

# 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, September 19, 2019**

Location: Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Meeting

## **Agenda:**

### **1. Chamber Business**

#### **1.1. Roll Call & Introductions**

*Jeff Guengerich, Anna Holloway, Edwin Johnson, Mike Skelton, Leslie Everett (via phone), Kelly Burns*

*Excused Absent: Neli Karamfilova, Mike Keller, Trina Smith*

#### **1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes**

**5 min.**

Mike Skelton has revision in section 3.2, change October Board Meeting to October Open house. Once change is made *Mike Skelton motions to approve. Kelly Burns seconds. Motion passes.*

## **2. Committee Updates**

### **2.1 US Forest Service - Mike Thom- USFS**

**15 min.**

Mike was not present but Neala reported on his behalf. The main message is that the 2019 hunting season is starting. First he wanted to highlight to remind hunters of the Custer Gallatin Food Storage order, and the importance and need for proper attractant storage. Secondly, hunters are reminded of the Motor Vehicle Use maps available at the FS office depicting the legally open motorized trails and roads. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, they will be closing Bald Mountain Road, Bear Fork Road near Timber Camp CG, and the upper Eagle Creek/Pole Creek road systems. The reason for these closures is to provide some elk security during the hunting season.

Eagle Creek, Canyon, and Tom Miner Campgrounds are still open. Our host at Eagle Creek is onsite, and has shared that the CG has been full for the last week. Though it is September it ahs not slowed down. The Forest Service will be installing a foot bridge across Bear Creek in early to mid-October. The bridge is right at the Bear Creek campground on the Bear Creek Trail #364. The bridge will be for foot and bicycle traffic only. Horses will still have a ford through the creek. This will be a great improvement from the existing conditions.

## **2.2 Yellowstone NPS - Mary Wilson- National Park Service**

Yellowstone visitor stats for August were released and YNP was up .74% from August 2018. Overall the park is down .69% from 2018.

NPS from Yellowstone, Glacier, and Grand Teton just released that Electric Bikes will not be allowed where ever normal bicycles are able to travel.

Yellowstone Science the Vital edition will soon be available. It will highlight the most current science in the park from wildlife to vegetation, as well as many other areas.

There are currently four fires in the park with very little activity but they are not completely out.

Wednesdays Yellowstone National Park Facebook is doing "What We Do Wenesdays", this will highlight jobs through out Yellowstone, and show the public what it takes to run this national park.

Steamboat Geyser's last eruption was Tuesday September 17 at 11:42 PM. Remember to remind guests that if you are in the area when the geyser erupts there is a strong possibility of car damage. The Park has also posted signs in the parking lot of Norris to remind visitors. Terese and Neala let Mary know that they had to call the Park because of some close elk encounters. Mary will be looking into getting signs for this area reminding visitors to not approach wildlife.

## **2.3 Director/CVB Report - Neala Siegle**

The Gardiner Visitor Center was up by 74% compared to last August. The reason for such an increase is in part because this is the first time we are able to count after hours vestibule visitors, and this is the first full month of our door counters. Terese added that Nightly visitors range from 26 to 140, but are typically around 50 visitors. This past weekend September 14 and 15 was the first weekend there was no staff and there were 516 vestibule visitors

The top geo locations from our visitors log were WA, IL, FL, PA CA; Canada, Australia, UK

The fall display ads promotional campaign just finished. The campaign resulted in 650K impressions and more than 12,000 clicks to our website. The best performing group was our remarketing list, or people who had already visited our website (3,000 clicks). The second best performing group was a custom audience that was created around people searching for places to stay in West Yellowstone. Traffic was overwhelmingly younger, affluent males in the 25-34 age bracket.

Yellowstone Country will be hosting a press trip at the end of September. They're bringing in a blogger with impressive reach to Gardiner. Neala is working on figuring out meals, lodging and activities for this blogger. This will hopefully promote the Gardiner fall season.

At the end of the month we will be moving into winter promotional campaign. This campaign will include: another Google display ads campaign targeting snowbound travelers with an emphasis on folks who have already visited our website or who are searching for lodging in West. Additionally, it will include: monthly to twice monthly blog posts on things to do in winter, a custom content piece in the winter digital magazine of *Outside Bozeman*, a winter display ad

campaign on Tripadvisor – 4 banners total, and winter social media posts including repurposed blog posts and video.

The Resort Tax grant application is nearly complete and is due at the end of October. Once the rodeo club's financials are in Neala will move forward.

The required FY19 grant reporting for last year's marketing grant is almost complete. This is due by January 1 and the state is happy we are ahead of schedule.

The Childcare Focus Group was held Wednesday September 18 and it brought to light some important issues. Childcare Connections will take it from here and they plan to connect with Little People Learning Center, Snoopy School, Gardiner Public Schools, and the North Yellowstone Education Foundation for a follow-up meeting.

Neala would like to propose a change in office hours starting November 1 to March 31 – 8 am to 4 pm. Board agrees but wants to monitor this change and take feedback from public if there is any concern through out these months. The change in hours will be posted in the Chamber of Commerce, an ad will be ran in the Community Newsletter, included in the monthly member update, and posted on the Gardiner Chamber of Commerce Facebook Group.

#### **2.4 Office Manager Report – Terese Petcoff**

As the end of the season approaches there are still hotels in need of the Gardiner Visitor Guide. This past week there were 10 boxes dropped off between 4 hotels.

A couple members suggested that we should offer bathroom advertising. We plan to move forward with this idea and purchase some displays in the future. We will keep members posted on this advertising opportunity.

### **3. Outstanding Business**

**20 min.**

#### **3.1 Picnic tables for Joe Gross Memorial**

The board decided on a table and Neala will contact the Park County Parks Department about putting it in Arch Park. Terese and Neala will also contact Personalized in Bozeman about a plaque.

#### **3.2 Upcoming Events – Xmas Stroll + Member Meeting**

The next Member Open House will be October 17 starting at 5:30 pm. This will be directly following the board meeting from 4 – 5 pm.

There is currently no set time for the Christmas stroll but Neala will be in touch with Carol Kellem, who has helped organize the event in the past. The group agreed this will be a good event for the Chamber to help out more with coordination to make sure it continues to be a strong winter event for Gardiner. Neala will look up the email list from last year to get in contact with all the businesses who plan to participate. The Chamber will make the passports again this year and be in charge of the Christmas poster. The Chamber will run an ad in the newsletter for Christmas Stroll poster designs earlier than in previous years in hopes for more entries.

#### **3.3 Properties and Facilities Check-In**

Terese reported that this summer the toilet paper supply had to be increased because there were multiple times that we ran out. We will need to keep this in mind in future summers. Recently there have been two occasions that a "Rodeo Grounds Use Permit" was needed. There is now one created and it is in the Properties and Facilities binder.

There is not a set date for the building siding to be updated but it will be in October.

Renewed the Assumed Business Name (ABN) of "Gardiner Resort Area Visitor Center and Public Restroom Facility" on Tuesday set to Expire November 26, 2019. Will have to be renewed in 5 years.

## **5. Public Comment**

**5 min.**

Anna reported that NYEF would like to know if the Chamber would donate newsletter credit for their Festival of Trees event. It was discussed to do a trade with them for a Christmas Tree and Anna will be follow up. The Chamber will also be decorating a tree for the Festival of Trees event this year.

Dennis McIntosh informed us that the Montana Association of Planners will be holding a conference on Wednesday, September 25 at Chico. They chose the Gateway Project as an area to highlight, and will visiting Gardiner and the Chamber of Commerce on that day from 10 – 11 am. Additionally, Dennis attended the Urban Housing Round Table at Mountain Sky Guest Ranch. There were multiple counties represented as well as major employers in the area to discuss the ongoing housing issues the communities are experiencing. Dennis stated his main take away from the meeting was that the HRDC can do the most for the Gardiner Community.

Meeting adjourned at 1:03pm

**6. Date of Next Meeting: October 17, 4pm-5pm**