

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 21st, 2023 from 12:00 PM to 1:30 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, Brian Koski, Debbie Mackey, Sarah Ondrus, Mike Skelton, and Billie Taylor

Excused Absence: Mike Keller

Unexcused Absence: Trina Smith

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

Mackey proposed a correction to reflect that debris from a gravel truck struck her in the face while she was driving past an oncoming gravel truck, not that her windshield was damaged by the debris.

Hagerty motioned to approve the minutes from August 2023 as amended. Ondrus seconded. 6 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 0 abstentions. Motion approved.

2. Guest Presenters

2.1 Dean Williamson – HRDC, Economic Development Director District IX

HRDC Gardiner Community Needs Assessment results

Williamson presented page-by-page on the Gardiner Specific results from the HRDC 2022 Community Needs Assessment. The report in its entirety can be found online at https://thehrdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2022_HRDC-Community-Needs-Assessment.pdf

Highlights from the report include:

Gardiner residents ranked housing, childcare, and mental healthcare as the top three needs in the community. From the report: "Gardiner residents ranked a lack of sense of community as a higher need at both the individual and community levels compared to any other location. Survey respondents also highlighted the concern of outside entities buying up significant plots of land and too many vacation rentals as the primary issues in inflated housing costs. Public safety was also a unique top rated need at both the community and individual level, which could be attributed to the flooding events occurring in Gardiner months before the survey was released. Childcare shortages and significant drops in school enrollment were another concern raised by Gardiner residents, with a fear that if affordable housing and cost of living is not addressed, families will continue to vacate the area and school enrollment could drop even further."

2.2 Morgan Jacobsen – Montana FWP, Community & Education Program Manager

Montana Conservation License: General Updates and Q&A

Jacobsen presented about the new Montana Conservation License process and its history. Beginning July 1, 2023, everyone ages 12 and older needs a Montana Conservation License to access most state lands. This includes all types of recreation – launching watercraft, hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, etc. Information including FAQs can be found online at <https://fwp.mt.gov/buyandapply/conservation-license>.

Questions:

Skelton asked if the raft companies need conservation licenses for raft guides and customers?

Jacobsen responded yes, if they're accessing fishing access sites (FAS), wildlife management areas (WMA), or wildlife habitat protection areas (WHPA).

Deweese asked what information is required for the licenses and can guides fill out the licenses for the customers. Jacobsen responded no, guides cannot fill them out for customers because of the sensitive information required- social security number, etc.

Skelton asked if you need a license if your recreation takes you from non-licensed land through land needing a license and back to land not needing a license, do you still need a conservation license? Jacobsen responded, yes, you need the license if you traverse state trust land (MT FWP operated land) in any way.

Mackey asked what the process would be like for raft companies - if there is a streamlined way to do that? Jacobsen suggests encouraging clients to purchase the license prior to the trip. Another possibility would be for raft companies and other outfitters to become a vendor and sell the conservation licenses.

Member of the public Sabina Strauss asked if you need to purchase a conservation license if you're already paying a campground fee. Jacobsen, yes, for campgrounds located in areas needing a conservation license, the camping fee does not cover the license. The license is separate from camping.

3. Committee Updates

3.1 Mary Wilson– Yellowstone NPS

Christina White also attended and spoke on behalf of Yellowstone National Park

The Mammoth Campground will remain closed through 2023.

The elk rut is in full swing, follow ranger instructions and encourage visitors to do so as well.

Skelton asked why the boardwalk at Mound Terrace is still closed. Wilson said there are still concerns with its safety.

Skelton asked why the restrooms at the Tower General Store are closed while the store is open. Wilson will look into it.

Deweese, from the hotel perspective, asked that White and others do anything possible to keep the park open if the government shutdown occurs. White responded that that decision isn't made locally.

3.2 Tim Schumacher and Mike Thom – USFS

Various Forest Service road closures start on October 15th.

The Slip & Slide area project is wrapping up.

It was another good season at the OTO. True Ranch Collection removed all their additions. The question moving forward is how do we utilize the OTO Ranch based on what we've learned so far?

3.3 Terese Petcoff – Director's Report

Petcoff spoke to a recent County Commissioners meeting in which the process of filling the vacant Park County District 2 Commissioner seat was and other items concerning Gardiner were discussed.

She highlighted the following ad ran in the Gardiner Community Newsletter:

- Notice is hereby given that in Park County, on October 26, 2023 at 9:00 am a meeting will be held in the Community Room at 414 East Callender Street, Livingston, MT 59047 for the following purpose: to appoint an interim Park County Commissioner in District 2. Pursuant to 7-4-2106, the remaining county commissioners shall fill the vacancy and the appointee shall hold office until the next general election. The appointee will serve until the end of the current Commissioner's term; December 31st, 2024. 7-4-2106 (2)(b); the remaining commissioners shall invite applications for the vacancy in a notice published as provided in 13- 1-108 and shall accept an application from any person who has lived in the unrepresented district for at least 2

years immediately preceding the day the vacancy occurs. The remaining commissioners shall appoint one of these applicants to fill the vacancy. The application is available in the Park County Clerk and Recorder's Office and online at jobs.parkcounty.org. Applications can be submitted in person or by mail to the Clerk and Recorder's Office at 414 East Callender Street, Livingston, MT 59047. Applications will also be accepted by email to: elections@parkcounty.org. The deadline to apply for the position is 5:00 pm on Friday, October 13th, 2023. DATED this 18th day of September, 2023. Maritza H. Reddington, Park County Election Administrator (406) 222-4110.

- She noted that the meeting touched on the problems on Fifth Street in Gardiner including:
 - o The county has been to Gardiner twice to grade the road and cannot get through
 - o Each time they have tried there are too many cars to tow, the County

Petcoff also touched on previous effort by residents to encourage moving cars to allow for work on fifth street: door signs etc.

Petcoff noted that the North Entrance Road issue with Apple Maps is seemingly resolved.

Petcoff stated the following plans for the Chambers Resort Tax requests for the 2024 funding cycle.

- o Inverter for upstairs conference room
- o Updated signage for the building – could potentially be supplemented with funding from the CVB
- o Continued servicing of trash containers
- o Snow Removal on Gardiner Sidewalks
- o Restroom Updates
 - New gender-neutral restroom toilet
 - Potential replacement for urinal in men's restroom
 - Changing tables added to both men's and women's restroom

Petcoff discussed the plans for Snow Removal on Gardiner Sidewalks more in depth with the Board. Highlights included: proposed areas for plowing, that a contractor had agreed to the servicing if the ask were approved, and provided history on the current MOU between the county and the Montana Department of Transportation. After feedback from the Board it was decided that Petcoff would follow up via email regarding the proposed ask as well as expand the potential ask to include all sidewalks in Gardiner.

3.3 Maria Koppelberger – Operations Manager's Report

VIC

Hotels in the area are filling up, with overall higher occupancy in hotels than earlier this summer. Last week there were a few days with hotels almost completely full- 1-2 rooms available in total from participating hotels.

The VIC has been doing well selling the America the Beautiful annual passes. We purchased 26 passes on August 21st and we have 3 left with more on the way.

Property and Facilities

Fireplace – Chimney sweep is cleaning on Wednesday, Sept 27th.

Koppelberger stopped in at the county health department for Narcan and COVID tests to have on hand and also to give away. We also have plenty of masks here at the Chamber. Let her know if you'd like any of those supplies for your business. In addition, anyone can stop in at the health department in Livingston at the City/County Complex to pick up the mentioned items.

4. Outstanding Business

None

5. New Business

None

6. Public Comment

None

Deweese motioned to adjourn the meeting. Koski seconded. 6 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 0 abstentions. Motion approved.

Date of Next Meeting: October 19th, 2023, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM