

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 26, 2021**

Call to order: Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Attendance: Present: Debbie Braun, Cristal Logan, Charlie Bantis, Alan Fletcher, Heather Steenge-Hart, Jenette Darnauer, Sam Barney, Riley Tippet, Rich Englehart, Maria Morrow, Andrew Ernemann, Cari Kuhlman, Bill Tomcich, Nina Eisenstat, Jeff Bay, Lisa LeMay, Donnie Lee, Rose Abello, David Baugh, John Rigney, Michael Goldberg, Dave Ressler, Torre, Alinio Azevedo & Patti Clapper **Guests:** Jon Peacock **Press:** Aspen Times & Aspen Daily News **Staff:** Kristen Anderson, Eliza Voss, Sarah Reynolds Lasser **Absent:** Heather Kemp

Approval of prior meeting minutes: Approved

Nominating Committee Update: The nominating committee met after the election to discuss slating of officers for the 2021 Board of Directors. Sam Barney, who was fulfilling an at-large seat will be stepping into a service seat, previously obtained by Jeannette Darnauer who is retiring from the Board of Directors. Michael Goldberg will be the representative of the restaurant seat along with Rich Englehart will represent the Aspen Airport, in an ex-officio seat. Alinio Azevedo has decided to step down in his appointed seat with Aspen Ski Co. We look forward to having Henning Rehm join us from the Limelight Aspen. All appointments unanimously approved by voting members. Thank you Jeanette & Alinio for your years of service!

Update from John Peacock: John joined the meeting to update us on current COVID data, the 5-star program and the Pitkin County grant program, in partnership with the Aspen Community Foundation and COVID Vaccines.

John reviewed the current data and downward trend. We have seen a significant drop in incidents. Our application has been submitted to the state for the 5-star program and we are days away from qualifying for the program. We should know by next week if we have been approved. The 5-star program will initially concentrate on the restaurant community. Our goal is to be able to open restaurants in some capacity by next week. John is optimistic to be 700 incident rates at the end of January. Orange level threshold by first week of February. When the county obtains the orange level metrics on the state level, then businesses can operate under yellow restrictions. If we were to ever to go into the red again, the businesses that are 5-star certified will be able to stay open with more restrictions.

The county is partnering with Aspen community foundation, on the business grant program. Please visit Aspencommunityfoundation.org to apply for the grant. The program is funded through county dollars provided by the CARES Act. To apply, your business must be owned by a roaring fork resident and operate in Pitkin County. You need to show how your business has been impacted by COVID. The business must have already submitted a business operating safety plan with Pitkin County and if your business was shut down for any violation of COVID you are not applicable to apply. Each business has the opportunity of up to \$2,500 dollars. They are reviewing applications on a rolling process. Apply as soon as possible.

Pitkin County is set up for success to provide vaccines to our community. We can provide 2200 – 2400 shots weekly. The challenge right now is receiving our requested number of vaccines from the state. We are constantly asking for more. We are prioritizing right now for the next round, teachers, and workers in childcare facilities, then food distribution system.

Destination Marketing Update Presentation -

Debbie Braun: Debbie welcomed the new Directors – Rich & Michael. Thank you to Alinio and Jeannette for your service. Debbie is a member of the 5-star administrative committee. Will continue to get information out to the group as soon as possible. ACRA has applied for the PPP Loan with Vectra bank. Annual report is printed and digital and will be mailed to all the members.

Eliza Voss: It's national plan for vacation day, a program from US Travel, you'll see our homepage takeover as part of the "Let's Go There Campaign" reflecting the sentiment "When you're ready we'll be here"

Eliza discussed ACRA efforts with the restaurant gift card program: We contributed \$50K of tourism recovery dollars to the Meridian Jewelers matching program. Those funds were exhausted within 3 days. 350 people participated and 67 restaurants benefited. There was also a pure non-profit piece of the program that Kenny Smith from Meridian is working directly with Kathryn Sands and Aspen Family Connections to facilitate gift cards at more grab & go focused establishments that will go to families that are in need of food assistance. The Jewish Community Center also ran a fundraiser distributing City Market gift cards to employees of restaurants. The program was an unbelievable success and created good will in the community.

We are working with the finance committee and City of Aspen to determine a repayment schedule for the \$200,000 loan, which we have requested a portion of it be turned into a grant.

Winterskol did offer an in-person experience for the wintersculpt event, otherwise everything was virtual. We sponsored Gay Ski Week this year which was mostly just a packaging opportunity for lift tickets & hotels, nothing was held in person.

Chair's Comments: Cristal congratulated the ACRA team, seeing the annual report and all the hard work the team has accomplished this past year. Congrats for being recognized for destination Colorado, especially Sarah Lasser for her award. Alan and Cristal meet with the arts and culture CEO's seeing how the vaccine roll out and planning. Aspen institute are hosting all programs digitally. Programs are sold out and great to see everyone come together.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Director's Comments:

Patti Clapper: BOCC Work session is this afternoon, starting the long discussion on short term rentals, discussion on growth management – how to start the public process. Going back to square one on growth management. Step One, deciding how to bring in the public. The BOCC has a weekly update on COVID with Jon Peacock.

Torre: Biggest issue is the restrictions in place. Looking forward to the 5-star program. Businesses is back on normal and look forward to opening the restaurant again and the community. Community support continues to amaze me. Torre is receiving a lot of calls about the vaccine, we need to direct everyone to the Pitkin County website for the latest information.

Dave Ressler: Interesting to see what happens with the new administration and the promise of more vaccines. Colorado is 9th best for vaccines. At the Hospital – 3 patients in house, on patient that is a patient under investigation, showing COVID symptoms but has tested negative twice. False negatives are real, we cannot let our guard down with just a negative test result. We still must follow the 5 steps of containment. Negative test is not hall pass. We are also seeing our fair number of usual traumas. Steadman clinic opened in December and taking great care of our patients. Starting with strong patient volumes. Accept all patients, regardless of healthcare provider even Medicare.

Michael Goldberg: A lot of discussion on 5-star program and what does it really mean locally. Restaurants are debating if they apply for the 5-star program with more restrictions than the current level or is it better not to apply and organically get to the orange level.

John Rigney: Great to see snow. Continue our work with the local food banks and helping our community. We are focusing on the guest experience; we want to provide the best experience possible to our visitors. We want everyone to be safe and follow the mask mandate. This is our 20th year of hosting x games, not the big 20th party we wanted to have. Focusing on skiing and snowboarding. 90% less people. People who are here are very strict with testing and protocols. Buttermilk is still open to the public. John has heard the question, why we are having events and why X Games. We are still influencers. This is a long-term initiative and marketing tool. It speaks to the younger demographic and celebrates athletic achievement. This is a pre-Olympic year, and the athletics use X games as a training ground.

David Baugh: The School district is having the most issues with teachers having to quarantine. The district's COVID numbers are reflective of the county's and continue to drop. Working to get the secondary schools in person first week of February. We delayed our athletic season to beginning of February. In support of our restaurant community and to reduce transmission in the community. Hope to get our teachers and staff vaccinated and keep our schools open. Elementary school has mostly been open since September. Staff survey shows that 1 in 14 teachers concerned about being vaccinated. Which is a little concerning.

Rose Abello: Occupancy in Snowmass is reflective of Aspen's. Winter activations and laminations have been a huge success. Westin Snowmass has been sold and have submitted a permit for renovations that will close the Westin, Wildwood and conference center for the summer. Rose and her team are focusing on helping the groups that are booked for that time period. Supporting the restaurants with take-out and delivery – ad campaign. Assisting with certifying restaurants for the 5-star program.

Donnie Lee: A lot of optimism for the summer. Concentrating on employee health and wellness. Kudos to everyone on the call, Debbie, and team on bringing everyone together. We are going to get through this together, we have a strong community.

Lisa LeMay: Business wise, December was very positive and close to 2019 numbers. January is very slow. It is interesting to see the effects of the travel affidavit. When our surrounding mountain destinations do not require to test and sign the affidavit. Is the affidavit causing more damage than positives? We can't give up on winter, we can turn this around to a positive outlook.

Jeff Bay: Welcome to the incoming directors. Jeff applauded Eliza and team for all the support for virtual events. It is very concerning not to see the frustrations on a nation level about the vaccine shortage. Vaccines should be the top priority of everyone.

Nina Eisenstat: Certain businesses are doing well; property management, construction. Personal services – not doing well, such as event planning. There is optimism for summer, and we should not give up on Winter. Well done on the ACRA Annual Report. The report to be used as a marketing tool to non-members. It is a great reflection on ACRA.

Bill Tomcich: Flights were down in December, 38% down from prior year. Demand is following the path of least resistant. People are traveling to destinations with the least restrictions. We are locally seeing a lot of Florida visitors. When we are able to welcome visitors with fewer restrictions, we will see them. Optimistic about Summer – there is a lot of pent-up demand for travel.

Cari Kuhlman: Very busy with the PPP loans. Not seeing as many businesses apply as the first round. A few more requirements up front this time. A lot of businesses that have not qualified due to 2020 being better than 2019.

Andrew Ernemann: We all need to focus on providing the best experience to the visitors that are here. This is the year of flexibility. Interesting to see the trends of last year – long term rentals. 2021 – with the current restrictions we have seen a lot of cancellations, leases have COVID language. Aspen being in the red and restaurants being shut down drives the visitors elsewhere in Colorado. Seeing people change their plans a lot more and very slow in rentals and showings.

Maria Morrow: Thank you to Lisa for bringing up the Traveler affidavit. I have questioned it since the beginning. It was quickly thought of and now we are seeing its effect and causing more harm than benefits. We need a more standardized form.

Rich Englehart: Thank you to Debbie and staff for the relationship with the airport and visitor center. With the weather and lack of snow, getting people in and out have been easier than years past. Approve resolution 105. It is now in staff's hands and need to wait to meet in person with the FAA. Rich hopes to have FAA out for a site visit and see the airport and community. Hoping to bring new director on by March.

Riley Tippet: Snow Butlers operates in different mountain communities and able to see the different business demand. Sun Valley, having our best year. Telluride was slow over the holidays and when they were in red. Now that they are out of red, continue to see gain over previous year. People are traveling and they are going to mountain resorts with the least restrictions. Great to see our incident rate down. We are the only mountain destination in red. Which is hurting us, along with the traveler affidavit. Amoungst businesses the PPP loan is a huge discussion. Businesses are being tested and having to scale up or down quickly.

Sam Barney: Sam gave a construction update. Activity is at a healthy level and permitting, a few complaints about wait time. Material prices are trending upwards, steel prices starting to spick and along with lumber. Great to see that there will be Growth management outreach.

Jeanette Darnauer - Hearing of concerns about the restaurants but a lot of support on the restrictions and local law enforcement. A lot of businesses in the service category are doing well. Been such an honor to serve on the board. ACRA is a huge positive force in the business community.

Heather Steenge Hart: A BIG thank you for ACRA's leadership and for driving initiatives through these very challenging times. I will say that the closure of restaurants in conjunction with the affidavit has drastically reduced our occupancies and the ability to ensure all of our hosts are working. That said, it is wonderful seeing the COVID statistics improve and looking forward to seeing restaurants able to open again.

Alan Fletcher: We have shifted our winter concerts to fully streamed, no live audience. We are still confident about a summer plan with distancing, protocols, limited numbers. Congrats to ACRA for super work throughout this bewildering time.

Cristal Logan: meeting adjourned and reminded everyone this is the year of flexibility and compassion.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.