



**ACRA** DEFY ORDINARY

ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT | MEMBER SERVICES | SPECIAL EVENTS | VISITOR SERVICES

## MINUTES

### Board of Directors Meeting

**Date: March 28, 2022**

**Location: Zoom**

Present: Cristal Logan, Debbie Braun, Charlie Bantis, Jeff Bay, John Rigney, Dave Ressler, Donnie Lee, Rose Abello, Henning Rahm, Patti Clapper, Nina Eisenstat, Alan Fletcher, Heather Kemp, Michael Goldberg, Dan Barthomelew, Mayor Torre, Lisa LeMay, Heather Steenge-Hart, Kathleen Wanatowicz, Maria Morrow, and Bill Tomcich Absent: David Baugh, Cari Kuhlman, Heather Steenge-hart, Sam Barney, Andrew Ernemann, David Baugh, Cari Kuhlman Staff: Kristen Anderson, Jessica Hite, Liz Cluley, Nichole Hellinger, Sarah Lasser, Susan Bantis, and Alycin Bektesh, Press: Carolyn Sackariason

Attachments:

*Policy Statements Update*

*Finance Committee Packet*

#### Call to Order

Chair Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

#### Policy Statement Update Presentation

Alycin gave an update to ACRA Policy Statements from the board retreat in February. Questions and conversation ranged from; adding information about Kids First under the resource section of the policy statements, to how can APCA look at affordable housing income levels differently? The board agreed business is in a difficult situation with hiring talent and paying a decent wage but still many can't afford free market and don't qualify for employee affordable housing. Alycin reminded all to not focus on solutions or tactic yet as we are still fine tuning the statements.

#### Chair Update

Cristal Logan, The Aspen Institute had a successful winter of programs. On April 14<sup>th</sup> we are hosting the Bayer Center Community Open House, food, and beverages along with tours of the new center. Looking forward to a busy summer season, all in person. On the Aspen Meadows side, Salamander Hotels take over May 1<sup>st</sup>.



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## President Update

Debbie let the board know that ACRA is actively hiring! Currently looking for a Membership Manager and Special Events Coordinator along with a Guest Service Manager. Debbie is attending MTS next week in Vail and will be leading a discussion at a leadership workshop. The Destination Management Plan Road show has kicked off and going well. Eliza had a great meeting with Rotary and looks forward to presenting to the BOCC, Ski Co Sales and Marketing team and City of Aspen in April. Next board meeting will be in person at the Aspen Police Station, Community Room, presenter will be Ben Anderson with the City of Aspen on short term rentals.

Finance Committee Update: Charlie gave a brief overview of the 2021 year-end meeting. Chamber had a great year, record year with membership income. Looking forward to understanding the membership profile, on who is joining. Destination Management, a lot of moving parts in 2021. DM saw significant sales tax revenue from what was budgeted.

Arts & culture Update: Cristal, Alan and Eliza brought together the Arts and Culture group. Eliza presented the Destination Management Plan, Bridget presented spring, summer and fall opportunities for collaboration, Jessica discussed digital co-op opportunities and, Maureen from Promo Inc. gave an PR update. Feedback from the organizations: rising costs is a struggle and the strong summer occupancy can make it difficult to find housing for performers and talent.

## Director Comments:

Mayor Torre: Working on the affordable housing strategic plan. Short-term rental regulations and requirements conversation is still going on. Downtown improvements which focus on pedestrian safety. Working with restaurants on right of way usage for summer.

Patti Clapper: Primary election June 28<sup>th</sup>. Pitkin County has 5 elected seats on the ballot this year, election is November 8th. The BOCC will hear an update on short term rentals ordinances on April 13th.

Dan Bartholomew: Near record of aircraft activity this past weekend and now this week, we start to see a slowdown. Great to see the Veterans group in, great group of people.

Donnie Lee: The Gant is finishing a busy winter. Shoulder season will be short, and summer is anticipated to match or exceed 2021 summer occupancy.



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Henning Rahm: Aspen Skiing Company hotels will close for their annual spring closure and re open mid to end of May. Summer will be very busy and already seeing next winter bookings.

Michael Goldberg: Many restaurants had a record year. Labor shortage and war is at its all-time high since the pandemic. Restaurants continue to come into town and more to be announced.

Bill Tomcich: Airlines ended their winter schedule last week and next week we will see spring schedule. American is ending direct flights from Phoenix. However, at the same time Austin is back on the schedule.

Alan Fletcher: Seasonal housing crunch has resulted in reduction of student size for summer. Alan has had to hire his most recent 4 year-round full-time employees remote, will come for summer season. They did not receive any resumes from local applicants. Summer tickets go on sale first week of April.

Dave Ressler: AVH is feeling the housing and staffing crunch as well. Excited to announce the Steadman clinic, in Willits is finished. Our community has embraced Steadman's world-renowned services. Election coming up for the Hospital Board of Directors. Cristal asked for an update on COVID. We are planning on seeing omicron variant BA2. Dave would be very surprised if we don't see a bump in cases. Good news is we have a high vaccination rate in the community.

Rose Abello: Snowmass launches our new brand identity and logo on Thursday along with summer campaign. Rose will be at MTS next week. In the coming week, Snowmass will announce summer line up and it is the 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of concerts on Fanny Hill.

Charlie Bantis: Charlie brought up the lack of transportation to and from Aspen Airport with the departure of CME and lack of taxi service. Bill commented, Fly Aspen/Snowmass have received two proposals from private companies that are interested in filling the void left from CME.

Cristal Logan: Community forum task force on Transportation and mobility will present on next EOTC board meeting in April. Will advocate for the findings from the community-based report. Cristal discussed the possibility of ride share options.

Heather Kemp: Heather also commented on the transportation to and from the airport and price of a rental car from Denver. Retail was extremely busy in March with Texas spring break and the new snow.



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Nina Eisenstat: Nina congratulated the ACRA team for great work on the policy statements. The service industry is seeing a strong spring. Employee retention and avoiding burn out continues to be an issue along with staff shortage. Hearing community discussion on the Destination Management Plan, people are curious about the strategies and look forward to more information.

Jeff Bay: Also seeing significant issues with airport transportation. March was busy and summer is expected to exceed summer 2021. Guest expectations are back to pre-covid and expecting the services and amenities that they are used to. This is a challenge with staffing levels. Jeff will also be at MTS next week.

Lisa LeMay: Retail is also experiencing labor shortages for the upcoming summer season.

Maria Morrow: Maria applauded ACRA for the important projects the staff is working on. Maria urges Torre and the city to look at one very manageable problem, downtown safety. This issue is not going away and needs attention during the offseason. Both drivers and pedestrians are at fault.

John Rigney: ASC is closing a different mountain over the next four Sundays. We were already short on staff and now we are losing our J1 visa students but will make it through another successful season. Excited for summer and already planning for next winter.

Cristal adjourned the meeting at 10:05 a.m.