

Visit Manitou Springs
Combined Executive Committee/Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2024

Present: April Hall, Farley McDonough, Denise Howell, Natalie Johnson
Absent: Kat Kilner, Annie Schmitt
Guests: Angela Wilkes
Staff: Leslie Lewis

A combined meeting of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors was held on Thursday, July 25, 2024, in place of the regular Board of Directors meeting. This meeting was held in the upstairs conference room at 515 Manitou Avenue and was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by President Farley McDonough.

A. City Update

Natalie Johnson had attended the MAPS meeting. There was an initial presentation on a program called “The Last Mile”. They did say they would need input from business owners and the Chamber on this program. The program is working for delivery drivers because of the convenience for them. Several other communities (Aspen and Breckenridge are using). It allows cities to manage large delivery vehicle traffic, and those cities are paying the cost of the program. Denise thinks the program would be a long way out for Manitou Springs. The MAPS Meeting is held the 4th Wednesday of the month and begins at 5 p.m.

Denise reminded everyone that there would be a community open house meeting for Plan Manitou on Tuesday and encouraged everyone to attend and provide input. There will be a survey going out to all residents at the end of August as well.

The historic signage is still in process. Denise is hoping they will begin being installed soon.

The city is repaving 20 roads this year.

The fountains and the clock are all working now.

The city is still working on storm clean-up. The next phase of the creek walk project will begin in September but will be stopped for the Coffin Races and restarted following.

The Day of Friendship is this weekend. Again, everyone was encouraged to attend. The city will have a pop-up there to gather input for Plan Manitou.

Denise gave “kudos” to the Mineral Springs Foundation for WaterFest. The Mineral Springs Foundation has done a great job working with the state and has been able to keep the springs open. Denise explained how the Foundation oversees the springs, and the city does the maintenance on them. Angela had been asked questions about the spring in the Spa Building and wasn’t sure how to answer them.

The city is still working to get a contract to have the sidewalks downtown cleaned. Leslie reported that Jason Hernandez has had a lot of health issues and been out a lot recently. Leslie contacted the city to have them water the city gardens downtown until Jason’s issues were resolved.

B. CRANE Update

Audrey Gray has been named Executive Director (she was Interim). That will be announced on the Day of Friendship.

CRANE had the 441-mural reveal with the third “Cookies with Crane” event.

They believe there were about 70 people that attended the event. The portable deity scavenger hunt went well. There were 60 QR Code scans. Many were from outside the area. The sculpture has been moved to Shoshone Plaza.

There is a new sculpture, “Bloom” that was installed at the Ruxton roundabout.

CRANE will be assisting the Chamber in a Call for Artist for the Visitors Guide cover for 2025.

Colleen Johnson and Leslie Lewis have joined the Board of Directors of CRANE.

The artist working on the Chamber mural was in town. Jennifer brought a friend to help. They loved Manitou and the MAC. The mural will be installed sometime Friday. With the mural, Farley gave an update on the Chamber patio. Due to size, and the picnic area the city put in across the creek, the ADA picnic table will not be ordered. People do use the existing picnic table now. The Adirondack chairs will be moved over there and possibly a bench added. There has been some signage ordered that Colorado Ski Chairs is creating. A sculpture will be added to the pedestal that is over by the picnic tables.

The city has the totem created at the library from one of the trees that was there.

The MAC is interested in taking over Manitou Made.

C. Events Update

Jenna is out on vacation. The chamber will be at Day of Friendship scooping ice cream and handing out information.

Manipalooza is August 10. Tickets are going very slowly. Jenna has several food trucks coming.

People are signing up for Coffin Races. Jenna did secure a \$7,000 sponsorship from Pepsi and Border Burger Bar partnering.

Denise will get a date scheduled to talk about a couple of days of free parking during the holiday season.

D. Discussion: CTO (OEDIT) Marketing Grant

The grant application for the 2024 Matching Marketing Grant application was just released. The grants range from \$2,500 to \$50,000. The match amounts range depending on the level of grant applied for.

One idea discussed would be to add a Spanish translation on at least a couple of pages on our website. Leslie thinks the grant would need to be in in September. Leslie asked about other ideas for an application.

E. Destination Blueprint

This is a program through OEDIT and the CTO to work on some of the new initiatives that work with the State’s Strategic Plan for Destination Stewardship. We were awarded 100 hours of mentoring. This will include a resident sentiment survey as well as a visitor sentiment survey. They have a lot of resources for us to utilize. The two focus’ we chose were Championing the Value of Tourism (to help better message to Council and residents) and to Advance off-peak tourism opportunities to better support small businesses year-round. The core team will do most of the work with a larger group meeting in October/November, which will be critical. We hope this ultimately leads to the creation of a Destination Management and

Marketing Plan. Denise said that city staff will be busy until after the budget work session which will be the 2nd Saturday in October.

Denise asked for an update on the DDA. There has not been a meeting in a while. Leslie will look at the last email between Dan (consultant) and Chelsea (Planning Department) to see where the conversation is. She believes that the consultants are looking at a couple of options. There was discussion about the Metro District being upset about not being included in these meetings and some of the suggestions that came from the initial report. The steering committee was representatives of the three entities putting funds into the study.

F. Update: ADA Compliance Statement

We did hand out the statement for everyone to see but have not decided as to where to put that on the web site.

With no quorum, the Executive Session is being postponed.

G. Unscheduled Appearance

Denise shared with the group that staffing is going to get harder in 2025 and will continue to get even worse in 2026. The additional challenges of insurance for both businesses are residents were discussed.

Angela asked about becoming a judge for the pie baking contest. Leslie will let Jenna know that Angela would like to be added to the list.

Having no additional business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.