



**March 4, 2021
Zoom Meeting
Minutes**

I. Call to Order & Introductions, Dara MacDonald, President

II. Opening Remarks

Senator John Hickenlooper talked about the accelerated delivery of vaccinations and the importance of that to our mountain economies. The federal COVID relief package, including PPP and small business assistance and tourism support, is significant. There will be some support for state and local governments as well. There was lots of compromise in this relief package. The new Secretary of the Interior vote is today. She is an advocate of outdoor recreation and supports the BLM office staying in Grand Junction. He believes that, given the new administration, science will be central in public lands policy and decision making. There is discussion around forming a national office of outdoor recreation. The Senator is working to expand the low income tax credit to address affordable housing challenges. He is working with Sen. Bennet on the CORE Act which has bipartisan commissioner support in affected counties. Sen Hickenlooper talked about how effective, persuasive, and well-respected Sen. Bennet is in Congress. He salutes all the mountain town leaders who are working tirelessly in these challenging times.

Governor Jared Polis provided remarks via video.

Senator Bennet expressed his gratitude for the strong leadership that mountain towns have exhibited during this difficult time. The relief bill will include money for state and local governments, recognizing the impacts COVID has had on town and county services and budgets. He has co-sponsored two bills to expand the Child Tax Credit. Congress will be looking seriously at infrastructure and the Senator will advocate strongly for forest and water restoration efforts. The CORE Act has passed the House and the Senator has high hopes it will pass in the Senate. The Senator talked about the importance of broadband and he will introduce the Bridge Act. We need to plan for the increased popularity and pressures on our public lands. The renewal of the Land & Water Conservation Fund will help. We might need to do things differently in the future. He confirmed there are conversations about forgiving EIDL and PPP loans.

III. Legislative Update: Meghan Dollar, Legislative Advocacy Manager & Kevin Bommer, Executive Director, CML

(Slides are posted on the CAST website.) Meghan reviewed the bills that CML is following. CML is sponsoring a bill on local government authority to promote affordable housing that answers the “Telluride question.” This bill is opposed by developers and realtors. Allowing for takeout alcohol post-pandemic is the focus of one bill. There are multiple bills around criminal justice and the courts. The single use plastics bill would remove the pre-emption of local governments to ban plastics. There will be a large transportation funding bill that is focused on fees and creates new enterprises. Money for roads will be distributed through HUTF. CML & CCI sent letters supporting the current HUTF split to local governments. CCAT is voicing strong support for multi-modal funding.

III. Economic Update

Brian Lewandowski, Associate Director, Leeds School of Business

(Slides are posted on the CAST website.) Mr. Lewandowski provided a recorded presentation, and then joined the meeting for Q&A.

The morning session adjourned at Noon. The meeting reconvened for the afternoon session at 2:00 pm

V. Gateway & Natural Amenity Region (GNAR) Initiative

Liz Sodja, The Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, GNAR Initiative Coordinator

(Slides are posted on the CAST website.) Ms. Sodja provided an overview of the GNAR Initiative and highlighted their most recent efforts. Their Zoom Town series was very well received. Their website is a repository for all sorts of great information pertinent to resort communities. Margaret Bowes often shares information on GNAR events with the CAST membership and has submitted past CAST studies to GNAR to share on the Toolkit section of their website. There are a lot of synergies between GNAR and CAST. The two organizations are thinking and talking about many of the same issues and many of GNAR’s academic studies align with CAST interests.

VI. Respecting Place: Place-keeping, Place-making, & Place-less-ness

Jake Powell, GNAR Initiative Lead & Extension Specialist, Utah State University

(Slides are posted on the CAST website.) Place-keeping is a tapestry and every community decision either increases or decreases a sense of place. Progress and uniformity in the United States threatens uniqueness. Economic gains and community health are often at odds. Holding developers “feet to the fire” and demanding a good product is important. Towns need to be very deliberate if they want to maintain a unique character. Mr. Powell highlighted a three step process for Place-Keeping: Recognize (economic, social, culture, environment), Defend, and Strengthen. He believes ski towns have generally done this well and that is why people want to visit and live in these places. Place-keeping is hard work.

VII. The Mountain Pact: 2021 Priorities

Anna Peterson, Executive Director, The Mountain Pact

(Slides are posted on the CAST website.) The Mountain Pact works with local elected officials in 11 states to build resilience of mountain communities. There is a strong focus on public lands, climate, and natural resources. Many CAST members participate with the organization.

VIII. Other Business

CAST sent a letter to Governor Polis asking the State to extend the mask order. Rick Holman talked about Breckenridge's mandatory "Mask Zone."

The January 2021 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

The June CML conference has moved to September and CAST will hold a social reception at that event.

We plan to meet in-person in Telluride August 26-27, 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.