

VISITOR IMPROVEMENTS FUND ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 8, 2012
REGULAR MEETING
Noon * City Hall Conference Room

The regular meeting of the Board was called to order at 12:07 p.m. by Chair Jim Voorheis.

PRESENT ON ROLL CALL: Board Members Blair Bracken, Will Cross, Gil Frontella, Keith Lambert, and Jim Voorheis.

Ms. Bracken made a motion to excuse Kevin Kelley and Ryan Mackley from today's meeting; seconded by Mr. Cross; the motion passed unanimously.

OTHERS PRESENT: Kristy Christensen, Deputy City Clerk; Nathan Lindquist, Planner; Helen Rogers, Project Manager, Downtown Development Authority; Frank Ladd, President/CEO, Rifle Area Chamber of Commerce; and Kasey Beres, Member Services/Tourism Director, Rifle Area Chamber of Commerce.

ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 10, 2012 REGULAR MEETING

Mr. Cross made a motion to approve the minutes as amended; seconded by Ms. Bracken. The motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON ADVERTISING FROM RIFLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Frank Ladd and Kasey Beres of the Rifle Area Chamber of Commerce gave an update to the Board on the progress of the marketing and advertising for Rifle. Ms. Beres presented to the Board the advertisement placed in the High Country Angler. They have scheduled to advertise in four additions of the High Country Angler. The High Country Angler is published quarterly and has state wide distribution. The City's local events are published in the Elevation Outdoors Festival guide. Some of the events listed are the Rifle Rendezvous, Garfield County Air Show, and the Centennial Concert Series.

The Visitor Information Center is experiencing an increase of visitors from last year. The Information Center has shown an increase of 119 visitors for April, 2012 compared to April of 2011.

The Rifle Area Chamber of Commerce Facebook page has continued to grow in popularity. The Facebook page data consists of: 900 new fans, 350,000 friends of people who like the Facebook page, and 70,000 people saw a sponsored story or ad weekly.

The Chamber would like to try some marketing in the Denver area via television or radio advertisements. They estimate this advertising would cost approximately \$3,000 to \$4,000. This advertising was not listed in the original proposal, but they have realized some saving on previous advertising and still have contingency monies, so this would not cost the VIF any additional funds.

DISCUSS THE STATE OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY IN THE GRAND VALLEY AND HOW IT IMPACTS RIFLE

Mr. Cross discussed his concerns about the local hotels and their future viability. He feels the area has too many hotel rooms while currently losing demand. He believes the hotel industry needs to have 70% occupancy rate in order for them to add to bottom line and have enough money for marketing. The local hotels as a group have not reached an annual occupancy rate over 50% since May of 2009. He believes the hotels are under duress and are not realizing enough profit to advertise and promote themselves. Mr. Cross would like to know if the Board supports the idea of suggesting a moratorium on building new hotels in the area. He feels the area cannot support another hotel. The market would be too saturated.

Mr. Lindquist, Planner for the City of Rifle was in attendance at the meeting and noted Mr. Cross' concern.

DISCUSS A PLAN TO INCREASE VISITORS TO THE AREA AND POSSIBLY THE FORMATION OF A DISCOVERY 9 GROUP (D9)

Mr. Cross presented the idea of developing a Discovery 9 Group. The D9 Group is an economic development group that can consist of unemployed people, an entrepreneur, and an educators who work together to create new jobs and attract businesses.

Rifle Regional Economic Development Corporation (RREDC) is considering this opportunity already. They are discussing modeling a D9 Group after Grand Junction's D9 Group.

DISCUSS GRANT CYCLES AND A PROCESS FOR A FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON USAGE OF THE GRANT FUND.

Mr. Lambert has suggested the idea of having grant cycles. Grant cycles would make the process more budget friendly and help the Board distribute grants to the focal points in budget and not over expend in one area. The Board would like to proceed with quarterly grant cycles. Grant requests would need to be submitted two weeks prior to meeting.

The Board would also like to implement a follow-up report. The follow-up report would provide the Board with documentation that the grant money is being spent in the manner that it was intended.

Mr. Lambert made a motion to approve quarterly grant cycles; seconded by Ms. Bracken. The motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON THE RIFLE BOAT RAMP

Mr. Frontella reminded the Board of the May 15th meeting on the design and construction of the Rifle Boat Ramp. The meeting will include CDOT, Army Corps of Engineers, and Colorado River Engineering.

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

New Ute Theatre

We should have construction cost estimates soon. The engineering drawings for the electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and structural design are at 80% completion. We are still waiting to hear if the theatre meets requirements of the HUD/DOT grant to pay for the pro forma.

Tour De Downtown

Nathan Lindquist reported that he felt the Tour De Downtown was a successful evening. Amelia Shelley of the Garfield County Library counted 130 people in attendance. Eighteen businesses participated in the poker walk. Nathan thanked the Board for their support.

The meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Kristy Christensen
Deputy City Clerk

Jim Voorheis
Chair