

Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

Meeting date: **Wednesday, April 18, 2012** Started: **12:00 PM** Ended: **1:11 PM**

Location: Community Center Board Room

Purpose/Notes: Regular scheduled meeting

Chaired by: Daniel Bierschwale

Minutes rec. by: Gardiner Chamber

Attendance:

Present: Elizabeth Baker, Bill Berg, Daniel Bierschwale, Gardiner Chamber, Chuck Curtis, Scott Demaree, Elk River Lodge, Kim Kaiser, Kellem's Montana Saddlery, MacNeil Lyons, Jean Modesette, Outwest T's, Rocky Mountain RV Park&Lodging LLC, Barbara Shesky, Sabina Strauss, Brian Suderman, Upper Yellowstone Roundup Assoc., Ker'en Walters

Regrets:

Absent: Above the Rest Lodge, Absaroka Knoll Construction, Absaroka Lodge, Adventure Yellowstone Inc, Bear Lair Lodge, Big Wild Adventures, Cabin By The River, CCC Salon, Child Care Connections, Comfort Inn- Yellowstone North, Crevice Mountain Lodge, Diamond Bar Heart Guest Ranch, Diamond Heart Guest Ranch, E.L.K., Inc, Elk River Art Gallery and Studio, Entre Nous, ERA Landmark Western Land, Family Massage Care, Flying Pig Camp Store and Rafting, Gardiner Laundry, Gardiner Pharmacy/Yellowstone Perk, Gardiner Therapeutic, Gateway Hose Company, Gold Strike Gifts, Graybeal's All Service, Greater Gardiner Community Council, Gail Habener, Headwaters of the Yellowstone B&B, Hell's A Roarin' Outfitters, Hillcrest Cottages, Home On The Range, Johnstad's B&B and Log Cabin, Gina Knight, Kremer's Cenex, Little People's Learning Center, Chris Lyness, Medcor Inc at Yellowstone, Montana Buffalo Company, Montana Whitewater Rafting&Zipline, Mountain Mobile Auto Glass, North Entrance Shopping - Food Farm, North Entrance Washtub, Richard Parks, Riverside Cottages, Smith Family Ranch, Stafford Animal Shelter, Story Distributing, The Silvertip, The Town Cafe, The Wildside Tours and Treks, Wild West Rafting, Wild West Vacations and Travel, Xanterra, Yellowstone Association, Yellowstone Country, Yellowstone Federal Credit Union, Yellowstone Gallery & Frameworks, Yellowstone Gateway Inn, Yellowstone General Stores, Yellowstone Mine, Yellowstone Park Riverfront Cabins, Yellowstone Park Travel Lodge, Yellowstone River Motel, Yellowstone Suites B&B, Yellowstone Super 8 Motel, Yellowstone Wilderness Outfitters, Yellowstone Yoga

Late: Anna Holloway, Cheryl Hoppe

Guests:

Joe Gross (present)

Meeting Documents:

(no documents)

Meeting Minutes:

1. Chamber Business

1.1. Call to Order

Gardiner Chamber

Roll Call: Gina Knight excused. All other Board Members were in attendance.

Status: Completed

1.2. Treasurer's Report

Ker'en Walters

Bank accounts are up by \$6+K compared to last year.

Quarterly Taxes - FILED

MT Annual Report - FILED

IRS Form 990-N - FILED

We are 6k over last years numbers, taxes are filed,we have met our goal of 25k in membership renewals

Report:

Status: Completed

1.3. Secretary's Report

Barbara Shesky

This March has been very quiet, we had fewer walk-ins phone calls and info pack requests than last year. Newsletter income shows that it is down as compared to last year. One explanation could be the number of members utilizing their credits. We have begun recording monthly website visits, we cannot compare them to last year as we are using a new program that tracks differently.

Report:

Status: Completed

1.4. Meeting Minutes

Daniel Bierschwale

March 21st, 2012

Resolution #: 041812-1

Moved by: Sabina Strauss

Seconded by: Chuck Curtis

Status: Carried

Vote: All in favor

Report:

Motion carried minutes approved.

2. Old business

No Old business

3. New business

3.1. MT Governor's Conference Update

Ker'en Walters

Review of Montana Governor's Conference

It was a great benefit to attend the conference, we garnered a lot of useful information and were able to network with a number of different agencies. See handouts for details.

Highlights: We learned about a website from ITRR which tracks travel through Montana. We learned that the average guest stay is 5.5 days, over 50% of those went hiking and/or wildlife watching as well as taking scenic drives. 51% are entering Montana for the first time through Gardiner from the Park. A large number of our travelers are driving as opposed to flying into the state. We encourage anyone who owns a lodging facility to utilize this site, to help their business, as well as, help create the database.

Also, The Federal Department of Commerce has initiated "Brand USA" in order to promote America as an International Tourism destination. The USA has fallen way behind in promoting the United States on an International level. The Board of Directors is a volunteer board with members from across the country. The speaker at the conference was Barbara Cook, from Wyoming.

The Brand USA site will not officially launch until after the PowWow.. There are marketing opportunities that will become available to us.

The Montana Office of Tourism was able to get Governor Schweitzer to veto HB 316-317 which would have taken away the 4% of the bed tax collected that is designated for promoting tourism in the state and add the monies to the general fund. Those coffers are already in the black and well padded as compared to the coffers of other states. For every 1\$ spent on tourism promotion, \$157 comes back into the state through visitor spending. this also reduces individual tax payer debt. It is very important to keep an eye on this situation as it will probably come up again and keep our officials aware of the need to promote tourism in the state. If we did not have these funds from the bed tax going into promotion and staffing we would not have

received the grant monies for the map project or additional staffing at the Chamber office in the summer seasons.

In closing, we believe that it is very important for us to represent Gardiner at these types of events in order for us to be aware of what is going on in our state and with the tourism industry that this town relies so heavily upon.

Report:

Status: Completed

4. Committee Business

4.1. Rodeo Club

Upper Yellowstone Roundup
Assoc.

The Rodeo will be held Friday and Saturday June 16th and 17th this year. the rodeo will start at 5pm, the gates will open up at 4:30pm. They are still waiting to hear from the stock contractor.

The parade on Saturday starts at 2pm, line up will begin at 1pm.

This year the rodeo has joined with "Tough Enough to Wear Pink". They were approached by the NRA president late last year in regards to this fundraiser for those who have cancer. They accepted because there have been so many local residents who have had to fight the disease. The club will be selling pink items such as jelly bracelets with the slogan at the rodeo and T-shirts will be available for sale as well. All monies collected will be held in a fund to be used by Gardiner residents only!

For the barrel races the barrels will have bright pink covers. Local businesses can buy program ads and also do monetary donations to the fund. If a business donates then they will receive a sign to put in their window to let people know that they contributed. There will also be a survivors memorial page anyone can donate \$1 for this too.

They are also in the process of trying to figure out a contest for businesses in which the business that collects the most donations receives a prize.

There will be an official NRA photographer on site so they want to get everyone involved to wear pink that day.

They will advertise other goings on in town on their posters that are for the Southwest Rodeo Queen.

We should link facebook pages.

FYI the program started in 2004.

Status: Completed

4.2. Yellowstone National Park

Brian Suderman

The western roads in the Park will open for travel, weather permitting, the 3rd week of April.

Summer road construction projects are geared more towards the north end this year, specifically Roosevelt and the Lamar Valley. Delays should be minimal. The project between Tower junction and Tower falls will be the big one that will have night closures and even full day closures at the end of the season for blasting purposes. The 3rd project will be at Canyon parking lot. It will be closed section by section, still allowing for parking but be warned- it will be confusing.

Visitation for the north entrance is up 7% over last year. Albright Visitor Center up 25%.

Due in part to the fatal bear attacks, we will see more emphasis on wildlife safety training of visitors. The Park is really trying to get the word out to people to be cautious and pay attention and follow food storage instructions .

The Park newspaper has been redesigned this year, they will try to get copies to the Chamber office.

The visitor's use survey from last year should be available soon and Brian will try to get us a copy.

Status: Completed

4.3. Business Improvement District

Scott Demaree

It has been difficult for Scott to get together with Chris Nellman (sp?) Scott has concerns about proposing this project in conjunction with the resort education process because as he understands it, the purpose of the formation of a business district is to form a tax base. He wonders if a separate organization should be formed to proceed with this. He also feels that we should put this on the back burner and focus on resort tax

education.

Not related to this topic is a conversation that he had with the Park County Health Inspector in which it was brought up that it might be worthwhile getting the Community Center kitchen set up to be licensed as a public space that could be rented by locals who want to make their own products to sell. But, getting a fire suppression system and hood vents is rather pricey at around \$20k.

Concern brought up by Kim Kaiser was that it would compete with locals who have their own food businesses.

Response- this kitchen would be something that could be utilized by locals who want to set up food booths at local activities or to make products to sell wholesale to local retailers such as pies and jams and such. Since the GGCC has taken over the Community Center, they will look into this possibility/expenditure.

Status: Completed

4.4. Events

Gardiner Chamber

Report:

Status: Completed

4.4.1. Yellowstone 5K Fun Run/Walk

Bill Berg

Bill is going to figure out what we should rename the Yellowstone Days 5k-Fun/Run/Walk. We will stick with the name for this year but we would like to incorporate the name of Gardiner in it. Last year there were approximately 70 runners and cleared about \$1,000.00. Would like to clear \$2,000.00 this year. He is in the process of garnering local business sponsorships.

Registration starts at 8:30am and the race will begin at 9:30. The route starts by Arch Park around the football field out Stephen's Creek and back. He has received suggestions of adding a 10k and children's events as well. Online registration will begin soon.

Report:

Status: Completed

4.5. Public Comment

Gardiner Chamber

Another question posed in regards to the Community Center kitchen and allowing people to "Sell" food out of it.

Response-There would not be any "selling" of food, it would be a health inspected kitchen that people could rent to make food to sell at Farmer's Markets, Festivals, and wholesale to retailers in the town as not only, "Made in the USA", "Made in Montana", but "Made in Gardiner" as well.

The Gateway Hose Company is looking at sponsoring a Pancake Breakfast Saturday morning before the 5K race.

Sabina Strauss has done research on the Voices of Montana "Tourism Works Day" in which Montana Government officials roll up their sleeves and go to a tourist oriented businesses and work for a bit to see how it is. Sabina will be sponsoring an open house for this event and will have several officials come and help at her place. the media will be present, so we should get some press on how important tourism is for our town.

Carol Kellem question- How are we going to approach the resort tax education process?

Daniel Bierschwale response-We will have outside facilitators come to discuss the pros and cons of resort tax implementation. We will have representatives from towns who feel that it has been a great benefit, as well as, representatives from towns where resort tax was implemented and then withdrawn. A petition would needed to be signed by at least 10% of those residing in the designated district and then it would go onto a ballot and be voted on. Only those residing in that district would be allowed to vote on it.

The need for public restrooms was brought up and that, if we as a chamber, can get Convention and Visitor's Bureau designation as well as become a Montana Welcome Center we could receive funding from outside sources for infrastructure, public restrooms, maintenance and staffing.

Peter Dahn question- Do we really need public restrooms? We should be like New York City and Las Vegas.

They don't have public restrooms, people have to go into a business and spend money if they want to use the bathroom, when I go into a gas station or what ever I go and buy something small too.

Carol Kellem- When people come in, I only want people who buy something to use my restroom.

Peter Dahn- If we become a Montana Welcome Center then we will have to have information on other places in Montana and people will leave and go elsewhere. People only come here once every fourteen years, they aren't going to remember if there were restrooms or not.

Daniel Bierschwale- Response - If you would like to have input on this matter then you should join the committee.(headed by Chuck Curtis Public Restrooms/CVB). Note: this was the second time this offer was extended.

Peter Dahn- I dont have time (to join a commitee), I'm too busy in the summer and I'm not here in the winter...Well if you don't want to hear my opinions... (he got up and and left the meeting room).

Barbara Shesky, Administrative Secretary - question to the members in attendance- So let me understand this, we want to portray ourselves as a small town, welcoming, with good small town values? But what I'm hearing is, that if someone doesn't have or want to spend money they can just go pee on the side of the road?

At least one person shakes their head in disagreement

Carol Kellem -Response - That was just one person's opinion it's not everyone.

Barbara Shesky -Response- Good, I was really starting to wonder about ...all this.

Barbara Read- Comment- Gave a very nice compliment to Administrative Secretary Barbara Shesky on her professionalism and helpfulness to members and guests in the office.

Cheryl Hoppe- We need a public restrooms and we need someone to fund it, maintain it and staff it. If we don't look at outside ways to fund it how is it going to happen?

Meeting adjourned 1:11pm

Note: Mr. Dahn was given the opportunity to voice his opinions, and was asked on two occassions to join the committee (Public Restrooms/CVB) in order to have even more of an opportunity to share his opinion. Both times he declined.

Note: The Chamber office has and has had for a number of years, brochures and magazines from across the state as well as the Northwestern corridor. The experience of the Director is that having this information available does not make people leave, what it does do, is allow them the opportunity to see what else the state has to offer and gives them an idea of other places that they may want to stop and see once they leave Gardiner or gives them ideas for planning future vacations. It is the opinion of the Administrative Secretary that; It is the responsibility of the business owners to make a guest's stay so pleasant and so memorable that they want to stay longer and/or come back again and tell their friends. She also remembers unfriendly towns, towns with bad restaurants and towns that smelled like human urine from six-twelve years ago, none of which she will ever visit again.

Status: Completed

4.6. Date Next Meeting

Gardiner Chamber

May 16, 2012 - noon at the Gardiner Community Center.

Status: Completed

Recording Secretary:

Chairperson:

Date:
