

Colorado Association of Ski Towns

October 30, 2009

Grand Junction

Meeting Minutes

The following were in attendance:

Johnny Younger	Dillon	Lulu Hunt	Telluride
Dick Cleveland	Vail	Andrea Benda	Telluride
Linda Romer Todd	Grand Junction	Stu Fraser	Telluride
Debbie Kovalik	Grand Junction	Jonathan Greenspan	Mt. Village
Laurie Kadrach	Grand Junction	Michael Penny	Frisco
John Warner	Breckenridge	Susan Parker	Crested Butte
Tim Gagen	Breckenridge	Leah Williams	Crested Butte
Russ Forrest	Snowmass Village	Mark Achen	CCCMA
Steve Ivancie	Steamboat Springs	Joe Fitzpatrick	Mt. Crested Butte
Jon Roberts	Steamboat Springs		

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Dick Cleveland at 8:25 am.

Approval of Minutes

There was a motion and a 2nd to approve the August 2009 meeting minutes.

Linda Romer Todd

Grand Junction city council member Linda Romer Todd welcomed the group and gave an update on happenings around GJ including upgrades to downtown and expansion of airport.

Harry Dale – Rocky Mountain Rail Authority

Harry Dale was present to talk about the RMRA's high speed rail feasibility study for Colorado. Senate Bill #1 – 10% transit funds to do a study. Formed the RMRA to study all possible rail alignments. No final determinations are made, it provides info for decision makers.

Final study estimated to be completed at the end of January 2010. Will make recommendations. High speed is for interstate or intercity. Want to have average speeds of 90 mph or above.

A multi-state systems looks better to federal government. In order to be feasible, you have to be fast. Study provides a snapshot in time. Will it happen? Want to be ready if we go in that direction.

Sarah Allen – Marketing Director, Powderhorn Ski Area

Powderhorn receives an average of 250 inches per year and opened in 1966. Mid-size resort but offers full-service amenities. Summer at Powderhorn includes 18-hole disc golf course and free concerts. 85% of visitors from within state including the Grand Valley, Western CO, eastern Utah, and Front Range.

Matt Sugar and Gaspar Perricone, Senator Udall's office

The Ski Area Recreation Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2009, which was introduced in March 2009, would boost year-round activity in ski resorts, provide more opportunities for outdoor recreation in Colorado, create jobs and aid local economies. Economic issue for resorts trying to push summer or shoulder seasons. Was in hearing yesterday. Bill S-607. Put the appropriate activities in the appropriate place. Support from CAST?

Forest Management, Bark Beetles and Fire Risk - Draft form of bill. Kept it to forest service land. Forest service spending 48% on fire mitigation. FS doesn't have the funding to deal with this. Set up a side fund for emergencies and catastrophic fires. Allows FS to use their funds for other uses, and what it was meant for. Bifurcates the pots of money. Flame Act sets aside a different bucket for funding. Will let CAST know what reps to contact for support.

Travel Promotion Act – targets international markets. The purpose of this bill is to help sell travel in the United States to overseas tourists. The bill would establish the Corporation for Travel Promotion, an independent, non-profit corporation governed by an 11-member board. Create an Office of Travel Promotion in the Department of Commerce. Set up a Travel Promotion Fund, financed by a public-private matching program. Much of the cost would be borne by international travelers, who would pay a \$10 fee collected through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization.

Great Outdoors Colorado – discussed communities throughout Colorado using grant money. Half the lottery dollars split in four quadrants. Never had grant cycle like this before. Got inundated with requests. Raised the cap - \$20 million dollars in this grant cycle.

CAST Roundtable Discussion

Telluride – couple of ballot issues. Care tax goes to parks, arts, recreation. New tax. Haven't passed a new tax in years. Cutting budget. Down 10% through August, September should be better. RET down 80%. No new capital projects. Cut eight positions. Airport re-opens next week.

Breckenridge – Sales tax down 12%. Redoing economic model and how to do business in the future. Change how they operate and take spending levels back to 2005-06. Decriminalization of marijuana on the ballot. Amusement tax and/or lodging tax – raise tax? Looking to make Breck a more “walkable” town.

Crested Butte – talked about the proposed Foothills annexation. Leah Williams will be the new mayor of Crested Butte.

Grand Junction – working on comprehensive plan, restructuring codes, making community more appealing. Slow down has helped with planning. Fruitvale and Clifton would add 35,000 to population. Adding additional runway to airport. Sales tax down starting 4th quarter in 2008 – steady decline. 40 positions eliminated.

Dillon – preparing for medical marijuana issue. Putting in new street curbs and gutters. Sales tax holding steady.

Vail – sales tax down 15%. 2008 was record year. Budget significantly lower. Down 10 positions from a year ago. No decrease in services. Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons, Solaris still moving ahead. 50% decrease in RET. Building new fire station. \$22 million in reserves. No to medical marijuana. Working on parking on frontage roads, affordable housing.

Fraser – sales tax down 14%. Working on dissolution of Fraser Sanitation District and absorbing operations into the town.

Snowmass Village – sales tax down 18%. RET down 85%. 2008 was boom year. Building permits way down. Have gone to pre-2004 staffing levels. Finishing comprehensive plan. Maintaining public transportation and supporting free bus services between SV and Aspen. Aspen currently has four medical marijuana dispensaries.

Mountain Village - new hotel opened. Construction down 68%. Retail and lodging are down, but food is up. Gondola maintenance could cut into reserves if things stay flat. Parking an issue. New “green” department.

Steamboat Springs – sales tax down 17%. Annexation of “Steamboat 700” is contentious, petition circulating, will go to ballot in the spring. Four new seats in upcoming election. Base area redevelopment moving ahead. Passed moratorium on medical marijuana. Cut 2009 budget by 18%. No big capital improvements. U.S. Hwy. 40 repaving through town.

Mt. Crested Butte – 3 ballot issues: 1% increase in sales tax; renew an existing admissions tax (lift ticket tax); de-Brucing and existing mill levy. Sales tax down 15%. September alone was down 37%. Not laying people off. Encouraging NEPA process with Snodgrass expansion.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.