

Custer County Tourism Board
Meeting Minutes for May 3, 2019
Westcliffe Town Hall

Call to Order at 8:35 a.m.

Roll Call: Debbie Adams, Charley Ellison, Bob Swanson, Jennifer Anderson, Rene Smith. Peggi Collins excused for personal emergency.

Visitors: Tom Flower, Jay Printz, Bill Canda, Amy Moulton, Bob Fulton, Angie Arterburn, Jax Bubis, Marilyn Hennessy

Public Comment:

Bill Canda stated he was 100% in support of current Tourism Board with hopes to move forward in a positive manner. Suggested a tourism report during staff reports on the 1st Tuesday or Wednesday at 9am in commissioner's room.

Angie Arteburn requested to be copied on meetings, agendas, copy of April minutes, updated by-laws and who to send calendar updates.

Tom Flower stated he appreciated and supported the Tourism Board, and looks forward to moving onward with a positive outlook.

Bob Fulton had a question regarding the bed tax and how it was to be used.

Amendments to Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes: Debbie motioned, Charley seconded to approve April minutes as presented. Passed 4/0.

Guest Presentations: None

REPORTS

- Chair: Debbie reported on attending Trinidad Proud and Pikes Peak Wonders workshops. There is a June 3 Board Summit at the WC town hall at 4pm. VW got four of our summer events on OutThere Colorado list of 487. Denver Post writer, Josh Berman, has responded to invite to visit sometime this summer.
 - Requested reimbursement of SOCO Summit and hotel \$212.95, upcoming CTO Media Reception registration \$75. plus mileage tbd.
 - Charley motioned, Debbie seconded to reimburse all previously approved expenses. Passed 4/0.
 - Charley motioned, Bob seconded that in going forward, an estimate of expenses should be provided. Passed 4/0.
 - Charley motioned, Debbie seconded that mileage reimbursement will be made then-current IRS business mileage rate, currently 58¢. Passed 4/0.
 - Debbie obtained lotions from Rosita Mary for CTO Media Reception Swag Bags along with glow-in-the-dark constellations bandannas paid for by Dark Skies. Debbie motioned, Charlie seconded to approve marketing expenditure of \$168 for lotion. Passed 4/0.

- Financial: Charley reported checking account balance of approximately \$65k and Visitor statistic information. Invoice for Pueblo Chieftain ¼ page ad \$359. In response to timing of digital ad expenditures and "heads in beds" capacity for visitors to County, Charley presented results of research on vacation rentals and visitors. Key highlights were:
 - 1) Capacity of vacation rentals was over 500 "heads" in August 2018;
 - 2) Average booking lead time is 75 days for summer months;
 - 3) Besides Front Range cities, top cities of origin are Dallas/Ft Worth, Houston, Austin, Omaha;
 - 4) 78% have an active Facebook profile. Conclusion: Timing of digital advertising, to drive new visitors to VisitCusterCounty.com, is well founded, timed and targeted geographically.
- Jennifer reported the airport was planning a Silver West Air Fest on August 24.
- Bob had a great interview with Lake City representative at the Smokey Jack Observatory for the dark skies. He continues to work on content.
- Vista Works: Brian presented social media stats, website analytics, and CTO Co-op information. Amy will send us a link to "7 ways to slow down in undiscovered Colorado". He also shared that he had gotten support from the State Tourism Office for the Dark Skies Tour.
 - 75% of traffic is from Google AdWords
 - (Google Ads had 17% Click-Thru Rate)
 - 83% are new visitors
 - 183 visitors entered on Lodging Page (from Ads)
 - Facebook Likes grew 32%; 4% Engagement from Paid Clicks.
 - Instagram has nearly 300 followers.
- Lava Research: Amy will be working with a local influencer for social media, stated the newsletter has a 45% open rate, working on enhancing Trip Advisor, itinerary development and a more user-friendly Tourism Event Calendar.
- Visitor Center/Chamber: Rene reported Chamber memberships are up due to new membership benefits. Ron Beckner will make presentation in June.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Debbie stated the BOCC on 4/17 accepted the recommendation for the removal of board member Angie Arterburn 3-0.
- Debbie motioned, Charley seconded to purchase 1000 Discover Guides at cost of \$950 for State Welcome Centers distribution. Rene will send them.
- Debbie reported the visitor info rack at White Bird Emporium is a work in progress. Charley motioned, Debbie seconded to establish criteria for info racks placed in a business. Criteria would be easy access, open 7 days, prominent placement of rack, employee training and signage directing visitors to Visitor Center for further information if needed. Passed 4/0.
- Visitor Survey Strategy was tabled until June meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Charley motioned, Jennifer seconded to approve State of Colorado Marketing grant project, as defined by Vista Works, and seed money of \$1000 to be moved from another budget category pending approval by the Custer County Government. Passed 4/0.
- Sangre Star Festival 2020 was tabled until June meeting.
- Debbie will be attending CTO Media Reception on May 13 in Denver.

Next meeting 9am Tuesday, June 11 at Westcliffe Town Hall, new meeting place.

Meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

Rene Smith, Recording Secretary