



Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

Meeting Date: Thursday, February 16, 2017, from 12:06pm to 1:24pm

Location: Upstairs at the Gardiner Welcome Center

Purpose: Regularly scheduled meeting

1. Chamber Business

1.1 Roll Call & Introductions

Schalene Darr, Sabina Strauss, Jeff Guengerich, Anna Holloway (absent – unexcused), Sue Johnson (absent – excused), Neli Karamfilova (absent – excused), Trina Smith, Edwin Johnson (absent – excused), Jim Stark (absent – excused).

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

There was not a quorum present at the meeting to do this.

1.3 Approval of Loren Guerin as Executive Director

There was not a quorum at the meeting, but Schalene later emailed the Board asking for a motion via email. A motion was made by Trina and seconded by Anna. No discussion, motion carried (via email).

2. Committee Business

2.1 Yellowstone National Park

Brian Suderman was not present. No update.

2.1 Properties and Facilities

Schalene reported that the bathrooms are scheduled to be complete by the first part of March. The tile has already been laid, the sinks are in, and things are right on target.

Schalene also stated she wants to have the building professionally cleaned

once the bathrooms are complete i.e. carpets and windows cleaned and just a general spruce up to get rid of the construction dust.

2.3 Gardiner Gateway Project

No one present to report on this.

2.4 CVB

Jean Modesette gave a background on the CVB for new members. The quick rundown was that this is a \$28,000 budget that comes from bed taxes with spending approved and monitored by the Montana Tourism Advisory Council (TAC). Twenty (20%) percent of this budget can be used for staffing and the remainder for marketing. Some past items paid for with this money were the new website, table tents about lodging facilities that were put out in businesses prior to the 100 NPS celebration, and a rack card that is currently in the process of being developed and will be used in surrounding areas such as South Dakota, Wyoming, the Glacier area, etc. The ultimate goal would be that area chambers whose materials we display would also display ours.

Jean also reported they were going to start using a “promoted” post on Facebook and we would need a credit card for payment of this. Discussions were had about getting one under Loren’s name. Schalene said she would look in to this. Jeff then asked what the focus of the “promoted” Facebook post would be. Jean said she is working with Mike Bento and his marketing firm and they would be very “zoned in” messages re: beauty, wildlife, charming small town, family owned business, etc. Jean went on to report that five years ago there were only 65 followers and now there are 6,000 and with these “promoted” posts the number of followers should continue to increase.

Jean shared that we also have a new Instagram account so now on the new website anyone who tags #gardinermontana will see the photos from Instagram as a live feed across the bottom of the website’s homepage. The new account is @visitgardinermt

She reported that the new CVB year starts July 1st with the New Year’s marketing plan being due the second week of May. She said this is a very intense project and a lot of work, but well worth it. The TAC meets the first week of June and this is who reviews and approves the marketing plan. It’s mandatory that someone from our CVB be present for this review otherwise you don’t receive the funding. Jean hopes that Loren can go to this meeting. They would also like to purchase a retractable stand up banner with the new logo to use during our presentation of the plan at this meeting. A new

requirement in order to receive this funding is that you partner with another organization on a project (not for entire plan, but just a portion). The CVB is currently discussing partnering with Cooke City, but some other possibilities are Vision Livingston, Park County Foundation, Yellowstone Country, and Belgrade Chamber of Commerce. The CVB plans to have their plan completed by the end of April.

Jean says she would like to have Mike Bento do a presentation to the Chamber board at some point. It was suggested that perhaps this can be done during the May meeting. While the preference would be an in-person presentation, it might be via Skype.

Sabina asked about the funding which is currently being held up because we don't have a "stable" person in the ED position. Jean said she had just recently learned of this and was going to follow up with Barb of TAC to make sure this was handled, but she did know that this money was not a "use it or lose it" and could be rolled over.

3. New Business – Action Items

3.1 Committee Appointments

Properties and Facilities – Schalene (Chair) and Jim
Yellowstone Country – Danny
CVB – Jean (Chair), Scott and Trina
Membership – Anna (Chair), Sue and Edwin
Nominating – Neli

3.2 Summer Hours VIC Grant

Not a quorum present at meeting to approve hours, but email sent out by Schalene for a motion to approve. The proposed hours would be Monday through Friday, 9am – 8pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 1pm – 5pm. These would run the fourth week of May through Labor Day. Sue Johnson emailed with a question about how these hours were determined. Loren responded with information from Barb's annual report. While previous years' traffic wasn't counted on an hourly basis, the weekend hours (which were the primary ones in question) are a middle of the road time frame from the previous two years. Loren thought it would be a good idea this year to try and keep better records of visitor numbers by the hour. Trina made the motion to approve, Anna seconded, and the motion was carried (all via email).

3.3 Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation and Policies and Procedures Manuals

Schalene collected the signed forms from Jeff and Trina.

3.4 Nametag Proposal

Sabina reported that she thought it was a good idea for the board members and visitor center staff to have name tags to wear. She explored the cost with a Bozeman based company and found that it would be a \$20 set up fee and \$11 per badge. Discussions were had about other “reusable” options since these were all positions with a certain level of turnover and some volunteers with short term dates. Sabina will look at other options and we can discuss same further at a later date.

3.5 Proposal for Streetlights on Main Street – Joe Gross

Joe has submitted a letter to Schalene asking that the Chamber go to the Gateway Project about the street lighting issue in certain areas of town. As Schalene had not had an opportunity to read the letter nor was there a quorum present to vote on this, the matter was tabled until the next meeting.

3.6 Sector Partnership – not an original agenda item

Schalene asked for an update on the recent Sector Partnership meeting hosted by Livingston Job Services and the MSU Extension Office. Since Sabina, Jeff, and Trina all attended this meeting they collectively reported that the purpose of this type of partnership is so that we can collaborate as a community and pull our resources to fill our staffing needs. Primarily we as the businesses share our needs and organizations such as the Chamber, the local job services, high school, universities, etc. act as sponsorships and listen to the needs of the group with the intent of trying to help fill those needs. It was decided we would call ours a “Tourism Sector Partnership” as that best encompasses the various businesses in this area. A “launch” meeting will be held Monday, March 20th. Sabina hopes that Kate of the MSU Extension Office can come to the March 16th Chamber meeting and give an overview to the Board on sector partnerships.

4. Old Business

4.1 Interim Help

In the absence of a full time Executive Director, Zondra is working more hours than normal for her, which is much appreciated. She posts the hours she will be available throughout the week at the beginning of each week.

While Schalene, Jeff, and Sabina have all been coming in to help with QuickBooks at times and aren’t opposed to doing that, it was suggested that

Zondra see if there is a class on QuickBooks being held in the area that she could attend to help expand her knowledge. Zondra was very appreciative of this offering and will look into it further.

Schalene reported she has one potential candidate for the Marketing Manager position, but it will be another week before she knows whether this person is interested. There is the hope that this person is at least willing to do it in the interim until Loren is in the area. If not, the position will need to be posted again.

4.2 Governor's Conference – March 12-14

Jean and Sabina will both be attending. Jean will represent the CVB and Sabina will represent the Chamber. While Jeff had originally hoped to attend, he is unfortunately no longer available.

4.3 PayPal

The PayPal account has been closed since it was no longer needed and the \$300 transferred to the regular operating account.

4.4 TIIP Grant-Bathroom Project

Schalene spoke to Carol and confirmed that a plaque needs to be made to list the funding sources, invoicing completed by March 1st, and a press release sent out about the project and its completion. Sabina asked about holding a "Grand Opening" for it and there were thoughts on doing these a little closer to summer.

A discussion was held about hiring someone to clean the restrooms on a regular basis versus it being left to the Visitor Center staff. Schalene has a local person in mind, but it was discussed that this is probably better to post as an available position. Trina and Jeff will work on putting together an ad for the position.

5. Public Comment

No Public Comment

6. Date of next meeting.

Next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 16th at Noon.