



## **MINUTES**

### **ECONOMIC VITALITY ADVISORY BOARD TOWN OF BUENA VISTA, COLORADO**

**Tuesday, January 16, 2018**

**7:00 AM**

**COMMUNITY CENTER – ASPEN ROOM  
715 EAST MAIN STREET**

**THE ECONOMIC VITALITY ADVISORY BOARD MAY TAKE ACTION ON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS AS PRESENTED OR MODIFIED PRIOR TO OR DURING THE MEETING, AND ITEMS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

#### **II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Jay Boyd, Lucas Smith, Jacy Doumas, Matt Litvay, Marcus Trusty, Dave Volpe  
Public: Amanda, Trey Shelton, Brent Jewell, Brett Mitchell  
Staff: Emily Katsimpalis, Hunter Hovenga, Phillip Puckett

#### **III. AGENDA ADOPTION**

Matt Litvay moves to adopt the agenda, Jay Boyd seconds. Motion carries unanimously.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 19, 2017**

Lucas Smith, Matt Litvay seconds. Motion carries unanimously.

#### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Amanda with Mt. Princeton Hot Springs is in attendance to observe the meeting, considering running for Trustee.

#### **VI. MARKETING, BRANDING AND WAYFINDING SUBCOMMITTEE**

Emily: RFP for Phase I of signage implementation will go to Trustees for approval at either their next meeting or the following meeting, pending design refinements. Will include one downtown welcome kiosk and seven highway auto navigation signs.

#### **VII. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**A. Introduction of Brent Jewell and Brett Mitchell**

Introduction of Brett Mitchell, owner of Topaz Lodge. Invited as part of EVAB conversations with businesses in town.

Brett: Town, Chamber, and County have done a pretty good job of promoting town and helping business. Business was hurt by recent highway project with a few minor remaining issues. Overall it has been good. Was caught somewhat off guard by business license fee increase.

Brett has caught word of possibility of lodging fee and would be opposed unless it had a clear, dedicated funding stream that would specifically benefit the lodging industry, which has already been hurt by proliferation of VRBOs and AirBnBs. New tax would disadvantage lodging businesses that already have to compete with Johnson Village and County businesses that do not have to pay BV taxes.

Introduction of Brent Jewell, owner/operator of Best Western for 20 years as well as the View Café Coffee and Gifts. In attendance due to Marcus's invitation to discuss proposal of lodging tax.

Brent and his wife came from larger hotel chains and decided to hang a shingle in BV.

Discussion of seasonal nature of lodging business and difficulty of finding reliable staff when wages are low and rents are high. Must rely on J-1 working VISAs with a 4 month time allotment, and must provide employee housing to make it feasible based on wages.

Brent must follow Best Western brand structures and a property improvement plan (PIP) which functions to maintain the integrity of the branded properties.

Discussion of passage of school bond which affects hotel owners twice via hotel and property ownership, as well as what taxes in BV are relative to major resort communities. Discussion of fear of taxing guests out of the market especially during off-season.

Brent Jewell: Tax might be feasible if booking was consistently full but that is not the case in the off season.

Emily provides clarification that it would be a fee and not a percentage tax.

Emily: Discussion was related to Town revenue streams and how we can create a year-round economy via projects from the new Economic Development Master Plan that could potentially be funded by a lodging tax.

Brent: Already pays a 1.9% lodging tax to Chaffee County Visitors Bureau. Buena Vista is potentially getting to the point where it could become its own marketing district.

Discussion of various ways of shifting lodging tax from County to Buena Vista and how marketing could be handled within Buena Vista, and alternative taxing structures.

Phillip: There have been discussions within the County of the amount of flexibility of the tax at that level.

Jay requests clarification on how the bed fee would work and be allocated in relation to the Chaffee County Visitor's Bureau tax.

Emily: CCVB tax can only be spent on marketing and not capital improvements.

Discussion of consumers at the margin and how a fee would affect the decisions of those potential customers over those who are not at the margin.

Wendell: The Visitor's Bureau funds can only be spent on marketing, the bed fee would allow for infrastructure projects.

Brett notes that it would help if businesses knew exactly what the money was going to be used and how it would benefit them specifically as opposed to being dedicated to a nebulous future use.

Discussion of underutilized ATV trail use.

Jacy: Some towns impose minimum night stays at VRBOs to give formal lodging businesses an advantage, similar ordinances could be researched for Buena Vista.

Discussion of ordinance enforcement on existing VRBOs in Town.

Brent: Salida has quadruple the amount of available rooms as Buena Vista. A certain level of a fee would price many customers out of the market.

Marcus: Are there any other amenities in BV that are being underutilized as an asset?

Brett: ATV trails are the major underutilized asset for the shoulder season.

Discussion of variety of trail uses in town and how they can be promoted.

Brent: Potential for expansion of food and beverage markets. ATV and snowmobile markets help business as well as festivals. Policy should be focused on not disadvantaging or advantaging any particular industry.

Trey: Where would customers on the margin potentially go instead?

Discussion of Salida and other lodging markets relative to Buena Vista.

Marcus has been in discussions with the BLM and Forest Service who have not shown much interest in adding amenities to the Four Mile recreation area, could have potential for improvement and untapped 4x4 markets.

Brett: County would likely be on board if the Town of Buena Vista showed initiative.

## **B. Officer positions**

Emily: Advisory Boards in Town can change or reaffirm Officer positions at the beginning of the year.

No changes desired by Board.

### **C. Town revenue streams discussion (see above)**

### **D. Certified Small Business Community program**

Wendell: There is a meeting on Thursday @ Watershed at 2:30 with Christina Hoffman to explore the idea. The County has expressed interest in taking the lead on the project, would need letters of support. Could possibly function as a good partnership that would allow Buena

Vista to continue with ongoing projects. It would be beneficial for EVAB to take part in the planning process.

Wendell was also appointed to the statewide economic development council, there is a growing trend towards supporting small businesses in rural parts of the State. There is a job opening for managing the Colorado Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund for Chaffee County.

Wendell has been busier in this part of the year than he has been in the past as far as discussions with businesses and families potentially moving to Buena Vista.

Dave Volpe: Is there any sense of why this is happening?

Wendell: Most of them bring up quality of life and desire for a "small town feel."

Discussion of amenities that bring people to BV including infrastructure, broadband, childcare, and transportation.

Phillip: Town has funding sources that need to be prioritized with a major focus of infrastructure development and maintenance and serving existing residents.

Discussion of level of representation of Buena Vista on Chaffee County Visitors' Bureau and how it can be better leveraged.

Wendell: Budgeting process is a great opportunity to get the public involved and invested in specific projects, could be a topic of discussion year-round instead of the last few months.

Discussion of shifting economic and demographic trends that will contribute to growth of Buena Vista.

Discussion of funding of ongoing trail projects in Town and changes happening in focus of Trails Advisory Board.

#### E. Downtown streetscape discussion

Emily: Main Street Board is looking at a downtown streetscape plan, but it is still in the beginning stages. Project arose out of parklet and other discussions related to vision for downtown. Board will be discussing it at their meeting this Thursday @ 9am.

Phillip: The Board of Trustees is looking at EVAB to advise in that area because it is a good cross section representative of interests across town.

Discussion of potential business guests for future.

#### F. Community Coffee for Buena Vista [Tabled]

Possibility for tabling the idea while other projects are hashed out, as well as how it would be defined and targeted for Buena Vista.

Dave: Some businesses will be meeting on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> at Watershed to discuss a sharing plan for employee benefits between small businesses in town.

Wendell: People in Salida have brought up the appeal of "clean eating" in Buena Vista.

**G. Envision Chaffee County/EVAB Liaison**

Jay is interested in getting more involved with the Envision Chaffee County group based on potential for expanding coordination of projects.

**H. Plan for First Quarter 2018: Guests, outreach and priorities**

**VIII. BOARD/STAFF INTERACTION**

Emily: Board of Trustees passed code change of extension of temporary vending permit to 360 days.

Jay notes the value of the learning process for making similar changes.

Emily: Town hired Jack Wyles for Airport Manager position.

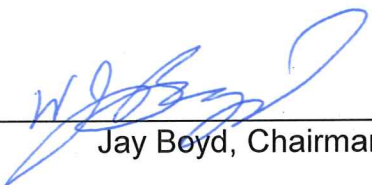
Local election is coming up on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Dave: Sangre is putting in a 2 megawatt solar project.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 8:31am.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
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Jay Boyd, Chairman