

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
March 30, 2021**

Call to order: Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

Attendance: Present: Alan Fletcher, Bill Tomcich, Charlie Bantis, Cristal Logan, Dave Ressler, Debbie Braun, Donnie Lee, Heather Kemp, Jeff Bay, Maria Morrow, Michael Goldberg, Nina Eisenstat, Patti Clapper, Rich Englehart, Rose Abello, Sam Barney, Torre and Heather Steenge-Hart Staff: Kristen Anderson, Sarah Reynolds Lasser, Liz Cluley, Jessica Hite, Mackenzie Sexton, Alycin Bektesh and Susan Bantis Guest: Maureen Poschman, Carolyn Sackarison & Evan Zislis Absent: Andrew Ernemann, Lisa Le May, Henning Rahm, Cari Kuhlman, and Riley Tippet

Approval of prior meeting minutes: Approved

Presentation: Hurst Community Initiative: Aspen Institute at Work in the Colorado Rockies

[Presentation Link](#)

Contact Information:

Evan Zislis

Director of Community Engagement

aspeninstitute.org/hci

970.366.2532.

evan.zislis@aspeninstitute.org

Presentation Questions / Comments:

Patti would like to have one of the Pitkin County council members participate in the coming year in the Hurst Community Initiative. Patti would like to see a future presentation on the Early Childhood Education from Northwest Colorado Council of Governments. Kristen will reach out and schedule for an upcoming board meeting.

Heather Kemp is interested in learning more about the Hurst program as it will be beneficial with Heather's business and retaining employees

Torre shared with the group his involvement with Hurst Community Initiative and the leadership seminars. They meet every two weeks and are given an assigned reading. Wide variety of readings and every session is based on a range of topics. Group of ten people, virtual. Discuss readings that are assigned. It is a great opportunity to connect with one another. Opportunity to reflect and take a moment for yourself.

Chair comments: The Aspen Institute is ending their winter season which was very successful with virtual seminars. They gained a lot of new community members due to being virtual. Depending on Public Health guidelines, the Institute is planning for summer, which will be a hybrid of virtual and in person programs.

President's Comments: Debbie is still very busy with COVID. Pitkin County is the only county in orange in the state. We can't let our guard down. Debbie is very active on the vaccine group along with the 5-Star Committee. Pitkin County will announce new public health orders soon, and the downtown mask zone is still in effect until at least May 1st. Eliza, Jennifer and Debbie are out for the beginning of April. Sarah is busy with group sales coming back. Jennifer is busy with summer events that are coming back. Membership is in the process of our April renewal month, which is our largest membership renewal month.

Finance Committee Update: Charlie went over Chamber and Destination Marketing year end 2021. Debbie and the team did a tremendous job at cutting costs. Charlie discussed the changes that will take place with the airport going into the Chamber and Special vents going into Destination Marketing. Destination Marketing balance sheet is very strong. Charlie went on to the airport P&L. Straightforward, flowing into the Chamber in 2021. We are tracking ahead in 2021. The PPP loan is allowing us to re-hire and build up our team. See Finance committee minutes in packet for details.

Marketing Advisory Committee Update: Jeff Bay gave a MAC Meeting Update. Committee is working on a more normal marketing plan in 2021. At the meeting there was discussion on 2021 goals of the Marketing advisory – new destination management plan. Other topics included - summer updates, new reservation process for Maroon Bells, direct flights from Houston. Along with BVK – new branding strategy. See MAC minutes in packet for details

Directors Comments:

Patti Clapper: The county is working very hard on the vaccination clinics. Patti will be in touch with Evan to have the county commissioners involved with the Hurst seminars. Pitkin County is establishing a relationship with representatives from Senator Hickenlooper's new offices in Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction. In contact with a representative from Michael Bennett's office also making a connection with Lauren Boebert's office. Hoping to be fair and politically correct across the board

Torre: The downtown mask ordinance, came to city council. 3 out of 5 council members are in favor to extend the ordinance, beyond May 1st. Torre believes we will need to modify the ordinance; he is in favor of masks indoors. However, there will be conflict with mandating masks outside in the downtown core. Summer planning is in full swing. Everything right of way usage and activations, from outside dining to summer events, park usage and ordinance. 4th of July is a topic of conversation, a lot of discussion and ideas on what the parade will look like. Making sure downtown has the right amount of vibrancy.

Heather Kemp asked Torre if they have thought about what New York City is requiring such as a vaccine pass for events. Torre is looking to the Board of Health on what they implement. Looking to Jazz Aspen will look like and Aspen Music Festival. Heather is hoping to see the mask ordinance will sunset by July 1st.

Cristal asked Rich if from an airline standpoint, he has seen anything. Rich is monitoring the situation and waiting for the FAA to see if any type of vaccine passport in place on a national basis.

Dave Ressler: Appreciates the conversation this morning and over the past year. It is amazing to see ACRA's relationship with the local community over the past year and what an instrumental part Debbie and the team have played. We are seeing a spike in cases and hospitalizations. We are in a race with vaccinations and COVID variances. 500 J&J and 1200 Pfizer administered this week. Governor Polis has opened up the vaccines to anyone 16 and older as of Friday, April 2nd. In other non-COVID news, we are seeing 83% use of helmets with patients in our trauma center. The Steadman Clinic has been welcoming patients since December and seeing huge success with the community.

Heather Steenge-Hart: The last couple weeks hotel occupancy in Aspen has been busy. St. Regis Aspen is closing for their annual spring closure, April 18 – May 13th.

Michael Goldberg: Restaurants that are 5-star certified are very thankful and can operate at 50% capacity. Currently 57 restaurants are 5-start certified, 21 restaurants that are not. The restaurants are seeing end of season fatigue along with COVID fatigue and guests are asking why they still have to wear a mask, even with vaccination.

Alan Fletcher: The arts community is planning June 27th opening at the tent. Alan has had legal advice and as of now, not looking to ask for a vaccine passport. Masks will be required at all times. Applied for the 5-star program. Looking to offer vaccines to staff and students, that don't have an option to vaccinate before arriving in Aspen for the summer.

Nina Eisenstat: Hearing a lot of optimism on the vaccine and positive feedback on the vaccination clinics. Still hearing a lot of discussion on which vaccine to get. There needs to be a marketing push to educate people on accepting the vaccine that is offered to them. Great to hear summer activations. Get the positive information to the public on the vaccines.

Sam Barney: Construction activity continues to be healthy in Aspen, Pitkin County, and TOSV. We are seeing continued escalation of carpentry materials which already went up roughly 20% in 2020. We are being notified of additional 10-20% cost increases on engineered wood products along with notifications of supply not meeting demand. We are also seeing shortages of PVC products and increases in copper materials. This is due to: building activity nationwide exceeding projections last year and into this year, COVID related manufacturing and raw

material procurement issues, and the winter weather event in Texas which has created demand as well as shortages from manufacturing facility impairment.

- AGC (Associated General Contractors of America) national surveys are reporting:
 - Shortages of materials, equipment, or parts
 - Shortages of craftworkers/subcontractors
 - Potentially infected persons visiting jobsites
- AGC Inflation alert – nearly 13% increase in input costs over the last year.
- Hearing negative feedback in the City of Aspen and Pitkin County with regards to turn around times for permits and permit change orders. Appears to be due to volume of activity and staff turnover.
- Construction parking program for Pitkin County going into effect this spring – paid parking in ROW, appears to equate to about \$50/day. Construction parking spaces in COA are \$40/day.
- If you are planning a construction project, be prepared for higher costs than past years as well as potential material procurement issues.
- Shots in arms – encourage, share information, help people get signed up.
- Pitkin County lighting code changes planning to be considered later this year
 - Similar subject lights-out aspen on IG April 22, 2021 at 9-10pm for astrological event, check it out and participate, we have great night sky in our area.

Charlie Bantis: Massive influx of new homeowners and long-term rentals. This being said, everyone wants to remodel. Every speck home that was on the market last year sold. Mortgage brokers are very busy. With our new members of the community and bringing their businesses here. Typically, Aspen mainly supports tourism and businesses that support tourism. We could see a change in the future with different businesses moving locally. Seeing more and more of our clients have already been vaccinated. Charlie is seeing client's behavior more in line with pre COVID times. A lot of our visitors are already vaccinated and will be unhappy if there is still an outdoor mask mandate.

Rich Englehart: Rich discussed the airport closure, they selected dates earlier than planned; May 17th to the 24th. Thank you to Debbie and Bill for their partnership on selecting dates. The airport will be conducting burn training exercises, May 31 to June 4th. Don't be alarmed when driving by the airport. Working on the bylaws for the community, going to the Board of Commissioners in the next few weeks. Jon Peacock has made an offer for airport director, Dan Bartholomew starts on May 10th.

Rose Abello: End of winter occupancy is very strong. In the midst summer planning, committed to offering free music every Thursday, June 10th to Labor Day. Once we know the state ordinance we will determine where the stage is.

Donnie Lee: Great to see season ending on a positive note. We are on the front side as more and more people are vaccinated and wanting to gather. Summer business looks optimistic.

Bill Tomcich: The first vaccine you are offered, is the vaccine you should get. Amazing how quickly air travel went up for end of season. United is adding more flights and will start summer flights beginning of June. Along with Flights direct from Austin to Aspen.

Jeff Bay: A lot of opportunities to get vaccinated. Starting to see occupancy drop off at the end of the month. One of Jeff's hotels will be closing on April 11th and compressing operations at the Molly Gibson for most if not all of the summer season. To accommodate projects and redevelopment schedule, yet to be published. Jeff would like to see a conversation on the affordable housing program and stakeholders need to have a voice. Debbie confirmed that Public Affairs is working to get the next public affairs meeting scheduled and affordable housing is on the agenda.

Maria Morrow: Maria discussed vaccine equity, vaccines are picking up the pace and about to open to everyone. Maria is urging our community leaders to promote vaccine equity. We need to make sure the sectors that need to get the vaccine does get the vaccine. People who are live in another county than Pitkin and work in Aspen, it is difficult to take time off to get vaccinated. They do not have easy access to register for a vaccine. We need to be an instrument to help our employees get vaccinated.

Heather Kemp: Retail in many sectors has been really good this year (beating 2019 year over year) with an influx in new homeowners (and long term COVID renters). Some specialty retail has been hurting this winter due to the earlier testing requirement to visit Aspen.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.