



Minutes
October 24-25, 2019
Aspen, Colorado

Attendees:

Andy Beerman, Park City, UT	Skippy Mesirov, Aspen
Allen Best, Mountain Town News	Kathi Meyer, Steamboat Springs
Dean Brookie, Durango	Ann Mullins, Aspen
Jen Brown, Beaver Creek Resort Company	Drew Nelson, Salida
Todd Brown, Telluride	Sara Ott, Aspen
Markey Butler, Snowmass Village	Margaret Plane, Park City
Dick Carleton, Breckenridge	Lynn Ware Peek, Park City
Dave Chapin, Vail	Rachel Richards, Aspen
Justin Critelli, Salida	Keith Riesberg, Winter Park
Robin Crossan, Steamboat Springs	Jim Schmidt, Crested Butte
Thomas Davidson, Summit County	Heather Sloop, Steamboat Springs
Jennie Fancher, Avon	Matt Scherr, Eagle County
Janet Farmer, Mt. Crested Butte	Karn Stiegelmeier, Summit County
Joe Fitzpatrick, Mt. Crested Butte	Jane Templeton, Salida
Becca Gerber, Park City	Torre, Aspen
Rick Holman, Breckenridge	Melissa Turley, Teton Village
Sarah Smith Hymes, Avon	Scott Vargo, Summit County
Elizabeth Jones, Beaver Creek Resort Co.	Gary Wilkinson, Frisco
Harald Kasper, Salida	P.T. Wood, Salida
Nancy Kerry, Frisco	Mel Yemma, Crested Butte
Clint Kinney, Snowmass Village	Delanie Young, Telluride
Elisabeth Lawrence, Breckenridge	Margaret Bowes, CAST
Ron LeBlanc, formerly Durango	
Dara MacDonald, Crested Butte	
Sonja Macys, Steamboat Springs	

Thursday, October 24

I. Colorado's Fiscal Policy: Presentation & Interactive Discussion

Reeves Brown, Building a Better Colorado

II. **Polystyrene Regulation & Legislative Effort, Sarah Smith Hymes, Mayor, Avon**

The Town of Avon is encouraging coordinated action to repeal Colorado Revised Statute 25-17-104: Local Government Preemption during the next legislative session. They are working with CML and CC4CA and Avon encourages other CAST communities to engage on this issue. This statute prohibits local governments from requiring or prohibiting “the use or sale of specific types of plastic materials or products” or restricting or mandating “containers, packaging, or labeling for any consumer products.” If this ban is repealed, Avon would like to ban styrofoam take out containers.

Friday, October 24

I. **Call to Order and Introductions, Dean Brookie, CAST President**

II. **Approval of August 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Approved.

III. **Welcome to Aspen, Mayor Torre**

It is important to the City Council to be inclusionary of the Hispanic population. They are working on strategic planning. Affordable housing is a top issue and they have six projects slated. There is a big focus on environmental health and sustainability, including composting and solid waste management. Building IQ is looking at all of the city’s buildings to see how they can improve efficiency. Kids First addresses the challenge they have with child care. Aspen is also looking to increase water storage.

IV. **Resort Spotlight: Aspen Skiing Company, Auden Schendler, VP of Sustainability**

Aspen has been stereotyped as a place of conspicuous consumption but it was never designed to be that. The founders said it was a place that opened you up to new ideas. Art in society pushes us to a new way of thinking and Aspen has done that through a combination of art, culture, music and sustainability. Aspen Skiing Company started thinking about what they could do to make a meaningful difference. Like the Ski Co., all of our mountain towns have unique power in that we can share sustainability practices with the guest. Auden suggested we need to talk about the problem and work on the action more explicitly. Climate is the umbrella issue for everything else. Sea levels are rising to the point it will decimate coastal areas which will disrupt the economy and affect ski towns. We need to look at systems such as energy cooperatives and get engaged to make big change. Folks in the Aspen Valley worked over many years to get on the Holy Cross Coop board. Think about where your leverage is and where your power is. Aspen Skiing Company uses their advertising to focus on climate with the goal to mobilize individuals. Outdoor Rec has more participants than the NRA has members but the outdoor rec community hasn’t been asked to mobilize. Trade groups in the outdoor industry have historically been horrible about talking about Climate, but that has really changed. Auden stressed that we can create an aspirational vision as mountain towns.

V. **Hanging Lake Active Management: Rearview Mirror of Season 1**

Lisa Langer, Director of Tourism Promotion, Visit Glenwood Springs

Max Forgensi, Mountain Sports Administrator, Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger District, USFS

Debra Figuero, Manager, City of Glenwood Springs

Mr. Forgensi stated that the USFS needs help from communities to promote stewardship. Many areas, including Hanging Lake have the challenge of far too many visitors. The Holy Cross Ranger District had seven employees working just the parking lot of Hanging Lake. Visitation doubled in the last five years and there were 184,000 visitors in 2017. That is four people every 100 feet. They spent seven years on the NEPA process for the Hanging Lake active management plan but that can hopefully be shortened to four years for communities that want to do something similar in the future. They developed a

sustainable management plan and the objectives have been met. This solution was a partnership with the City of Glenwood Springs and a private shuttle provider – so a P3 project. During high season, visitors need to secure a reservation and pay \$12 for the required shuttle. Off season visitors still need a permit but can drive and park. The daily capacity of shuttles is 615 people. Now the USFS spends less time doing enforcement and are providing a better guest experience. So far this year they have had 75,000 visitors so a significant decrease. Mr. Forgenski encourages us all to look for opportunities to support the USFS in managing our local forests.

Hanging Lake is important to the Glenwood Springs economy. The USFS reached out to the City with a request to partner and it led to a collaborative agreement to manage Hanging Lake. A challenge from the city's perspective was learning how differently the USFS operates. There was lots of media attention on this grand experiment. No one was sure how it would work, but good partnerships made it possible. Debra Figuero explained that the City was under a very tight timeline to get the shuttle system set up and they began with an RFQ. The shuttle service was a success and they essentially broke even. The effort won an award from the Governor's Office and received technical assistance from the EPA

Lisa Langer explained that Hanging Lake (HL) was the top visited destination on the Glenwood Springs tourism website. They had stopped marketing HL, and instead only included the how tos and educational messages. They focused on Leave No Trace education, offered alternate hikes, and encouraged off peak visitation. The local tourism office helped fund a USFS Ranger for a few seasons. They partnered with VOLPE for management discussions around transportation. Visit Glenwood Springs hosted the reservation system. They brought destination marketing expertise to this effort, including branding and integrated the Colorado Tourism Office/Leave No Trace "Care for Colorado Principals". The reservation page has large visitation. The shuttle provider uses the ice rink for pick up/drop offs and that has brought more people into town, whereas before they might have just driven right through to HL.

With fewer people visiting HL they are seeing fewer violations. There was a NY Times article about over tourism and the article featured the Hanging Lake partnership as an example of what we can do right in destination tourism.

Discussion:

There were very few complaints about the new reservation, permit and shuttle system. Local residents love HL and were glad to see it protected. USFS still had staff at the gate blocking the parking lot this season to educate visitors of the new system. They might consider offering a local's discount or school group discount in the future. They did see an attempt by someone to buy and resell tickets and the shuttle service provider contacted that individual and explained that is not allowed. Larger groups need to call to set up a reservation. The shuttle breakeven is 70% occupancy. The shuttle company took a lot of risk and paid rent for use of the ice rink lot. Every year the plan will be reviewed as it is an adaptive management plan. 5% of every permit sale goes back to USFS/City partnership.

VI. Stand Up Paddleboards or Great Blue Herons? Managing Conflicting Community Values

Mel Yemma, Planner, Town of Crested Butte

Noel Durant, Executive Director, Crested Butte Land Trust

In Crested Butte there were increasing conflicts between the river, the Blue Heron rookery and recreation, specifically standup paddle boarding (SUP). When a local SUP YouTube video got significant attention, they had to address the issue. The Land Trust has strong conservation values to find balance between scenic, wildlife, recreation and agriculture. The river is bordered by both town-owned and BLM land.

The first step was getting all partners at the table: Town of Crested Butte, Land Trust, BLM, the water conservancy district, commercial outfitters, Gunnison County, division of wildlife, and two local nonprofits made up the working group. A facilitator was hired to do six meetings that got them to a draft work plan. They presented at one council meeting and had one community forum. The meetings were closed, but minutes were public. They were continually engaged with the media that gave locals a good understanding. There was no consideration around shutting down the river, but instead looked to balance uses including making it clear who the landowner was and to be respectful of the land. Ag issues also needed to be addressed and barbed wire was replaced with fencing that had fewer safety concerns.

The hardest sell was a “no float” period on a 12 mile stretch of the river until after July 15. This was voluntary with the public and other options for floating were offered. Commercial use is not allowed but it was happening and so that too was addressed at this working group. The need for infrastructure like bathrooms and parking was considered as part of the process. This 2019 Slate River Floating Management Plan takes an adaptive approach so they will analyze how it worked after a year. There were other coalitions formed that were against the plan, so they realized more work needed to be done and the Working Group was reconvened.

Outreach and education were a big focus, including the installation of signage and a physical presence to interact and educate users. Local SUP businesses were communicating the messaging too. They had to build an understanding around the ethics of a valuable community asset with multiple landowners and users. They recognized that all partners needed to use consistent language, so they developed an MOU for this purpose.

Key lessons learned: A positive working group dynamic is important, human presence on-site is key, a community-based solution is critical. The Working Plan will need to be adapted, the effort will face funding constraints and they know that issues will continue to arise. This process can be utilized on a broad range of issues. The whole process took less than a year.

VII. Climate Discussion

Aspen’s Climate Action Toolkit: Ashley Pearl, Climate Action Manager, City of Aspen

Aspen sees the impacts of climate change on a day to day basis. The economy, forests, wildlife, and infrastructure are all impacted. It will take all of us to make a change. Aspen created a sustainability office in 2004, produced a climate action plan in 2007 and updated that plan in 2018. Council has climate action goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 30% by next year, 80% by 2050. They might set an interim goal. The City is focused on the issues that the city has some control over. There needs to be benefits to the community beyond just emission reduction such as to enhance public safety, build resilience, etc.

Their Climate Action Plan has 46 actions and 25 are in progress. Implementation priorities are composting, working towards renewables, and focusing on electric vehicles. A lot of the work needs to happen at the state and federal policy level, so the City of Aspen engages heavily with CC4CA and Mountain Pact. We can’t just do policy and just do local work – we need both. As of 2017, emissions are down 20% since 2004, and during that time the economy has grown.

Their Climate Action Toolkit can be utilized by other communities to save them the 1.5 year process that it took Aspen to develop it. Ms. Pearl hopes the work Aspen has done and the tool kit can be useful to other CAST communities.

Jacob Smith, Executive Director, Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA)

CC4CA members are primarily ski towns and suburbs and the organization leverages the voice of these local communities into state policy. Polling data shows the belief in climate change and that it is human caused is low but improving. The level of concern (currently 66%) is growing. There is a wide and widening partisan divide on belief that climate change is human caused: 78% D vs 31% R. But there is a strong bipartisan support for solutions such as renewables and EVs. Latina/o voters tend to support climate action.

Suggestions from polling data:

Need to personalize and localize communications, balance threats and hope, social validation, preempt counter arguments, and highlight co-benefits of climate action. Repetition of messaging cannot be overstated. The term “climate disruption” is better received by skeptics than “climate crisis”. Advocating for “not failing behind” is a powerful message. Tying climate change impacts to public health resonates with people. Two other key issues are who is talking about the issue (local electeds, moms, scientists) and those that aren’t talking about it (politicians.) Carbon pollution is a term that all can relate to.

Discussion:

Aspen’s Building IQ , if passed, would require 70% of the commercial square footage to track energy use over time. You often see a 2% reduction in energy use after one starts tracking their bills. There might be a bill at the state legislature to benchmark energy use for larger buildings.

Work with design and architectural community to implement energy-friendly buildings.

Aspen’s Climate Action Plan brought a group of 40 people together. They were all advocates that never before had a formal role. This was a chance for the City to connect with them. Aspen has an incentive program where every department sets sustainability goals and if achieved, they get a bonus. This is a big motivator. To get buy-in from city employees, propose the problem or challenge and ask them to be engaged in finding solutions.

How do you explain what Net Zero looks like to the community? A positive term but few know what that means.

Legislative Priorities:

There is lots of momentum around climate issues and some of that momentum should carry over to the next legislative session. Rulemaking proceedings are in process as a result of last years’ legislation. It is important that the regulations are crafted in a way that the intent of the legislation is met. There is a lot to be optimistic about in that there is growing awareness and support for climate action.

Mountain Towns 2030-Net Zero Summit

Mayor Beerman highlighted what a successful event this was. Summit attendees agreed to three actions and one of those was regional collaboration. Park City is talking with Paul Hawkin and the Draw Down Fund to see if they would do a list of actions specific for mountain towns.

Park City was commended for their work on the Summit. Attendees were from diverse backgrounds. Rob Davie’s presentation inspired and provided clarity and he will be coming to several Colorado communities this winter. The event provided a great bi-partisan call to action that action won’t happen

at the federal level and needs to be driven locally. Having the ski industry in attendance was positive. The event video will be up on the website soon.

Summit County and its municipalities will host the next Net Zero event Sept 30-Oct 1-2, 2020 in Breckenridge.

VIII. Updates/Other Business

Short Term Rentals: Discussion with Sen. Rankin and Rep. McCluskie

Telluride last year elected not to put a tax on STRs on the ballot, but it has come back as a citizen initiative. A statewide look at this would give uniformity and would also keep a level playing field. Exempting primary residences is one option. Another criteria might be an exemption if rented less than 30 days. Denver is an example of actively enforcing STR regulations. Sen. Rankin would like to see tax reductions as part of the solution. Crested Butte is two years in and their regulations have worked better than expected. Their 3% excise tax generated \$300K in first year for affordable housing. Statutory counties don't have the options that home rule communities do. Counties do everything through land use permitting because they don't have licensing tools. Steamboat Springs needs help with a definition or enabling legislation in defining "locally occupied". The state can help set some standards around safety for renters.

CAST members don't think taxing STRs as commercial will negatively impact tourism. Senator Rankin stated he was hearing there is a need for enabling not prescriptive legislation at the state level. Sen. Rankin and Rep. McCluskie would welcome input on what that might look like. Margaret Bowes will work with them to gather input from CAST members.

Short Term Rentals: Consideration of CAST/NWCOG research effort – Northwest Colorado Council of Governments was interested in doing a research effort highlighting best practices in STR regulations and asked CAST to partner. The membership felt that many of the regulations are too new to have shown solid results yet so we should give them some more time before investing in another STR research effort.

Mountain Town News Farewell, Allen Best

Allen Best stated that although he will no longer produce the weekly Mountain Town News, he sees this is not as an end but a beginning. He has been writing more on energy issues and that is where he wants to spend his time moving forward. There is a lot happening around energy in Colorado. He expressed appreciation that CAST Members push ahead on so many issues. Mountain Towns tend to lead. He asks CAST to continue a relationship with him and communicate with him on potential collaboration.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.