

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, November 21, 2019**
Location: Gardiner Chamber of Commerce
Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Agenda:

1. Chamber Business

1.1. Roll Call & Introductions

*Jeff Guengerich, Trina Smith, Edwin Johnson, Mike Skelton, Leslie Everett, Neli Karamfilova, Kelly Burns, Mike Keller
Phoned in: Anna Holloway*

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

5 min.

Motion to approve made by Trina. Motion seconded by Mike Keller. Motion passes

Due to the large meeting attendance the order of the agenda was changed and is reflected below.

3. Outstanding Business

40 min.

3.1 North Entrance Construction – Superintendent Cam Sholly

Superintendent Cam Sholly first stated there are four housing areas that YNP is focusing 35 million dollars on that they received from the US Interior.

1. Removing sixty-four trailers from the park
2. Improving on trailers
3. Restoring historic housing
4. Adding capacity inside the park. This included adding more in lower Mammoth and exploring the area around the HRC in Gardiner.

He also said that over the next twelve months Northwestern Energy will be working on updating the utility grid. He explained how critical these changes are because in 2018 the park was up 50% in revenue but was still operating with the same number of workforce.

Cam urged everyone to read the [2018 Visitor Use Study](#) because it contains very useful insights for business members especially.

He also explained that the comment period for improving/expanding Wifi connectivity in areas that already have Wifi has opened. He stated that if this is accepted it would not be to the detriment of YNP and they would only be adding equipment to towers that are already in place.

Cam then turned it over to Pat who presented on construction projects and updates. Pat informed us of two completed projects Norris to Golden Gate and the Brink of the Upper Falls. For 2020 he informed us of the following major projects...

- Fishing Bridge to Pelican Creek: Construction in 2020 will replace the Pelican Creek bridge and causeway to allow the wetland and creek to flow freely again. Crews will also put the finishing touches on work that started in 2018 improving the deck, piers, and abutment of Fishing Bridge; add turn lanes to the facilities at Fishing Bridge; construct a larger, improved parking area to the east of the General Store; and widen the road and add/improve pullouts.
- Tower Fall to Chittenden Road: This project will widen the road and provide additional/improved pullouts; create a larger, safer parking area at Tower Fall General Store; and improve the trail and overlook for Tower Fall. This section of road will be closed for 2020 and 2021, however, the public can still access the popular Mt. Washburn Trail by traveling north from Canyon to Chittenden Road.
- Gardiner Gateway Phase 3: This construction will add an additional lane and kiosk to improve traffic flow and reduce lines; replace the existing two buildings with one larger building/station and two kiosks; improve the flow of employee and delivery traffic from Robert Reamer Avenue; improve pedestrian safety by realigning parking along Robert Reamer Avenue; and replace the water line along Robert Reamer Avenue. Funding for this project comes from the Federal Highways Administration, Yellowstone Forever, the National Park Foundation, and fees collected in the park. This project will take place in 2020 and 2021 and visitors should expect delays when entering through Gardiner/the North Entrance.

3.2 Park County Update/Zoning - Park County Commissioners

In attendance were Park County Commissioners Steve Caldwell, Bill Berg, and Clint Tinsley and a representative from the Planning and Development Board for Park County.

Immediately there were questions regarding an article that came out in the Livingston Enterprise on November 11, 2019 regarding Park County's plan to unveil a zoning draft. The Commissioners clarified that they had not yet seen the draft of the proposed zoning and that the draft would be presented to them at 4 pm that day (Thursday, November 21) by the Planning and Development Board of Park County. He then told us about the [Park County Community Decay Regulations Draft](#) that is currently being discussed. He explained that the purpose of this proposal is to help clean up the county from decay that is currently adjacent to or on county property, for example junk vehicles.

At this time the representative from the Planning and Development Board began addressing the public on both the drafts for the decay ordinance and the zoning regulations. He informed us that the job of Park County Planning and Development is to work towards the goals and objectives defined in the [Park County Growth Policy](#), that was adopted in 2016 and updated in 2017, one of the objectives being to, "Complete an infrastructure plan and adopt development standards that under state law provide incentives for planned development in the unincorporated area around Livingston," in which they would "Draft and adopt zoning for the area based on the infrastructure plan amendment." After many questions and discussion with the public the following were the key topics from the conversation.

- *What is the nature of the decay proposal?* In short to help rid the county of “Community Decay” that is defined as a public nuisance as stated in the [Park County Community Decay Regulations Draft](#). This would not include equipment used for agricultural operations such as farming or ranching; or equipment used for persons servicing, manufacturing, or processing materials, goods, or products. The representative from Planning and Development stated that most items that people think of as decay in nature are not.
- *What is the nature of the zoning draft being purposed?* This draft is being purposed to help mitigate land use conflicts in Park County.
- *What is the process of the zoning draft?* Once the draft is proposed to the County Commissioners the board chair will recommend one of two approaches, either a formal or informal process. The representative believed that it would be recommended to have an informal process which he estimated taking at least 6-9 months. During that time the Commissioners would extensively reach out to the public and listen to the citizens to why Park County should or should not adopt zoning.
- *Would the citizens of Gardiner be able to vote?* Initially speaking the citizens of Gardiner would not be able to vote. Under state law this proposal would only be voted on by the County Commissioners, who after hearing from their public would vote on behalf of the citizens. After the vote if the citizens felt that their beliefs were not appropriately voted for, they could petition the county. If the citizens captured enough signatures on the petition it would then go to a referendum and on the ballot for the citizens of Park County to Vote. At this point Commissioner Clint Tinsley added that it is important to consider if this zoning is adopted and there was a referendum held we would also be voting with the citizens of Livingston and not just Gardiner.
Commissioners Bill Berg and Clint Tinsley
- *Between the proposed decay ordinance and zoning draft what is the cost to the tax payers?* The representative from Planning and Development said that he did not believe more money or more staff would be needed to implement either proposal.
- *Would properties be “Grandfathered in” if the draft zoning proposal was voted in?* Yes, whenever there is a zoning law passed all existing buildings and facilities (residential or commercial) are grandfathered in.

To view the Draft Park County Community Decay Regulations click [here](#).

To view the Draft Park County Conflict Mitigation Zoning District Regulations click [here](#).

To view the Draft Park County Conflict Mitigation Zoning District Abstract, District and Regulations click [here](#).

To view the Draft Park County Conflict Mitigation Zoning District Map click [here](#).

3.3 Annual Meeting of the Members (confirm date)

The date for the annual meeting of the members is confirmed as Thursday, January 16, 2020 from 6pm – 8pm set up at 5pm.

2. Committee Updates

10 min.

2.1 Director/CVB Report - Neala Siegle

Neala informed the board that we have a new member, Rosie's Bistro and Pizza.

She also updated us that the memorial picnic table for Joe Gross is being assembled on Friday and will be in Arch Park ready for use.

She reported that the resort tax ask presentation went well and we will know in December if the money we requested on behalf of the Rodeo Club was granted or not. There was also more asks than money available this year.

Neala and Terese prepared the CVB audit and submitted it to Helena. It was finalized with the State on 11/20 and everything is balanced out. They also attended a Yellowstone Country meeting in Columbus on Tuesday, November 19, to present on the 2019 summer visitor center traffic per the grant funding requirements. There was more than 31,000 walk-ins last summer, an all-time record. She also reported that our website traffic is up 55% and we are on target to meet our social media goals for the quarter.

Christmas Stroll planning is underway so don't forget to attend on December 5th.

Lastly, Neala reported that a member of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC), Alger, would like to come to Gardiner and present on the Bison Hunt. She had previously discussed with Jeff and they both agreed that this topic seemed to be a subject that Bear Creek Council would hold a presentation on. The board agreed and Sabina Strauss, a member of Bear Creek Council, said she agreed and that she would like to have this type of function but would need help from the Chamber with advertising. The board agreed to be a connector to inform the public if such event was held. Board member Anna Holloway stated that this may be a good thing for the Gardiner School to be involved with and could tie in to the Indian Education standard. Neala will follow up with Alger with this information.

2.2 Office Manager Report – Terese Petcoff

Terese presented on the building mortgage that was discussed at the last board meeting. She reported that we have a 20-year amortization note with a balloon payment at the end. We can make a lump sum payment up to \$25,000 per year that just goes to the principle of the building. However, there was not a lump sum payment made in either 2017 or 2018 so she has reached out to Jerry Khar to see if we can "play catch up" on those payments, he will be back in touch. Additionally, the interest rate will need to be adjusted by March 1, 2020 to reflect what is set by the Wall Street Journal Prime Rate, Jeff will meet with Jerry in mid-January to finalize this. At this time there was a question with how the balloon payment and interest work with the amortization from Leslie. Terese will be in touch with Guardian Title and update members at the next board meeting.

5. Public Comment

5 min.

Sabina Strauss asked on behalf of Successful Gardiner if the Chamber of Commerce would support their next time in which they would hold a public presentation on the findings from Successful Gardiner. The presentation would be almost identical to what was presented at the last board meeting but Future West would have more options for how to move forward; they also plan to have members from other communities, example Ennis, to come and speak on how incorporation worked in there town, this is not to say that the final recommendation is to incorporate. The board discussed that they would not want it stated that we support/sponsor the meeting but rather word it as "promotional consideration provided by".

6. Date of Next Meeting: December 19, 12pm-1pm