

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**Date: July 30, 2024**

**Aspen Meadows Resort**

**Present:** Cristal Logan, Jeff Bay, John Rigney, Donnie Lee, Dan Bartholomew, Debbie Braun, Patti Clapper, Matt Cook, Nina Eisenstat, Alan Fletcher, Michael Goldberg, Heather Kemp, Lisa LeMay, Justin Nyberg, Henning Rahm, Dave Ressler, Steve Skadron, Heather Steenge-Hart, Justin Todd, Bill Tomcich, Brenda Wild, and Pete Yang.

**Absent:** Cari Kuhlman, David Baugh, Dwayne Romero, Julia Theisen, Maria Ticsay, and Torre.

**Staff:** Alycin Bektesh, John Clay Davies, Nichole Hellinger, Jessica Hite, Savannah Grant, Casey Graves, Sarah Reynolds Lasser, Eliza Voss, and Liz Watson.

**Guests:** Jenny Elliott (Aspen Music Festival and School), Dan Freed (Aspen Center for Physics), Nora Jacobs (Design Workshop), Amanda Jenkins (Aspen Center for Physics), Mitzi Rapkin (Full Light Communications), Richard Stettner (Aspen Institute), and Carrie Williams (Aspen Institute).

**Call to order:** Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:32 AM

**Approval of the June 25th Minutes:** Approved

**Disclosure of Conflict of Interest:** None

**Housing the Aspen Idea:** Mitzi Rapkin from Full Light Communications introduces the "Housing the Aspen Idea" project, a collaborative effort involving the Aspen Institute, the Aspen Music Festival and School, and the Aspen Center for Physics. The project aims to address critical staff housing shortages by developing land owned collectively at the Aspen Meadows. The initiative seeks to solve their own housing needs and provide a leadership model for other organizations. Representatives from the Aspen Institute discuss their plans, which include creating 13 varied housing units, expanding underground parking, and relocating an engineering shop. They highlight the environmental benefits of reducing staff commutes by housing employees on-site. Speakers from the Aspen Music Festival and School outline their efforts to maintain existing parking while adding housing to accommodate about 1,000 people during the summer. They emphasize improvements in design and layout that ensure easy access and enhance the entrance from the West End, considering modular construction to ensure timely completion between festival seasons. The Aspen Center for Physics discusses the housing challenges for visiting physicists, particularly during their summer and winter programs. They propose a housing plan to accommodate a significant portion of participants on-site, reducing commuting and environmental impact. The plan includes architectural integration into the landscape to minimize visual and environmental disruptions. Overall, the discussion underscores a commitment to collaborative problem-solving, sustainability, and community engagement, aiming to enhance organizational sustainability and serve as a model for similar initiatives.

**Chair's Comments:** Cristal Logan comments on the positive momentum seen in Aspen's arts and culture nonprofits during the summer, highlighting their successful activities and the good attendance at events like the Aspen Music Festival. She expresses appreciation for the ACRA team's efforts in creating a vibrant cultural scene and thanks board members for their active participation in committees and recent city council meetings. Logan shifts focus to a new community coalition aimed at upgrading the Aspen airport, named the Community Coalition for a 21st Century Airport. She notes the coalition's grassroots nature, its need for financial support, and its goal to enhance quality of life through reduced pollution and noise while upgrading a key piece of infrastructure. Logan emphasizes the importance of community engagement in these efforts and urges attention to the new initiatives discussed in local newspapers. She concludes by stressing the unique opportunity to improve transit from the airport, calling it a crucial component of Aspen's transportation and mobility plans.

**President's Comments:** Debbie Braun builds on the discussion about the new community coalition for the airport, emphasizing ongoing chamber tactics for public engagement and highlighting the August Board of Directors meeting with various stakeholders, including the community coalition for a 21st-century airport and Aspen Fly Right. She and Alycin are preparing a survey to gauge membership opinions on the airport layout plan and explore the potential for gathering support through a letter if members are in favor. Debbie mentions her active involvement in community outreach, writing letters to the editor, and meeting with young community members to support an educational campaign about the airport. Additionally, Debbie updates on the Aspen Chamber's facility master plan, sharing positive news from a recent city council meeting that approved a significant increase in space for a new visitor center at the armory. She notes the absence of room for ACRA offices in the new setup, leading to a search for approximately

1000 square feet of office space in town to keep the chamber close to central Aspen. Reflecting on past opportunities to secure independent space for the chamber, Debbie expresses a determined focus to ensure strategic placement for the organization. Debbie's remarks highlight a proactive approach to community issues, strategic facility planning, and the importance of positioning the chamber as an influential entity in Aspen.

**Public Affairs Committee Update:** Alycin updates that the minutes from the last public affairs meeting were omitted from the packet and will be emailed over. She shares a timeline of ACRA's involvement with the airport project, recalling the visioning process affected by COVID-19 and highlighting ACRA's support through various stages, including letter writing and mobilizing community attendance at key meetings. Currently, ACRA focuses on voter registration and education campaigns, emphasizing the importance of community involvement in upcoming decisions about the airport layout plan. Alycin also details an ambitious outreach initiative involving a 10-episode series on local TV, aimed at educating the public about the airport project, supplemented by extensive updates and historical information on ACRA's website. This effort coincides with a broader campaign to get people registered to vote, particularly targeting ACRA board members' employees to maximize community involvement in decision-making processes. The update concludes with Alycin discussing ACRA's active role in public transportation advocacy, especially in relation to construction impacts from the Castle Creek Bridge project. She highlights ACRA's ongoing efforts to enhance housing initiatives and business engagement in local infrastructure projects, underscoring the organization's strategic approach to community support and development.

**Directors Comments:**

**Donnie Lee** addresses the group, acknowledging the busy nature of the current summer despite various distractions, such as issues related to the entrance and the airport. He emphasizes the organization's focus on enhancing the guest experience and supporting team members during this peak period. He notes that while planning lead times have shortened, there is still strong last-minute demand indicating a robust summer season.

**Dave Ressler** expresses his enthusiasm for participating in the airport coalition, noting that despite being a long-time community member, this is his first time engaging in a community effort with some conflict. He appreciates the Chamber's approach and is eager to contribute both as a board member and as part of the coalition due to the significance of the issue. At the hospital, Dave highlights ongoing construction as part of the final phase of a four-phase project valued at \$180 million, supported strongly by the community. This phase includes creating a new front entrance and registration area. Additionally, the hospital is expanding its housing solutions by constructing 11 call rooms in the old ambulance building. These rooms accommodate staff who live outside the area and work consecutive shifts, staying in these rooms between shifts. Dave also mentions the hospital's investment in modular construction for future units at their Beaumont property, emphasizing the cost-effectiveness and reduced community impact of this building method compared to traditional stick-built methods.

**Steve Skadron** discusses the recent developments at the Aspen campus, particularly emphasizing the new kitchen that has started operating and hosting cooking classes. These classes cover a variety of cuisines, with recent themes including Italian, tapas, and farm-to-table, which focus on preparing locally sourced ingredients. He encourages everyone to check out the upcoming fall classes listed on the CMC website and in mailed bulletins. Steve also touches on a broader initiative to leverage the new kitchen as a community asset that enhances local hospitality and culinary sectors through outreach and integration. He notes a shift in academic programming towards faster-paced courses, detailing an innovative eight-week training program designed to quickly upskill individuals, like transforming a dishwasher into a line cook. Additionally, he highlights a growing demand for English as a Second Language programs at CMC, along with new offerings in Spanish, reflecting the diverse needs of the community. Steve also mentions the challenges of attracting adjunct faculty to Aspen due to increasing traffic and travel difficulties, which are influencing the shift of population and resources towards Carbondale. In summary, Steve outlines the dynamic changes and strategic expansions at CMC, focusing on educational innovation, community integration, and adapting to regional shifts, all aimed at enhancing local workforce skills and addressing logistical challenges in the region.

**Jeff Bay** provides an update on lodging trends in the community, noting a very strong summer occupancy with optimistic projections for the coming months. He mentions that while individual properties may vary, overall visitation and occupancy in Aspen are growing, with August and September looking particularly positive. August shows a significant increase in pace over the previous year, and October is projected to be about 30% higher than last year, though this does not include Snowmass. However, Jeff notes a drop-off in occupancy for November and December, attributing this to a short-term booking window and some uncertainty likely influenced by last year's early winter conditions. He remains optimistic about the fall, highlighting a lot of social business, especially

weddings and social events, which are proving strong for their boutique-sized property, the MOLLIE. Jeff also shares a personal announcement: after a decade of varied and exciting roles at HayMax Hotels and the recent successful opening of the MOLLIE, he has decided to take a break and step down from his role, effective the following day. He plans to stay within the community and explore new opportunities after returning from a three-week trip to Africa. This decision also necessitates him stepping down from his board role temporarily, though he hopes to remain engaged with the organization and continue contributing to its efforts.

**Heather Kemp** shares her recent experience of a family reunion and heritage tour in the Baltic Sea, visiting Sweden, Norway, and Germany. She finds inspiration in the Scandinavian model of urban mobility, particularly the widespread use of bicycles in Copenhagen, and draws parallels to Aspen, suggesting the potential for easier bike usage in the town. Heather returns to describe a bustling summer season in Aspen, highlighting a successful local campaign, "Petal it Forward," organized by ACRA, which involved distributing flowers to the public. She notes the positive impact this initiative has had on the community's spirit and visibility. Heather also acknowledges the exhaustion felt by retail and hotel staff in Aspen during the mid-summer rush, emphasizing the importance of recognizing their hard work. She concludes by expressing appreciation for Debbie's efforts.

**Patti Clapper** thanks everyone and updates that the Board of Commissioners will have a work session on the new bridge and the entrance to Aspen's Record of Decision. She clarifies that while the county is not actively seeking new issues, such as the airport, they have been requested by their constituency to engage in this matter. Patti invites anyone interested to tune in or attend the session to hear the county's perspective, which will be discussed in the upcoming weeks. Additionally, Patti mentions that the county is considering a ballot question for a small mill levy aimed at funding housing initiatives, set for the first reading on August 14th. This levy, costing about \$121 per year per million dollars of residential property value, is designed to enable the county to form partnerships to aid housing efforts, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses. This initiative aims to make housing solutions more accessible to all community members. Patti also shares her recent involvement at a national level, where she successfully passed a resolution with the National Association of Counties during an event in Florida. This resolution urges the federal government to allow revenues generated from airport activities to be used for off-airport projects like renewable energy and sustainable aviation fuel initiatives. She plans to push this resolution at the congressional level in March.

**Justin Todd** expresses gratitude towards Jeff for his contributions and updates, noting that he will be missed. Justin then discusses the housing presentation earlier, highlighting its importance to him as he manages the Aspen Meadows. He emphasizes the minimal impact of the proposed housing developments on the West End and expresses his full support for the initiatives led by Alan and his team at the music school, as well as the efforts related to the physics community. Justin mentions the critical nature of housing for his team members, many of whom face long commutes from places like Glenwood, Carbondale, and Newcastle after lengthy workdays in the hospitality sector. He expresses readiness to discuss these issues further and notes that the housing initiatives will be driven by Cristal and the Aspen Institute, with Richard Stettner playing a key role. Justin's focus remains on addressing housing challenges to improve conditions for his team and the broader community.

**Heather Steenge-Hart** congratulates Jeff on deciding to take a sabbatical, sharing her own positive experience from a recent trip to Africa with her family. She offers to provide insights and hopes Jeff enjoys his time off, emphasizing the importance of rest. Heather expresses her appreciation for the information shared in the meetings and highlights the importance of ACRA's stance on the Aspen airport project, which is crucial for the St. Regis and W Aspen. She pledges support for the initiative and inquires about directing financial contributions to the Aspen Airport Coalition, indicating a willingness to involve the property owner in the effort. She closes by acknowledging the busy summer season, expressing gratitude for the business and the collective efforts that help bring guests to Aspen.

**John Rigney** expresses gratitude for the ongoing passion and involvement of others in community affairs, appreciating the updates shared. He then discusses the vibrant summer activities in Aspen, noting great participation in events like the Thursday or Tuesday night bike series, Power of Four, and the Snowmass 50. He mentions that concerts have been well-attended, contributing to a lively atmosphere in the area. John highlights ongoing developments at Snowmass, specifically the installation of the Coney Express, a significant new ski lift that will run from the end of the mall to the top of Coney Glade. Additionally, he discusses improvements aimed at enhancing the après-ski experience at Lynn Britt, making it more weatherproof and enjoyable during the peak winter months. John's remarks reflect excitement about the current and upcoming enhancements that are contributing to the area's appeal and activity levels.

**Justin Nyberg** expresses relief and optimism about the formation of a new group focusing on the airport discussion, which he feels has been dominated by a single, loud perspective for too long. He notes that the prevailing discourse in the media has been disproportionately fearful regarding airport expansion, and he hopes the new group will provide a clearer, more balanced message. Justin is particularly interested in understanding what the community stands to lose if the airport expansion proceeds as planned, and he questions the actual impact in terms of visitor numbers. He suggests that the community's broader concerns about growth are increasingly being centered on the airport, impacting areas from affordable housing to the influx of people during the summer. He emphasizes the need for a more precise understanding of how many additional people might use the expanded airport facilities and how this could affect the community. Justin advocates for a discussion that clarifies these impacts, countering the notion that the airport expansion will significantly drive growth. Additionally, Justin praises a project presented by the Institute as an example of responsible growth. He appreciates its thoughtful approach, modest goals, and focus on meeting unmet community needs, highlighting its respect for open space and its well-considered design.

**Pete Yang** discusses the current situation in the banking sector, noting the enjoyment of high interest rates. He mentions that the Federal Reserve is meeting this week, and there is an indication that interest rates might drop. Pete expresses hope that a rate reduction will help bolster more economic activity.

**Henning Rahm** echoes the sentiments expressed by others about the busy summer.

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**Bill Tomcich** discusses significant updates in the aviation sector, particularly relating to the Aspen airport. He notes that United Airlines plans to replace the CRJ 700 aircraft with the Embraer 175 (E175) starting from December 3, initially from Denver and Houston, and later expanding to include flights from Los Angeles and San Francisco by January. This transition is part of a broader effort to enhance the performance of aircraft operations at high-altitude airports like Aspen, which began with a performance enhancement package introduced by Embraer in 2016. Bill explains that the introduction of the E175 is the result of extensive engineering efforts and collaborations that started with a validation flight in 2020. He highlights that more than half of this winter's flights to Aspen will be operated with the E175, which is designed to improve safety and service quality. The new aircraft will feature 70 seats, including 12 first-class seats, offering more comfort and potentially lower first-class fares due to increased seat availability. Tomcich also mentions a recent earnings call from SkyWest Airlines, indicating that for every new E175 delivered, an older CRJ 700 will be retired, marking a significant upgrade in the fleet servicing Aspen. This shift aligns with broader aviation industry trends towards more efficient and comfortable aircraft. He touches on community concerns about airport expansion and clarifies that the new aircraft and runway improvements are primarily about safety and operational efficiency, not merely accommodating larger planes. Bill underscores the strategic importance of the airport improvements, which involve substantial investment and planning to ensure long-term benefits for Aspen and its visitors.

**Nina Eisenstat** discusses the ongoing success of the services category this summer, particularly highlighting sectors related to real estate, development, construction, and property management. Despite some services being short-staffed, she notes that efforts are being made to persevere through the peak season, with a focus on reaching mid-fall. Nina commends Cristal for organizing a fantastic event at the Institute, which featured Dr. Mark Hyman discussing actionable health tips. She encourages everyone to view the event online to gather insights on healthier living. Moreover, Nina expresses admiration for the vibrant arts and culture scene in Aspen this summer. She specifically praises the 75th anniversary celebrations at the Aspen Music Festival and School, noting the exceptional performances that have left attendees elated. She also mentions other cultural highlights, including Anderson Ranch, the ballet, the Institute, Theatre Aspen, and the Aspen Art Museum, all contributing to a culturally rich summer filled with festivals and artistic engagement.

**Brenda Wild** expresses her excitement and extends congratulations to Jeff for his contributions, noting her regret at missing a recent meeting. She updates on the real estate market, highlighting that in Aspen, the average sale price for single-family homes has significantly dropped to \$8.25 million with properties staying on the market for an average of 80 days and selling at about \$3,033 per square foot. There were 29 new listings last month, and currently, there is a 30-month supply. In Snowmass, homes are selling for an average of \$11.5 million, staying on the market for 100 days, and selling at \$2,222 per square foot, with six new listings and a 5.6-month supply. Basalt homes are averaging \$2.7 million, considered high for the area, with homes selling at \$771 per square foot and staying on the market for 39 days, with 18 new listings and an 8.2-month supply. Carbondale homes are seeing an average sale price



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of \$2,020,000, also deemed high, with properties staying on the market for 157 days and selling at \$600 per square foot, with 16 new listings and a 5.7-month supply. Brenda notes the real estate market has been slowing, a common trend during election years, and speculates that while there might be an uptick following a potential rate decrease, she does not expect significant activity until after the year's end due to the election season.

**Dan Bartholomew** updates on the recent submission of the airport layout plan to the FAA, which includes a depiction of an 80-foot runway shift, differing from the common ground recommendations. The FAA has initiated a three-month review process and has responded positively so far. Dan shares insights from his recent meeting with the Denver Airport District Office (ADO) of the FAA, discussing potential consequences if the plan does not move forward. He explains that the FAA might remove a modification standard waiver that currently allows for closer monitoring of safety distances between the taxiway centerline and the runway centerline. If this modification is withdrawn, Dan mentions that the airport might be reclassified from a group three to a group two airport, which could potentially disqualify the use of Embraer 175 aircraft due to their larger wingspan. The more likely scenario, however, involves removing the 95-foot wingspan restriction, leading to less regulated aircraft movements. This would necessitate sterilizing the taxiway during all aircraft movements on the runway, significantly reducing the airport's capacity from about 40 aircraft movements per hour to just eight. Such a change would prioritize flights on a first-come, first-served basis, complicating operations, especially for general aviation. Dan notes that this approach to managing airport modifications through air traffic control is not unprecedented and is currently implemented in locations like Boeing Field in Seattle and others. He emphasizes the complexities this would introduce, especially given Aspen's unique one-way-in, one-way-out airspace configuration, and urges stakeholders to stay informed as the situation develops. Dan concludes by noting the likelihood of an airport closure for at least two weeks in the spring, potentially extending to a month depending on winter conditions, as they plan maintenance around Memorial Day to minimize disruption.

**Mountain Ideal Certification:** Eliza Voss provides an update on the significant achievement of Aspen receiving the Mountain Ideal certification, which marks a notable accomplishment after two years of diligent work. This certification, awarded by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) under its sub-body governing rural mountain destinations, is part of Aspen's broader destination management plan aimed at establishing a sustainable baseline for tourism. Eliza explains that the process involved extensive collaboration across the community, including site visits with various local entities such as Aspen Consolidated Sanitation, the landfill, the music festival, visitor services, and the ski company. This comprehensive approach covered aspects from infrastructure to cultural offerings. She mentions that Aspen is now certified with other towns like Vail, Breckenridge, Durango, and Park City, noting that Durango is slightly behind in the process. Eliza highlights the rigorous effort involved in achieving the certification, describing it as akin to "college-level essay writing" and emphasizes its importance beyond just marketing, pointing to the substantial behind-the-scenes work. Eliza concludes by noting that while the certification sets a global benchmark for Aspen, the community should aspire to exceed these standards. She also mentions discussions with the Colorado Association of Ski Towns (CAST) about the certification and considers attending an upcoming CAST meeting in Durango to further these efforts.

**August 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** Discussion is had about the upcoming August board meeting, which is scheduled for Zoom attendance. However, given the importance and complexity of the topics to be covered, it has been decided that an in-person meeting would be more effective. This format will allow for more thorough and detailed discussions. For those unable to attend in person, a Zoom option will be available to ensure that all Board members have the opportunity to participate and provide input.

**Adjournment:** Cristal Logan adjourned the meeting at 10:25 AM