

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, August 20th, 2020 from 12:00pm – 1:00pm**

Location: Zoom meeting

Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Agenda:

1. Chamber Business

1.1 Roll Call & Introductions *Jeff Guengerich, Edwin Johnson, Kelly Burns, Sarah Ondrus, Trina Smith, Mike Keller, Mike Skelton, Alex Roberts, Leslie Everett*

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

Per the recommendations from the June board meeting, edits were made to the May minutes to which the board gave unanimous approval.

Leslie Everett recommended edits to the June minutes regarding the Yellowstone Forever discussion. The edits will be addressed and sent to the board via email for approval.

2. US Forest Service – Mike Thom – USFS

10 min.

2.1 The culvert work at Eagle Creek should be complete this week. The road will be resurfaced next week. Pending work will occur on the culvert above the campground.

The district has newly acquired property on which they will begin to do aquatic invasive species mitigation. The Slip & Slide land has ponds in which an invasive species has been identified. The district will release a video that will explain the mitigation process. The road to the ponds that has been closed to vehicles will open to allow easier access to the ponds so the public can fish out the rainbow trout that currently inhabit the ponds. The district is hoping that these fish can be removed by anglers so there is less waste.

Thom noted that they have appreciated the Chamber's communications regarding dispersed camping in response to problematic camping behavior that has been seen in the district this summer season. Behavior has since improved with these communications as well as having a sheriff deputy patrol the Eagle Creek and Jardine areas in the evening.

Fire danger is now Very High in the area. There have been reports that Red Lodge is seeing negligent behavior in their area. We are seeing such behavior yet here in Gardiner.

The Carbella boat ramp will undergo reconstruction starting September 13th and will have to close for the season from that time forward.

2.2 Yellowstone NPS – National Park Service

Mary Wilson was unavailable. Hopeful to present at meeting in September.

3. Committee Updates

10 min.

3.1 Office Manager Report – Sara Fleming

Fleming opened the report with presenting two options for an automatic lock installation for the vestibule door of the Visitor Center. This is for the purpose of abiding by the State issued guidance to have public facilities closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fleming presented the board with two installation estimates for hardware for which the board requested further information. The questions posed were regarding how the hardware would work in the instance of a power outage and if the optional remote access could be clearly defined. Fleming will clarify those details and present them to the board in an email. The board determined that approval could be completed via email later.

The Chamber was able to purchase 10,000 masks through the second round of the Business Adaptability Grant and Fleming provided an update on plans to distribute the masks to Chamber members.

3.2 Director/CVB Report – Terese Petcoff

30 min.

Petcoff started her report with an update on new chamber members: Walking Shadow Ecology and Big Sky Ebike Tours.

The Chamber received a letter from Guardian Title Bank regarding an account transfer. The account will be transferred to Bank of the Rockies.

We received a letter requesting our endorsement for the Headwaters Act for the Yellowstone River. The board did not pursue discussion of endorsement.

Petcoff reminded the board that Park County Health Department is conducting Surveillance Testing for asymptomatic individuals at Yellowstone Forever. Park County has noted that attendance has dropped in the last few weeks.

The Rodeo Grounds have continued to see the problematic issue of vehicles being abandoned. Some of vehicles have been removed but we are still seeing that vehicles remain. Discussion involved exploring options for getting vehicles removed but no decisions were made. Petcoff encouraged the Board to provide any suggestions and guidance for how to resolve the issue.

The Updated Gardiner Walking Map has been distributed to chamber members and have received great reviews from members and visitors.

CVB Updates

The Gardiner Chamber ran a Summer Landing Page for what is open for business as the summer season began. The results did not meet our expectations for performance and did not have the same results as the landing page we launched in the Spring. With the summer landing page, it seemed that adventure pictures performed the best. The demographic analytics also suggested that States hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic provided the most traffic to the landing page.

A new joint venture opportunity came up with Yellowstone Country for the cost of \$1,500.00 to promote the Winter Season in Gardiner. We are intending on promoting cross-country skiing alongside four other CVB's in the region. The Board recommended to wait to sign off on the venture until there is confirmation for what Delaware North is planning on for winter operations.

The board asked how the deferred membership problem the chamber was facing in June. Petcoff updated the Board with the good news that all but five of the members with deferred payments have since caught up or have signed up for payment plans.

Maternity Discussion

Petcoff presented the executive committee with a maternity plan proposal. The executive committee wants to define the language of the plan so that it can be used for the future within the chamber while also being specific to Terese's needs. The board also asked if the chamber is open to having volunteers while Terese is on maternity leave to assist Fleming while we are short-staffed. Petcoff stated that seeking volunteers is something the staff will likely pursue.

Montana Safety Grant Discussion

The state of Montana through the federal CAREs Act will be distributing a total of \$33,850 to disperse COVID-19 Safety Messaging. Petcoff explained that the chamber has already begun the spending and allocating of these dollars in the same manners that other CVB's have due to the short timeline of the grant and made the board abreast of the ways the chamber is seeking to disseminate safety messaging. She also noted that this grant can be allocated towards administrative time for developing and disseminating the messaging.

Gardiner Chamber Bylaws

Petcoff reopened the discussion for amending the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws that was discussed at the February Board Meeting. The board intended on completing and voting on the amendments in the September meeting. The meeting will require 10 directors and members to be in attendance and she will include that in the Monthly Member Update for next month. Skelton noted that Article 10 of the Bylaws should be rescinded and not amended, and that action should be included in the monthly member update. Petcoff will have to give notice for the edits being made.

5. Public Comment

15 min.

Joe Gross Memorial Bench

Board members inquired about the bench dedicated to Joe Gross and if the plaque for that still needs to be installed. Leslie Everett volunteered to offer her services to have YF maintenance staff install the plaque.

Successful Gardiner Update

They are following the example of the model of West Yellowstone for moving forward with creating a neighborhood plan. This plan will need to be reformatted to work for Gardiner and will be shared with the community when it's ready.

Census Discussion

A U.S. Census staff person discussed that Gardiner participation is exceedingly lacking for the current census and started the value and importance to encourage more participation. Discussion and exploration for how to encourage engagement was explored and included the possibility of having a census staff person set up a table outside the Chamber building.

6. Date of Next Meeting: September 17, 2020 12pm – 1pm.

Meeting was adjourned.