

Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

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The Gardiner Chamber of Commerce serves our community through developing local tourism while endorsing stewardship of the Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Meeting date: **Thursday, October 17, 2019**
Location: Gardiner Chamber of Commerce
Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Agenda:

1. Chamber Business

1.1. Roll Call & Introductions

Jeff Guengerich, Trina Smith, Anna Holloway, Mike Skelton, Leslie Everett, Kelly Burns, Mike Keller

Absent: Neli Karamfilova and Edwin Johnson

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

5 min.

Motion to approve Mike Keller. Motion seconded by Mike Skelton. Motion passes.

2. Committee Updates

2.1 US Forest Service - Mike Thom- USFS

10 min.

Neala reported on behalf of Mike Thom.

Eagle Creek, Canyon, and Tom Miner CGs are still available for public use.

We have a new trail bridge crossing Bear Creek. The bridge is located at the Bear Creek CG, and serves the hiking/biking users. A ford is still located just downstream for the horseback users. In the past, a down log was utilized to cross the creek, which would roll, dam up the creek, etc.

Several roads were closed on Tuesday. Bald Mountain Road above Hell's A'Roarin Outfitters, Bear Creek Fork across from Timber Camp CG, and Upper Eagle Creek. These are closed for elk habitat security as hunting season approaches.

2.2 Yellowstone NPS - Mary Wilson- National Park Service

Terese reported on behalf of Mary Wilson. She informed us about the thermal burn at Old Faithful that happened on September 29 to a 48-year old male. Also, all of the wildfires in the park are officially declared out.

Wednesday, October 16 park wildland fire staff conducted a 16-acre prescribed fire in the northern section of the park. Results of using fire to restore native vegetation will inform current and future restoration efforts throughout degraded sagebrush and grassland systems in the West.

Yellowstone hosted 693,118 visits in September 2019. This is a 4.3 percent decrease from September 2018. So far in 2019, the park has hosted 3,807,814 visits, down 1.4 percent from the same period last year.

Lastly, park facilities have begun closing for the season. Albright Visitor Center (Mammoth - open every day of the year with the exception of Thanksgiving Day this year), Old Faithful and Canyon Visitor Education Centers close at 5pm Sunday, November 3.

Park roads close for the season at 8:00 a.m. Monday, November 4, 2019.

Roads are scheduled to reopen to oversnow vehicles (commercially guided tours and visitors with non-commercially guided permits) for the winter on Sunday, December 15th.

2.3 Director/CVB Report - Neala Siegle

She went to the TAC conference on October 7th & 8th and was also informed that Senate Joint 24 will be thoroughly looking at the 7% lodging tax and how it is distributed and spent throughout the state. Glacier Country is representing the Visitor Center industry but if we feel the need Neala can go to Helena and vouch for how our portion of the lodging tax is being spent. She will keep us update to date on any developments.

2.4 Office Manager Report – Terese Petcoff

Terese informed the board that the Picnic table for Joe Gross was purchased and we are awaiting shipment.

She reported that we have disturbed 15,285 visitor guides meaning we have a little less than half left. She will be contacting other winter destinations in Montana to see if any more need to be sent out.

3. Outstanding Business

3.1 2020 Chamber of Commerce Budget

10 min.

Neala and Terese presented a proposal for the 2020 budget to the board. This was only a proposal because we will not know the exact amount of funds the Resort Tax will be contributing until November. The major changes in the budget they added: online subscriptions (Mailchimp, Spotify Premium, and Amazon Prime Business), parking lot maintenance, employee engagement (staff dinners & gift cards), Office Manager, IT services, and direct deposit.

Mike Skelton asked why the Travel Guide Ad Sales were both an income and an expense. This is because part of the Travel Guide is funded by using the state bed tax funds and the Chamber has to reimburse those funds so they items offset each other.

Neala and Terese both asked the board the terms of mortgage and usage of Capital Grant Funds received from the Resort Tax. There was not a consensus from the board on the terms of our mortgage and Terese will be following up with Guardian Title to find an explanation.

3.2 Successful Gardiner Findings

30 min.

Randy from Future West presented the findings from the Successful Gardiner study.

The first phase in Successful Gardiner was learning. In this phase they interviewed community members and compiled data from online surveys to learn what issues Gardiner faces to create a community profile. They found that our top issues were housing, schools, and our operating system.

The next phase was visioning in which they came up with three options for Gardiner. The three options were: 1) Gardiner would continue on the same path, 2) Gardiner would work with the county and county commissioners to enact zoning, 3) Gardiner would incorporate as a municipality. To discuss these ideas and Gardiner issues they held town workshops in May in

which any area resident was invited to attend. To read the full findings from the May workshops click [here](#).

5. Public Comment

5 min.

County Commissioner Bill Berg let the group know that the bison guard before Yankee Jim Canyon is now up. He also reported that Gardiner now can increase the resort tax to 4%. Lastly, he commented on the Successful Gardiner findings urging the group that the time to act is now and not to wait.

6. Date of Next Meeting: November 21, 12pm-1pm