

Colorado Association of Ski Towns

October 23, 2015

Estes Park

Meeting Minutes

The following were in attendance:

Steve Skadron	Aspen	Jim White	Grand Lake
Sarah Smith- Hymes	Avon	Judy Burke	Grand Lake
Virginia Egger	Avon	Bob Lenz	Jackson, WY
Jen Brown	Beaver Creek	Joe Fitzpatrick	Mt Crested Butte
John Warner	Breckenridge	Joe Gierlach	Nederland
Tim Gagen	Breckenridge	Gary Suiter	Steamboat Springs
Rick Holman	Breckenridge	Sonja Macys	Steamboat Springs
Aaron Huckstep	Crested Butte	Walter Magill	Steamboat Springs
Dean Brookie	Durango	Jenny Patterson	Telluride
Bill Pinkham	Estes Park	Stu Fraser	Telluride
Bob Holcomb	Estes Park	Andy Daly	Vail
Frank Lancaster	Estes Park	Stan Zemler	Vail
John Ericson	Estes Park	Jimmy Lahrman	Winter Park
Ward Nelson	Estes Park	Kim Cancelosi	Frisco
Wendy Koenig	Estes Park	Gary Wilkinson	Frisco
Peggy Smith	Fraser		

The meeting was called to order by CAST President Aaron Huckstep at 8:10 am.

New Members

There was a motion and a second to approve new members - Beaver Creek Resort, Teton Village Association, and Town of Blue River - and the motion was passed unanimously.

Bill Pinkham - Estes Park Mayor

Bill Pinkham welcomed the group and gave a presentation to the group on the history of Estes Park, the challenges they've faced due to the 2013 flood, their relationship with RMNP and where they are today. The town depends on tourism since their isolation prevents commercialization other than tourism. They have a great relationship with RMNP and have about 1500-1600 volunteers in the Park. September 12, 2013, was the date of the historic flood. Emergency operation plans were put into effect and they held all-day meetings with the public, i.e. the key to recovery is collaboration. Congress shut down the Park, and it was Governor Hickenlooper who communicated with the White House to get things reopened. Two weeks later things were starting to get back to normal and key roads were reopened in November. To day, their sales tax is up and they have some new projects in the works in the way of their new events center and the downtown loop project.

Wes Kufeld, Estes Park Police Chief; Kate Rusch, Public Information Officer; Kyle Patterson, Rocky Mountain National Park Public Affair Officer; and Mary Kay Watry, Rocky Mountain National Park Biologist

This group gave a presentation on how RMNP and the Town handle their wildlife situation along with the large number of tourists. Estes Park gets about 3.5 million visitors per year and the town has about 10,000 residents. One of the main attractions for Estes Park is that people come to see the wildlife. On some days, there are 30,000 people in town. Bear and elk interactions are most prominent safety concerns. The safety and preservation of wildlife is very important. There are many challenges including traffic jams caused by elk or people getting out of their cars while car is running and leaving them in the middle of the street. Tensions occur between visitors and locals because of the congestion. Visitors also get too close to the wildlife and take risks, most are excited and naive. Outreach and education programs are in place to educate visitors. The Park has staff who help educate, but there is not enough of them. Visitation to the Park is up 20% from last year - from 537,000 to 644,000. It is the country's 5th most visited park. Outside the Park, Colorado Parks and Wildlife manages wildlife.

Bears also pose many challenges. There have been incidences where bears had to be shot. In 2012 the Estes Valley Bear Education Task Force was formed, an outreach program to educate residents and guests. Efforts include flyers in utility bills, saturation mailings and reach out to HOA's with ready-made presentations. In 2015, the town passed a wildlife protection ordinance which they'll start enforcing in April 2016. Highlights of the ordinance focus on residential and commercial refuse disposal, types of trash containers, pick up times, etc. Neon green paintballs are used to mark problem bears. They do everything to run bears out of town and back into the woods as opposed to having to kill them. The other major problem in the Park is the increased food conditioning in bears. Bears associate visitors with food and exhibiting bolder behavior. Education, constant messaging, sign, better facilities, and regulations and enforcement are the ways they are dealing with the issue.

Jill Lancaster and Sally Park, Estes Park Nonprofit Resource Center; Travis Machalek, Town of Estes Park

This group gave a presentation on operating non-profits in destination communities. The Estes Park Nonprofit Resource Center was formed in 2002 because of the proliferation of nonprofits in the area - 108 that they know in the Estes Valley. The organization offers support to other nonprofits. The presenters did an interactive session with the members to find out if nonprofits either enhance or hinder in their communities, who had organizations similar to EPNRC in their communities, and what are the challenges and opportunities posed by nonprofits. The demographics of the Estes Valley showed that the top three types of nonprofits were community, creative/cultural service, and human services, followed by health and youth. Local governments have unique challenges and opportunities in dealing with nonprofits. Estes Park has a community service grant program supporting arts and education, human services, transportation, housing and youth. \$2.7 million has been granted since 2005. In 2015 they're improving their review process with better application questions and scoring criteria. The statewide average of grants to nonprofits as a percentage of general fund is 0.70%, with Aspen showing the highest percentage in their survey of 3.49%.

Reeves Brown - Building a Better Colorado

Building a Better Colorado is a group of non-partisan statewide civic leaders who've come together with a shared concern for our state's future. Their members include former Colorado senators, mayors, and governors, among others. Their website is www.betterco.org. Their initiative is to engage the state in conversation. They see a growing disconnect between citizens and their government evidenced by the increasing number of amendments to our constitution, the decreasing number of citizens who participate in our election process, and the decreasing number of citizens who participate in our election process. They believe the pathway to a better Colorado lies in engaging citizens statewide in a constructive conversation about what they want their state to be. Their goal is a ballot measure in 2016 but they don't know that is yet. To find out, their engaging Coloradan through bipartisan committees developing options for consideration, those options discussed and debated at community summits across Colorado and online, and learning from community meetings and online surveys. They are targeting civic leaders in 40 communities across the state.

One of the major issues is that Colorado has one of the most easily-amended state constitutions, and therefore we've seen more citizen initiatives than any state except CA and OR. Initiative proponents (many of whom are out-of-state interests) are incentivized to pursue amendments to our constitution rather than state laws, and this is creating an increasingly inflexible and conflicted framework for our state. Secondly is a decreasing number of voters in primary elections. Unaffiliated voters, which make up the largest and fastest growing block of Colorado's electorate, can't easily participate in this process for which they help pay. And lastly Colorado's fiscal policy is unsustainable because of a combination of constitutional spending mandates and revenue limitations, and health care costs related to our aging population. Building a Better Colorado wants to help solve these issues and believe the solution is engagement across the state leading to a ballot measure in 2016.

Frank Lancaster, Estes Park Town Administrator

Frank gave an overview of the September 12, 2013 flood and how the town responded. He started out by recommending that everyone take FEMA training. The whole county can participate and the feds will pay. By 1:00am Estes Park area had six inches of rain, and by 3:00am the town began emergency operations. Fall River reach twice its 100 year event by 4:30am. By 5:30am the Emergency Operations Center was in full swing and they began evacuating low lying drainages. Three drainages converge in Estes Park. Utilities fail - cell phones and land lines are out, 911 fails. Could use internet, but nothing else. Meetings were held with the public and streamed to people outside who couldn't get to Estes Park. Social media was huge in getting out timely information. By noon all roads are impassable except for Trail Ridge Road to the west. Overtopping of roads and dams begin to create massive infrastructure losses. Feds shut down the Park. Staff is at full tilt with evacuation efforts and mobilizing equipment and resources. The town becomes an island with only resources being those that are present. Public concern and confusion about basic life needs become real.

Recovery operations begin and the town takes a hard look at its policies. Had to think outside the box using Lake Estes for a gravel operation. Bureau of Reclamation agreed to lower the lake. Got a crusher from Grand Lake and procured contractors to run the operation. 250 thousand yards of material estimated to have been lost during the event. 120 thousand yards needed just to restore emergency access. Economic

recovery has been challenging, almost all business experienced significant loss in business an incurred repair and recovery expenses. Recovery solutions have been aggressive integrated, multi-phased marketing campaign, immediate crisis response, short-term recovery campaign, and long-term strategies to mitigate effect of losses, retain market share and capitalize and national and international exposure. Media coverage was huge and was very time consuming to deal with them. It's not a matter of IF you will have disaster, you WILL have a disaster. Towns need to practice, get training, and know your roles.

Updates and other business

The next meeting will be January 20-21, 2016 in Whistler, British Columbia.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm