



**Glenwood Springs Tourism Promotion Board Meeting Minutes – Planning Retreat
Thursday, March 10, 2016, 12:30-4:30 p.m. Location: Courtyard by Marriott Glenwood Springs
Tourism Board Members:**

- Trent Blizzard, Chair, Blizzard Press – Citizen/Resident
- Krissy Clary, Vice Chair, Colorado Ranch House – Restaurant
- Nancy Heard, Treasurer, Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park – Tourism
- Dorian Ciolek, Best Western Antlers – Lodging
- Jeremy Gilley, Glenwood Hot Springs – Lodging
- Ken Murphy, Glenwood Adventure Company – Tourism
- Samantha Montgomery, PR Studio – Citizen/Resident
- Suzanne Stewart – GSCRA Board Representative
- Troy Hawks, Sunlight Mountain Resort – Citizen/ Resident
- Steve Davis – City Council Representative

Tourism Board Members Present	Tourism BOD Absent	GSCRA Staff Present	Guests Present
Trent Blizzard Krissy Clary Nancy Heard Dorian Ciolek Jeremy Gilley Ken Murphy Suzanne Stewart Troy Hawks Samantha Montgomery Steve Davis, City Council		Lisa Langer Cristin Barta Marianne Virgili	Marianne Virgili, CEO GSCRA Chris Romer, CEO Vail Valley Partnership (Facilitator) Vicky Nash, Resort Trends (PR Vendor) Drew Gorgey, Acting City Manager

12:32 p.m., Meeting was called to order by Trent Blizzard, Chair.

Approval of Minutes — February 11, 2016 Board Meeting. Nancy Heard moved to approve the board meeting minutes. Ken Murphy seconded and the motion carried.

The 2016 Tourism Promotion Board Retreat was facilitated by Chris Romer, CEO of the Vail Valley Partnership.

Understanding a volunteer advisory board – Chris surveyed the returning and new board members about what they felt their duties were as a volunteer advisory board. After input from various members of the group, Chris summarized that the three main responsibilities of this volunteer board are to implement strategy and vision (position and market Glenwood Springs), to oversee the budget (hold staff accountable to working within the budget), and governance. Drew Gorgey, acting city manager, briefly explained the Tourism Promotion Board's structure and its role within the city of Glenwood Springs according to city charter.

Individual agendas versus community visioning – Chris explained that the board's responsibility is to come to meetings as a community representative. Board members should think from a 30,000 foot level to ensure the tourism promotion fund is being used for the betterment of the community. He recommended creating ground rules, with the most important being to assume good intent from all present. It was stressed that each board member is here to represent a specific tourism segment of the community. Therefore, it is a board member's responsibility to vote on behalf of the community segment they represent and to leave personal agendas at the door. He also stressed the importance of standing behind the groups' decisions once they are made.

Fiscal oversight and the board's role in advising City Council – For the benefit of the new board members, Lisa Langer, VP of Tourism Marketing, explained the fiscal responsibilities of the board. Each year, Lisa presents the budget along with a marketing plan. The board reviews these documents, makes any necessary changes, and then sends the finalized budget recommendation to City Council for approval. Lisa also explained how the tourism promotion fund is garnered (a 2.5% pass-through lodging tax) and how it can be spent according to the city charter. According to the charter, a certain percentage of the fund must be kept in reserve. The remaining money is split between tourism promotion (92.5%) and a separate events fund (7.5%) governed by the city's Financial Advisory Board. Additional fiscal responsibilities include making recommendations to City Council when money should be allocated to projects from the reserve fund or when the existing budget needs to be amended.

For the edification of the board, Lisa explained the relationship between the city, the financial advisory board, and the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association. The Chamber is the tourism marketing vendor, contracted by the city. The Chamber used to have a separate board to manage the budget, but the city created the tourism promotion advisory board to ensure transparency.

Colorado Sunshine Laws – The tourism promotion board must follow the Colorado Sunshine Laws because the fund is public tax based. Under the Sunshine Act It is illegal for more than two board members to meet without publicly noticing the meeting. This stipulation includes phone conferencing and email correspondence. Meetings are public and must be recorded. Therefore, an administrator (staff member) must also be present.

Robert's Rules of Order – The tourism promotion board follows an amended version of parliamentary procedure. Procedurally, there always needs to be a motion and a second, followed by a call for discussion. This system is used so everyone is heard and has a vote but also ensures there is a civil way to limit discussion while working in collaboration.

Board role: strategic versus task driven – Chris asked the group for the "big picture" items that the board should focus on in 2016. Since there would not be time to dig into each item, he then asked the group to vote on a few topics to tackle at the board retreat. These items will help form upcoming board meeting agendas.

Topics included:

- Increased funding for tourism marketing
- Impact of changes to lodging inventory channels - e.g AirBnB and VRBO
- Visitor Mix/Demographics, lodging tax versus sales tax (what is a good balance)
- Grand Avenue Bridge construction - improving tourism industry engagement around the project
- Events
- Improve mission clarity - define roles and eliminate overlap between the DDA, the city, the tourism promotion board, the financial advisory board, and the Glenwood Springs Chamber to maximize collaboration and efficiency
- Regionalism – leverage larger budgets from neighboring resort communities to maximize GWS reach
- Market research and surveys – demographics are changing/need for new data
- Content creation and marketing assets (e.g. updating photo library and licensing of photos)
- Defining what, if any, public stances or public policy feedback the board should engage in
- Educating locals about the importance of tourism and appropriate uses for the tourism promotion fund
- Hospitality customer service training

The group all agreed that growing the tourism promotion fund was essential to stay competitive.

Suzanne moved to create a task force that would work on strategies to increase funding for the tourism promotion fund. The motion was seconded by Ken Murphy and carried.

The task force will include Suzanne, Ken, Dorian, Marianne, Lisa, Cristin, Jeremy, Trent, Steve, and Krissy.

In addition to increasing funding, the board also voted to discuss creating content and marketing assets, improving the clarity of the mission, and future visitor demographics. Cristin and Lisa asked that due to limited time remaining in the retreat that the group not speak to content creation as they agree it is a priority and will be undertaken internally. The group agreed and also decided it would be futile to discuss mission clarity without the other entities present. Therefore, the remainder of the retreat was focused on future visitor demographics.

The board agrees that there has been a recent shift in the type of visitor that is coming to Glenwood Springs. There is still a strong representative of families seeking affordability and couples/empty nesters in the shoulder seasons, but now there are also visitors with money looking for experiences. Historically, people visited for two days, now with the variety of activities longer stays are more common.

Chris asked the board "who does Glenwood Springs want as a customer moving forward?" Should the focus be on overnight visitors or on day trippers? Ken asked if we take money from overnight visitors would this compromise room nights (i.e. the tourism promotion fund). Jeremy Gilley stated that day trippers often visit, fall in love with Glenwood Springs, and then return as overnight guests. It was suggested that marketing efforts should encourage tourists to hub in Glenwood Springs and explore neighboring areas. With this philosophy in mind, Trent suggested moving some summer budget to marketing for increased day tripper traffic.

There was some objection to this course of action. Most of the board agreed that they are feeling a shift in visitor demographics, but they felt that more information on current Glenwood Springs' visitors is needed. For example, Nancy Heard informed the group that from their surveys they discovered 40% of their guests were staying with family and friends, a surprisingly large figure. The group agreed that this speaks to the need for an updated visitor survey.

Ken Murphy moved that staff look in to research firms and associated costs to present at the April board meeting, ideally with a plan that could be implemented by Memorial Day weekend. Jeremy seconded and the motion carried.

Election of officers – Chair, Vice Chair and Treasure: Lisa reviewed the current board positions: Trent, Chair; Jason Keenan, Vice Chair (no longer living in the area); and Nancy Heard, Treasurer.

Nancy Heard moved to nominate Trent as Chair. Ken Murphy seconded and the motion carried.

Ken Murphy moved to nominate Krissy Clary for vice chair. Trent Blizzard seconded and the motion carried.

Ken Murphy moved to nominate Nancy Heard for treasurer. Suzanne Stewart seconded and the motion carried.

Ambassador program bid – Sam Montgomery followed up on the board's request from last month's meeting for a proposal from PR Studio to manage an ambassador program. PR Studio staff could handle two part time (20 hours/week) employees, Memorial Day to Labor Day (16 weeks). The ambassadors would be trained on bridge construction, wayfinding, and would be unbiased in terms of business recommendations. For this scenario, estimated cost would be \$30,000 plus \$5,000 for branding. Several board members think that more people are needed for the program to work effectively. Ken Murphy suggested increasing the visitor information budget to have the Chamber hire and manage the Ambassadors. Both PR Studio and the Chamber will come back to the board with proposals that include more coverage.