

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 25, 2020**

Call to order: Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

Attendance: Present: Cristal Logan, Debbie Braun, Donnie Lee, Charlie Bantis, Jeff Bay, Rose Abello, Andrew Ernemann, Rob Ittner, Sam Barney, Patti Clapper, Dave Ressler, Nina Eisenstat, Cari Kuhlman, John Rigney, Torre, and Bill Tomcich Absent: Alinio Azevedo, Jeanette Darnauer, Alan Fletcher, Tom Heald, John Kinney, Heather Kemp, Lisa LeMay, Maria Morrow, Heather Steenge-Hart, and Riley Tippet Staff Present: John Davies, Susan Bantis, Eliza Voss, and Jennifer Albright Carney

Approval of prior meeting minutes: Approved

Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association – Mike Pritchard: The RFMBA’s mission is to create and sustain the best possible mountain bike trail system and experiences in the Roaring Fork Valley. See presentation in link for information.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tyrMlox2LYO-gXFN1dbHg-ez3xSXYtwj/view>

Chair’s Comments: Mountain biking is a favorite topic for everyone here as it’s such a wonderful activity in the valley. It’s been a great winter for the arts and culture nonprofits. I met with Eliza and we are continuing the surveys so that we will have a full year’s worth of data. The Aspen Santa Fe Ballet has a winter encore performance of Nicolo Fonte’s “Beautiful Decay” this weekend. If anyone is interested in attending, I have a discount code for \$25 tickets. Tonight, we will be at the city council meeting for approval to renovate a building on the Aspen Institute property. Additionally, we are looking to build the Bayer Center for gallery space. I’d like to applaud the mayor and the city for bringing the issue of childcare to the floor. This is a widespread issue that we are not only experiencing in the valley, and it will take employers and businesses coming together to fix.

President’s Comments: We are hoping to close our books for 2019 today and should have a finance committee update at next month’s meeting. Wintersköl 2021 will take place January 14-17th. The April City of Aspen breakfast has been retooled into a business marketing forum taking place at 8:30 a.m. on April 7th at the Aspen Meadows Resort. Midday, Google will be onsite giving a seminar on increasing online presence and verifying businesses. That evening we will be launching formalized leads group programming. Kathryn will be pushing out information on programming. We will be bringing the ACRA 5-year strategic plan to the board next month for approval. I met with Donnie regarding the public affairs committee and the group will focus this year on workforce housing and communications. The Valley Health Alliance met and has invited me to join the board. As the chamber, we are representing small businesses and are hoping to launch a healthcare plan in 2021. We will be meeting again in March to continue on plan design to begin marketing this summer. Sarah will be taking the lead on participating in the Kids First childcare initiative.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Director’s Comments:

Charlie Bantis: Don’t panic when looking at your 401k and investments. Seeing market volatility. Comment about childcare discussions – scale matters. We need to have larger group offerings which gives better opportunity for workers, pay, and overhead efficiencies. Issues here are space, zoning, and NIMBYism. The small fragmented approach to childcare is guaranteed to fail.

Jeff Bay: Gave occupancy update. February has been exceptionally strong, and March is looking good. Summer is looking like a mixed bag at the moment, but we’ve been seeing later bookings. We’ve seen pressure from Snowmass on rates, but higher priced properties are still doing well. MAC will meet at the Limelight in March. We are looking at partnerships with key partners on marketing strategies. Working with ALA to determine a leader and will have them join the committee. Snowmass is shaping up to be stiff competition for lodging. There are articles in today’s paper about the effects of VRBO / Airbnb, which is something we are hoping to get regulated quickly.

Rose Abello: Happy Mardi Gras! We have celebrations going on in Snowmass, with activations at the mall and base village. Bookings have been strong, and we finished 2019 with 9/12 months of record occupancy. March is up 5% even though the first 10 days show a slump in business. However, with last minute bookings, we aren't concerned. The Disabled American Veterans group is returning, and we are looking for volunteers. We aren't looking to compete with Aspen, however, room rates are a big factor. The consumption report is up 13% with restaurants up 10.5%. Aspen visitors stay longer with summer cultural offerings while Snowmass sees shorter stays.

Andrew Ernemann: Lodging competition with Airbnb and VRBO includes long standing rental agencies. Multiple articles out that are worth reading about real estate markets, bringing both positive and negative discussion about billionaires in our real estate market. The market has been pushed positively however it's created negative press.

Rob Ittner: Based on the responses to outreach, people are interested in a restaurant week. Gave sales tax update. 2019 was up 7.5% and restaurants were up 5%. We need to be looking at 3 and 5-year growth periods to get accurate view. There are also a lot of variables, such as inflation, and fewer people spending more money. It's become hard to find bottles of wine under \$100 on menus. There has been growth in the hotel, construction, and miscellaneous categories. Average daily rates have seen big increases over the years.

Sam Barney: Gave construction update. 2020 is looking to be a strong year although there are concerns about supplies from China. Met with the City of Aspen's community development director about streamlining the permitting process. Both the City of Aspen and Pitkin County have an online system. Haven't yet put together the data for Snowmass update.

Patti Clapper: Working on the airport and waiting for the visioning committees to back out with recommendations. Have been watching the recordings of the meetings. We are hoping to make a decision in the coming months after looking at every option and listening to the community. The courthouse interior is being renovated and we hope to have a grand reopening this summer. We are seeing issues in the Pitkin County jail due to space issues and demographics, requiring emergency changes. The final reading of the energy code is coming up. There is a new deconstruction code coming due to the landfill capacity, and they are looking at adding an area to sell deconstructed parts. BOCC retreat prioritized public safety and childcare. There is a possibility of creating a special tax district as allowed by the state. Pitkin County is working to educate about the coronavirus.

Dave Ressler: Very much in support of a public safety tax initiative. We are currently housing intoxicated people at the hospital but looking for a more cost-effective solution. Appreciate the leadership that Debbie brings and excited to have her on the board for the Valley Health Alliance. We are working hard to accomplish a region wide health plan on a tight timeframe. Looking to find a balance of health care costs and premiums. Healthcare shouldn't be impacted by capitalism. Value based care is everything. We have 5 chambers working with the VHA to represent small employers and businesses. Housing and childcare affect us as we have a shortage of housing and workforce. The coronavirus is not currently a pandemic and we haven't had any local cases, but we are at risk.

Nina Eisenstat: I'd like to compliment Eliza on the new website. Very successful launch of a great looking site. I've had a few members ask about how ACRA feels about popups and if there are membership options. I'm working with the Aspen School District Board of Educators on the hiring process for the new superintendent. The pool of 24 candidates was culled to 8 and the finalists will be announced in the coming days. Monday at 5:30 there will be a meet and greet that is open to the community. Interviews will be held on Tuesday. We've worked to make the process transparent and open.

Cari Kuhlman: The stock market dropped more than 1,000 points and there's uncertainty in the market due to the coronavirus and presidential election. Investors are saying the market could continue to go down, but it's still a great time to buy or refinance.

John Rigney: Thanks for bringing in the Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association. We've got good snow and solid booking; the end of the season is looking good. NASTAR and the US Nationals coming soon. Planning for summer is underway, which includes a closure of the Sundeck for roof reconstruction.

Torre: The City of Aspen has a lot going on currently.

Donnie Lee: Public affairs committee will meet in March and I will bring an update to the group at next month's meeting. Workforce will be front and center as well as better interaction with members. We knew going into winter that international business would be down, but it's not been terrible. We are seeing good demand for early summer and should finish winter strong.

Bill Tomcich: Apologies for missing today's presentation, but I did see it during press conference. Gave an update on the ASE visioning process. Last month was concerned about the direction, but the last two meetings were very productive, and fact based. We are headed in the right direction. There are meetings scheduled through March. After years of work, Southwest will be announcing flights into Steamboat Springs. This is going to be a very interesting case study to watch.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.