



Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

Meeting date: **Thursday, March 20, 2014** Started: **12:00 PM** Ended: **1:00 PM**

Location: Upstairs at the Gardiner Market

Purpose/Notes: Regular scheduled meeting

Chaired by: Scott Demaree

Minutes rec. by: Gardiner Chamber

Attendance:

Present: Barbara Shesky, Elk Inc, Gardiner Market, Headwaters B&B, Montana Guide Service, Mountain Home, Mountain Mike's Tours, Outwest T's, Town Cafe, Upper Yellowstone River R, Wild West Rafting, Wildflour Bakery, Yellowstone River Lodge, Yellowstone Safari, YP Riverfront Cabins, Schalene Darr, "Be Our Guest " House, Frankie Aars, Above the Rest Lodge, Absaroka Lodge, B Bar Ranch, B Wood Photography, Bear Lair Lodge, Bill Berg, Best Western By Mammoth Hotsprings, Sandy Bierle, Daniel Bierschwale, Big Wild Adventures, Gardiner Chamber, Child Care Connections, Comfort Inn- Yellowstone North, Aspen Cottage, Crevice Mountain Lodge, Scott Demaree, Diamond Bar Heart Guest Ranch, Elk River Art Gallery and Studio, Elk River Lodge, Entre Nous, ERA Landmark Western Land, Gardiner Food Pantry, Gardiner Laundry, Gardiner Pharmacy/Yellowstone Perk, Gateway Hose Company, Gold Strike Gifts, Graybeal's All Service, Greater Gardiner Community Council, Hell's A Roarin' Outfitters, Home on the Range, Cheryl Hoppe, Chico Hotsprings, Johnstad's B&B and Log Cabin, Kellem's Montana Saddlery, Absaroka Knoll Construction, Little People's Learning Center, Livingston Job Service, Cowboy's Lodge, MacNeil Lyons, Medcor Inc at Yellowstone, Midwest Welding and Machine, Jean Modesette, Montana Buffalo Company, Montana Whitewater Rafting&Zipline, Mountain Mobile Auto Glass, North Entrance Vacation Rental, North Entrance Wash tub, NorthWestern Energy, Paradise Adventure Company, Paradise Gateway B&B & Vacation , Richard Parks, Photos by Sandi, Rainbow Ark, Riversbend Lodge, Riverside Cottages, Rockin' HK Outfitters, Smith Family Ranch, Stafford Animal Shelter, Stonegate Chiropractics, Story Distributing, Subway, Brian Suderman, The Wildside Tours and Treks, Tumbleweed Bookstore & Cafe, Two Bit, Upper Yellowstone Roundup Assoc., Wild Bear Adventures, Wilderness Connection, Wolf Ridge Lamb & Wool Company, Xanterra, Yellowstone Association, Yellowstone Basin Inn, Yellowstone Country, Yellowstone Federal Credit Union, Yellowstone Gallery & Frameworks, Yellowstone Gateway Inn, Yellowstone General Stores, Yellowstone Mine, Yellowstone Park Travel Lodge, Yellowstone Raft Company, Yellowstone River Motel, Yellowstone Suites B&B, Yellowstone Village Inn, Yellowstone Wilderness Outfitters

Regrets:

Absent: Hillcrest Cottages, Yellowstone Super 8 Motel

Late:

Guests:

(none)

Meeting Documents:

(no documents)

Meeting Minutes:

1. Chamber Business

1.1. Roll Call & Introductions

Daniel Bierschwale

Daniel Bierschwale

Richard Parks

Frankie Aars

Scott Demaree

Sandy Bierle

Cheryl Hoppe

Schalene Darr



Jean Modesette

Minutes:

12:03PM meeting begins. Richard parks and Cheryl Hoppe excused.

Quorum in attendance

Status: Completed

1.2. Director's Report

Barbara Shesky

Update on Office Operations

Minutes:

For Febbruary meeting that was cancelled:

February 20th meeting notes

Over the past four weeks I have assisted with the Seasonal Resort Tax Initiative, -

- 1)- collecting signatures at the Chamber office
- 2)- collecting petitions
- 3)- delivering the petition to Park County Clerk and Recorders Office

I Reviewed and gave feedback to Norma Nickerson and Meredith Berry from the Institute for Tourism and Recreational Research regarding the non-resident survey associated with the Gardiner Gateway Project, as well as, on the comparison report between residential and nonresidents.

I have also been reviewing the Memorandums of understanding for the NRPC and GGP to ensure that we are compliant.

I attended the Resort Tax Committee meeting on February 6th, I Attended the Events committee meeting on January 23rd, I attended the marketing committee meeting on February 13th, On January 22nd I sat in on a phone conference call with Park Service regarding the Winter Use Adaptive Management Program with Rebecca Garvoille.

I plan to also contact Wade Vagias (transportation- YNP) with regard to how the numbers of available snowmobile and snow coaches to our North entrance are created in an effort to see if there is a way to increase our winter use.

The largest frustration I see for tourists trying to vacation here at the North Entrance in the winter is the apparently limited number of opportunities to book day trips down to Old Faithful or out to Canyon.

I have notified the Chamber membership regarding the Governor's Conference, registered for and reserved hotel rooms for the Governor's Conference for Jean and I.

I emailed the membership for donations of raffle prizes to take to the Governor's Conference. We have had excellent response!

We have a 2 night lodging package courtesy of Montana Buffalo Ranch Company, a ½ day whitewater rafting trip for up to 6 people courtesy of Paradise Adventure Company, An All Day Natural History Wildlife Safari tour courtesy of Yellowstone Safari Company and a gift bag and coffee mug courtesy of the Gardiner Market. This package is worth \$1,351.00. I am planning to create a poster with photos from all the businesses that donated so that we have it to stand on the table next to the Gardiner Market bag and mug. As well as preparing to take all our membership rack cards that I have available. So if you do not have a rack card or if you are unsure whether I am out of the ones you may have given me, then now is the time to address this!

I worked closely with Tdg Communications, to set up a new distribution method for the newsletter. We are now using Mail-chimp. The old system was not functioning properly- it would send out two copies sometimes and at the same time it would give me an error message telling me that it didn't post the newsletter and then I would get complaints from subscribers because they received more than one copy.

The old method was not going to be compatible with the new company's new software. I was told that despite the fact that the website is only two years old the technology used to build it was outdated even then.

There were a few glitches that I think have ironed themselves out; some people particularly Xanterra were claiming to have not received the newsletter but with the new program I can actually see if an email bounced and I can see if the person actually opened it or not. We determined that the Xanterra mainframe wasn't pleased with Mail-chimp. This program can also be utilized to send out other types of campaigns as well, although I have not had the time to explore everything.

We have also completed the domain name transfer- it was previously under the wing of Cool works and now we have our very own domain name. The newsletter is once again being posted to the Chamber website.



Jean and I are currently working on updates to the About Us page as well as other updates and photo changes and hope to have those to Tdg tomorrow. We are very confident that this is a change for the better as, before, communication with the website designer and host was non-existent on his side and I gave up after being ignored.

I have also filled out the Occupational Injury and Illness survey that we were required to submit.

I have also submitted the Yellowstone Country staffing grant for this summer's VIC program.

I also gathered our end of year tax documentation, quarterly tax info and W-2 information needed for delivery to the accountant for preparation and made the payments and mailed the W-s to our previous employees. I also had a meeting on February 12th with a new accountant, Cat Moody- She will take over as our accountant with the next quarterly payroll, she teaches QuickBooks, will do out taxes at a discounted rate and has offered to teach me as much as she can about the program. I feel I will have a better rapport with her. She will also be instrumental in setting up accounting methods should the resort tax pass and if we attain CVB status. We will have to keep very good records as reports will be due to each of the Boards that dispense these types of funds.

I do believe that I have finalized the chamber insurance plans, we are going to come in under budget on that one.

Of course there is the weekly preparing and delivering of the newsletter and invoicing for membership ads. And made necessary apologies to those whose ads were incorrect or did not run.

I have been paying bills in a timely fashion entering information into quick books to keep it updated and entering transactions into the checkbook register to match it so that Cheryl can then verify these numbers with the bank statements. I have made sure all checks and cash are deposited in to the Chamber accounts. On a regular basis I tracking which member are due for renewal notification and drop anyone who has chosen not to renew off of the website. Then of course, the daily answering of the phones for visitor questions, information packet mailing, and responding to email inquiries from members, board members and potential visitors. And assisted locals and visitors that do come into the office.

For March meeting:

Director's Report for March 20, 2014

Attended 3 Resort tax Committee meetings working closely with Danny and Sandy to create Resort tax initiative ads and assisted Danny in getting a handle on how the Resort tax implementation process works. Attended a phone conference for the Gardiner Gateway Interpretive Program working group.

Filed our Annual Report

Filed an Income and Expense reporting form with the Park County Department of Revenue regarding the Community Center.

Worked weekly and or daily on the intake of ads, the creation of ads and the newsletter itself, invoicing to track member usage of advertising credit.

I also create the weekly mail-chimp delivery of the newsletter for emailing. I also have a way now of tracking and getting accurate info regarding the number of subscribers to the newsletter right down to who opened it and who didn't! (Show report)

I continue to post the newsletter to the website, as well.

I also maintain our financial records on a weekly basis –paying bills in a timely fashion recording entries into Quick-books and the checkbook register for Cheryl to verify.

Run the errands to the Post Office and the Bank several times a week and to the Rodeo grounds on an as needed basis.

Invoiced members for this month's membership renewal drive.

Found and printed some guest information that seems helpful such as car rentals info and camping information for both the Park and the Forest. I am planning on figuring out how to print a simple document for visitors in lieu of a directory. So that I am better able to assist our potential guests and visitors.

Of Note: We still have over 12,000 maps left so anyone in need of Gardiner maps should swing by and pick some up. I believe in the future any projects we print should be limited to a one year projection as this was supposed to be a two year project and we are now entering the third season with this map which contains information for businesses that are no longer members as well as old information. (IE Food Farm)

I will also be starting the brochure ordering process for the summer season and will be looking at a reduction in some of the information that we have on hand and streamlining our racks. If you haven't sent/brought me any rack cards in a while now is the time to do so.

I have emailed pertinent info out to our membership regarding MTOT ad campaigns and ITTR reports.

I have the Non -residential Visitor spending report (review)



As well as the ITRR resident, nonresident and comparison reports from their data collection last year (Review)

Of concern is the fact that our website visits seem to be dwindling each month- I have contacted tdg to see if they are tracking- They do not – They did find some glitches in the line of code and so I have contacted Chamber Master to see if they can give an explanation. I will have more to report on this next month. Otherwise - The only fix I know is to start an online ad campaign – but that takes several thousand dollars that we do not have right now so let's keep our fingers crossed that the resort tax is going to pass and we can apply for CVB status next year and have some money to actually promote ourselves.

I found an error in the projected budget I wrote that we had an \$8,000 grant when it was actually \$5,000 and that stinks.

We also did not receive the E-grant that we were hoping for to help pay for the Film- So we need to scrape up an additional 5-6K to pay for it.

On a brighter note, I was quick enough to respond to an email from MTOT offering up to \$500 in travel reimbursement to the first 20 respondents for attending the VIC training that will be in Butte this year. Unlike previous years, Yellowstone Country requires that I attend this training in order to receive the VIC staffing funds. That additional travel was not part of what we budgeted for travel this year.

Financially we have about \$1,000 more than we did at this time last year but as I said we have to pay for the rest of the filming costs which is \$5,000.

Emails (Google analytics report) versus me trying to write down every email etc.

NRPC stats report. We have had visitors to the site from all but three states the top four being Montana, California, Florida and New York. (Show Report)

Jean and I will be departing for the Governor's Conference on April 13th-15th and will be preparing a poster to display for our raffle prize donators info. Reminder We are in the running for two awards this year so if you haven't voted-please do so! (Technology Innovation Award and Gateway Community of the year award) We plan to unveil the NRPC video there. We are sharing the table with Cooke City.

I need a volunteer to step up to the plate to go over to the kiosk we now own and look at it to see if repairs are needed I think that it needs painted or stained- it doesn't look very 'friendly' I would like to put a poster in it directing people where the Chamber office is and that we have a public restroom- So I need a handyman volunteer and an artist volunteer.

Status: Completed

1.3. Treasurer's Report

Cheryl Hoppe

Update on Chamber's financial status- This report may be given by the Executive Director as needed.

Minutes:

Fo Details see documentation at Chamber office

Status: Completed

2. Old business

No Old business

3. New business

No New business

4. Committee Business

4.1. Yellowstone National Park

Brian Suderman

Update on YNP

Minutes:

Norris to Mammoth road project 5.4 miles from north of the campground to Grizzly Lake trailhead –there will be a big impact on Gardiner that they will be hauling material through on trucks all summer two year project. April 18th projected start date. Night closures from 11-7 can start at that time as well through till fall. There will be a full closure from Sept 14-30 in addition to that 5 mile stretch, they will be rebuilding the bridge at Sheepeater Cliffs, there will be work at the south end of the Park as well as at Dunraven. New road



alignment around Frying pan springs to lessen the impact on the thermal area. There will eventually be a board walk to the springs. In Elk Park south of Norris you can still see the old road bed and it is visible because all the material wasn't removed so part of this contract is to correct that. You can expect 30 minute delays in any other projects as well.

Annually there is a study of Gateway community spending. The report that was recently released indicated that there was 400 million in spending by nonresident travelers in 2013. There is a video of the road plowing being done so people can see what it is like. When is Mammoth going to go year-round? Brian does not know at this point in time he will find out for us as this will increase shoulder season traffic in Gardiner too. The Canyon Lodge project is starting as well they are ripping out all the flat roofed cabins and putting in two new hotel like structures the same number of beds will be in place.

Status: Completed

4.2. Gardiner Gateway Project

Daniel Bierschwale

Gardiner Gateway Project update
Visitor Center

Minutes:

Over the past two months the steering committee has been meeting with local businesses on Park, Main & 4th streets and they are taking the feedback and building it into the plans. We had a public meeting with Federal Lands in attendance last night they are working into 70% design phase. Neepa report may be needed. It has been well received by Park street residents, businesses as well as on Main Street.

Immediate work is going to be Utility work they are going to replace water and sewer lines this fall before they do the road work. It will work in phases. Doing a section at a time.

They have also started to come up with the some concept art.

Status: Completed

4.2.1. Resort Tax, Gardiner Welcome Center & Public Restrooms

Richard Parks

Update on the Seasonal Resort Tax Initiative and Prospects for a Gardiner Welcome Center. Updates may be given by other members of the Resort Tax Committee as well.

Minutes:

Resort tax update: Ballots have been mailed to those residents residing within the boundaries of the resort tax district. We had a question; if the Chamber could take ballots up on the 8th and the answer is no – it would put the Chamber in a precarious position.

We have been working with a specific property and we are close to receive a specific price from the owners and executing a buy sell.

Danny has been working to set up a conversation with Park County on how implementation of the resort tax, should it pass, will work.

It will make it easier if we manage the funds locally. So we will need to start the District creation process.

Sabina- with regards to work around the Arch if we can get notification sent to the Chamber office so that I can send it out to the membership so that they can inform the guests- people get less upset if they can be forewarned by the hotelier.

Fed lands is listening and trying to plan the majority of the work in the shoulder seasons.

Status: Completed

4.3. Properties and Facilities

Schalene Darr

Updates on Rodeo Grounds and Community Center

Minutes:

Currently there is no lease on either properties. Schalene is working with the Community Center and the rodeo club there is apparently a long waiting period for the rodeo club to get their own beer and wine. While in the past the Chamber allowed the rodeo club to use ours, this is not appropriate or legal. Schalene will contact the state; we will do anything legal and prudent to assist them. The Community Center program s doesn't have a beer and wine permit either. Schalene will continue to investigate.

Status: Completed



Jean Modesette

4.4. Marketing

Update on Marketing projects-
Upcoming is Montana Quarterly

Minutes:

We are working on a two page spread in MTQ we have a really good reduced price we still need a couple more members to join in so that we can get the rate we will be working on the theme today.

We are going to have a booth at the Governor's conference with Cooke City we will have the tourism video at the booth we will have our members rack cards we hope to have a banner and will take GGP info as well as info on the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Park Service on August 25, 2016.

Status: Completed

4.4.1. Gateway Coopertives and Partnerships

Jean Modesette

Updates with regards to our partnership with the Cooke City/Silvergate/Colter Pass Chamber of Commerce in promoting the northern range.

Minutes:

We are close to finalizing our NRPC video.

Status: Completed

4.5. Events

Frankie Aars

Update on upcoming events or potential events

Status: Completed

4.5.1. Memorial Day Horse Drive and BBQ

Frankie Aars

Update on the, new this year, fundraising event

Minutes:

Events Horse Drive (Vigo Mortenson been contacted to be master of Ceremonies- we will wait to hear a response from him) we will have Montana Rose for music, and there will be a BBQ up at Hell's A-roarin'. A rough stock rodeo barrel racing and team racing is planned for Sunday along with Cowboy Church and a craft sale in Arch Park with a beer booth as well. See Flyer .

The Events Committee is reaching out to sponsors we are making sure we don't contact the Rodeo clubs sponsors. Looking at advertising all over Western Horseman and such.

Jean with the Horse drive the cost is \$20 which includes transportation, dinner and music. Montana Rose will be playing until 11 we are working with YA and a couple of the raft companies for the shuttle services. We are negotiating rates with designers and Montana Rose. Hell's A'roarin is donating the food and donating towards the band cost. The rodeo will have ticket sales. Sue is able to get portable heaters if the weather turns cold. The events committee is going after sponsors we are going to create a FB page and an events page posters Frankie is working with Cowboys and Indians and Western Horseman for advertising. 3-forks used to do a horse drive but they lost their pasture lease- the name "Yellowstone's Epic Horse drive" Frankie and the committee will bring up tweaking the name. Photographers will have opportunity to get some great shots we are reaching out online to photographers and story writers also reaching out to the 2 mustang and feral horse organizations as well.

If this is truly the last horse drive the MTOT might be really interested. This is a really cool new event Sue Johnson is all about raising as much as she can for the Chamber.

Status: Completed

4.5.2. Brewfest in Arch Park

Frankie Aars

Update on the Annual Brewfest in Arch Park Chamber fundraiser.

Minutes:

Brewfest we will be contacting the brewers directly and asking the brewers to come and bring their products.

Other thing we are looking at is music down in Arch Park once or twice a month through the summer we have ahead a lot of people inquire about events we could do open mic or have a band and collect ticket sales.

Status: Completed



Gardiner Chamber

4.6. Public Comment

Minutes:

Joe Gross- Regarding the access to the jail which is currently blocked by private establishments. Joe has had no response from the County. The Chamber should write a letter to tell them to move their stuff.

Board response: We don't have any authority on this matter though – Joe does not feel that the County has responded to his concerns for the access to a historic landmark. This is more of a County issue. We would be end up in a conflict of interests.

Status: Completed

4.7. Date Next Meeting

Daniel Bierschwale

The monthly meetings of the Gardiner Chamber of Commerce are on the 3rd Thursday of every month, upstairs at the Gardiner Market.

Report:

The next meeting will be held April 17th at noon upstairs at the Gardiner market.

Status: Completed

Total time scheduled: 60 min

Recording Secretary:

Chairperson:

Date:
