

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, March 17th, 2022 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM**

Location: Gardiner Chamber of Commerce 216 Park St. Gardiner, MT & [Virtual via Zoom](#)

Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Monthly Board of Directors Meeting

Agenda:

1. Chamber Business

1.1 Roll Call & Introductions

Chelsea Deweese, Amanda Hagerty, Debbie Mackey, Sarah Ondrus, Mike Skelton, Trina Smith, and Sabina Strauss

Excused Absences: Mike Keller and Billie Taylor

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

Minutes from February 2022 – Hagerty made a motion to approve the minutes for February 2022, Ondrus seconded the motion. Motion passed.

2. Presentations

2.1 Yellowstone National Park – Mike Tranel, Deputy Superintendent YNP

Housing Update

Tranel spoke to a meeting at the Gardiner school a few days prior where after-school programs and community engagement for the students were discussed. With the information gathered from the meeting and from personal experience, Tranel spoke to the housing issues our community faces emphasizing the importance of affordable family housing, as having more families helps to foster a vibrant community.

Tranel also talked about how the town and local businesses can help to spread school spirit throughout the community to support the students.

2.2 Wild Livelihoods Business Coalition – Cara McGary & Dr. Jeff Reed (20 min)

Presentation and Q&A

Cara McGary and Dr. Jeff Reed gave an informative presentation about Wild Livelihoods Business Coalition explaining the purpose of the organization and its intentions, following the presentation was a Q&A. Below are highlights of the presentation.

- Wild Livelihoods Coalition is a group of business owners around YNP whose livelihoods depend upon wild places.
- They presented various findings on the dollar impact their clients have on the community as a whole.
- The group would like to update past data and gather data regarding how wildlife affects businesses, both consumptive and non-consumptively. Specifically referencing the following efforts and their respective costs:
 - *Aggregation of known data surrounding the impact of wildlife watching in the Northern GYE: \$5,000*
 - *Updating of 2006 Duffield, Neher, and Patterson Study: \$10,000*
 - *Survey of Tourism and Recreation Dependent Businesses in the Northern GYE (Spring/Summer 2022): \$65,000*
 - *Surveyor of Visitors to the Northern GYE (Summer 2023): \$100,000*
- They have been raising money for this data research, and currently have an estimated \$75,000.

- The group requested a letter of support from the Chamber urging Montana FWP to return the wolf hunting/trapping quota in districts 313 & 316 to the previous 2021 quotas.
- The group asked the Chamber to be a fiscal sponsor of the above-mentioned data collection projects, stressing that they are not asking the Chamber & CVB for money but rather asking our organization to be the financial conduit for the projects. Dr. Reed stated that they were not looking for an answer the day of.

Strauss moved to vote to be the financial sponsor for the projects. The Board of Directors discussed the motion and ultimately decided being a financial sponsor needed to be discussed further. There were no votes cast. Motion did not pass.

2.3 Gardiner High School – FFA Chapter (20 min)

Presentation and Q&A

The Gardiner FFA presented on different views surrounding the conversational wildlife topic of Bison Management in the GYE. They are involved in speaking competitions surrounding current agricultural issues and as a requirement, they must present to five different community organizations.

Each student presented a different view, whether they agreed with the view or not, on the topic of the practice of bison culling. They included views from the perspectives of a rancher, a local resident, an indigenous member of a tribe, and several more.

During the Q & A Dr. Reed posed the question *“If I were to give you a billion dollars, how would you use the money to solve this issue?”* to the students. One student replied that she didn’t think that the issue had anything to do with money and that she would try getting everyone together in one big room and not letting anyone leave until they came to an agreement.

The students did very well and were complimented by many meeting attendees.

3. Committee Updates

3.1 Mary Wilson – Yellowstone NPS

Wilson was unable to present due to time constraints

3.2 Mike Thom – USFS

Thom expressed that the USFS is gearing up for this spring/summer season with 13 incoming seasonal staff arriving in May. He updated the Board that reservations at Eagle Creek Campground are going well. He stated that the USFS Gardiner District just signed a comprehensive 20-year plan. Regarding upcoming projects they will begin rehabilitating the ponds at Slip N Slide Creek into wetlands in August/September and have a project with the National Park Service on cutthroat trout.

3.3 Terese Petcoff – Director’s Report

Petcoff attended the same meeting at the Gardiner school as Tranel. She brought up the topic of having a section of the weekly newsletter dedicated to the school that would help with community engagement and highlight school accomplishments. The school would be responsible for supplying the content and ad sizing is to be done on a weekly basis.

Since sponsoring ad space for community entities has been approved by the Chamber before, Petcoff asked, on behalf of the Gardiner Public School System, that the Board allot an up to one full-page ad for the Gardiner Public Schools in the weekly Gardiner Community Newsletter indefinitely.

Ondrus made the motion to sponsor up to one full page of ad space in the Gardiner Community Newsletter for the Gardiner Public School system. Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Petcoff suggested that the school have a spirit week the week of prom and that local businesses participate by decorating for it.

Petcoff also spoke to an email from Park County who would like to install a discreet bench at Confluence Park asking for feedback from the Board. The bench was discussed and the only concern mentioned was the possibility of individuals carving on the bench. The board was overall supportive of the idea.

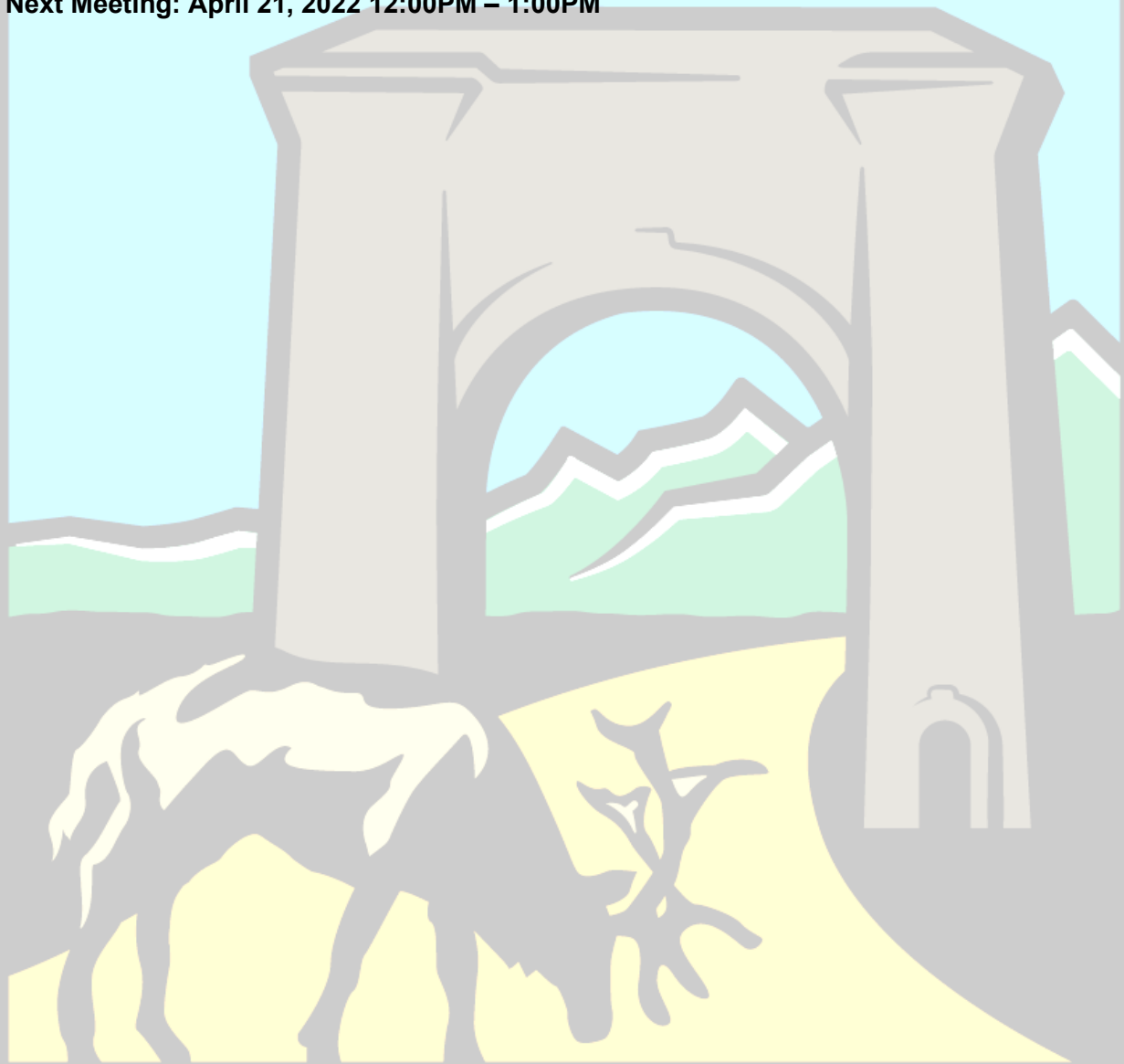
4. Outstanding Business

4.1 Sesquicentennial

5. New Business

6. Public Comment

Date of Next Meeting: April 21, 2022 12:00PM – 1:00PM



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