



Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

216 Park Street P.O. Box 81
Gardiner MT 59030-0081

406-848-7971
executivedirector@gardinerchamber.com

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

Meeting date: **Thursday, August 18th, 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

All meetings are recorded and available upon request by emailing

executivedirector@gardinerchamber.com.

Agenda:

1. Chamber Business

1.1 Roll Call & Introductions

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

Absent: Amanda Hagerty, Billie Taylor

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

Sarah Ondrus moved to approve.

Strauss seconded. Minutes from August 2022 pass.

2. Committee Updates

2.1 Mary Wilson – Yellowstone National Park Service – Not present, Petcoff shared updates on her behalf.

Petcoff shared the list of events for *Yellowstone Revealed* on behalf of Mary Wilson.

Skelton shared that NPS has restricted parking at Madison and communicated that the Old Gardiner Road will be open to the public on October 15th and they are still determining if there will be length restrictions. Keller shared that the road will now end at the east side of the justice center. He also reiterated that visitor traffic will be allowed in full once the road opens on October 15.

Sabina asked if the CVB were to market for summer 2023 when would they do so. Petcoff shared that while the CVB has typically never marketed for the summer season, if they were to do so it would probably begin in March/April as that is when visitors begin calling inquiring about summer.

2.2 Mike Thom – US Forest Service

Thom shared that the Forest Service is still working on and evaluating river access sites that were compromised due to the June flooding.

Campgrounds are open and quiet. The busiest weekend was Brewfest when Mammoth folks and outside visitors came to visit.

Thom shared they have \$25 million in flood related damage requests, mostly on the Red Lodge side.

The Cutler Sphinx connector trail was completed in mid-August. The trailhead is located just south of Cutler Lake on the Old Yellowstone Trail S. This is a mountain bike loop that will total 10 miles if you connect back up the Old Yellowstone Trail S to the trailhead.

They are looking forward to OTO open house. There has been some good publicity on that, and it'd be great to see folks up there.

Ondrus asked if this would be an annual thing to which Thom replied they aren't there yet.

Skelton mentioned that there would be a community call on August 31st, from 2-2:30pm.

2.1 Terese Petcoff – Director's Report

Petcoff followed up on an email from Deweese regarding the Bozeman Airport staff community that Gardiner is closed to visitors. She stated that she and Skelton had tracked down and moving forward the issues should be resolved

Petcoff communicated that NPS may be utilizing rodeo grounds for NPS staff parking.

The Old Saloon is giving guests free concert tickets if they are staying in Gardiner, including the concert in Arch Park. Petcoff shared that parking was offered at the rodeo grounds. Skelton said that the production company would need to name the Chamber as insured for no less than \$500,000 if they would like to utilize the grounds.

Petcoff submitted a proposal for additional funding from the department of commerce for an additional 15K. She presented an expanded budget for the funds. The present board members voted. Ondrus motioned to approve. Keller seconded. Deweese abstained from voting. The new budget was approved.

Petcoff has partnered with the Livingston CVB on a **Pick your Path to Paradise** promotion with a tagline of **play today, invest in tomorrow**. There is a website, social media posts (paid and non-paid), itineraries, and posters being distributed.

Petcoff proposed a payment plan option for members who may need it for yearly membership fees. Petcoff will send a modified version of the payment plan option that was approved for COVID-19 to the Board to be voted on via email.

The Chamber will be moving forward with the free Meridian Trust membership.

Petcoff shared an email that she received from Robin Hoover with Yellowstone Country Tourism who is encouraging folks to contact Scott Osterman with the Department of Commerce, the Director, and/or the Governor's office directly regarding the flood impact. Stating that if they don't hear from businesses directly, they may have an erroneous perception that the region is recovering well without state assistance. Petcoff is continuing to share survey results and will provide contact information for those mentioned in an eblast to the membership.

An Assistant Professor at Baylor University in Texas contacted Petcoff about a gateway community study called the 2022 Yellowstone Flood evaluating national parks critical infrastructure to the US eco-tourism economy. They will be here the week of September 12th-16th. They want to interview business and have provided a questionnaire. They are seeking a letter of support and participation in an F4R, which is a community resilience one day workshop to pinpoint areas that need work in the community. This is a scientific study and will be published.

2.2 Tracey Sutton – Office Manager's Report

Visitation to the Chamber in August 2021 was 8,900. So far for August 2022 we have had about 2,800 visitors, with ten days left in the month. In 2021, July was the busiest month. She shared that most visitors seem to be Montana locals wanting to support Gardiner.

Sutton encouraged the board to check out the new flags in front of the Chamber as well as new toilet paper dispensers in the public restrooms.

Skelton mentioned that he would like to do an experiment by closing the vestibule door to get a more accurate count of visitors coming into the Chamber that strictly use the restrooms as opposed to the just the Visitor's Center or both.

3. Outstanding Business

3.1 Sesquicentennial

No discussion

4. New Business

4.1 Flood Incident & Recovery

Keller shared that there has been renewed interest in plowing the plug this winter. He said that it will be plowed this winter and there is dialog about being open for the long term.

Strauss brought up that we would then lose our designation as the only year-round entrance.

Petcoff shared that the last marketing study revealed that being the only year-round entrance was not as exciting to folks as you would think.

Keller mentioned that Travel Wyoming will be putting forth dollars to promote Yellowstone's Northern Range of Lamar Valley and Mammoth region.

5. Public Comment

Skelton said that the Chamber would be moving \$5,000 from the Chamber's Savings Account into a CD through Edward Jones, 9 months at 2.85% interest, or could be 12 months for over 3% interest.

Skelton also reminded the Board that at the end of the year terms are up for himself, Strauss, Mackey, Hagerty, & Deweese, however, they are all eligible for another term.

Edwin Johnson, the owner of Montana Guide Service, shared an idea of having a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the old road opening. Petcoff will inquire about this possibility with Bethany Gassman. Additionally, Johnson spoke to holding a candidate forum like has been done in the past for those running for political office. There was discussion amongst the Board that this is typically an event that GGCC is the host of, however, if there is such an event held Petcoff will share this information with members.

Gina Knight, owner of 406 Lodge, shared that a guide company that many of her guests utilize was not able to gain access to the north entrance to come to Gardiner and therefore cancelled multiple nights in at her property. Skelton urged her to have the guide company reach out to the CUA office within YNP who would be able to assist as they have been very supportive in assisting Gardiner lodging properties.

Date of Next Meeting: September 15, 2022, 12:00PM – 1:00PM
Keller motioned to adjourn. Ondrus Seconded. Meeting adjourned