

Minutes

Moab Area Travel Council Advisory Board Meeting March 25, 2010 5:30pm Grand Center

Members Present: Bob Greenberg (Council Liaison), Jason Taylor, Steve Wang, Mark Stuenkel, Fiona Raison, Colin Fryer, Arlo Tejada, John Knowles, Bob Jones , Rachel Paxman

Members Absent: none

Staff: Marian DeLay, Tina Snyder

Guests: Melinda Brimhall, Lisa Church, Beth Logan, Kris Schwalen,

- **Meeting Called to Order:** 5:30pm by Arlo.
- **Approval of January minutes:** Mark made a motion to approve the December minutes, Jason 2nd the motion, after clarification on the TRT ordinance changes that were tabled in January were those for the proposed penalty changes, the minutes were passed as written with none opposed. Bob Jones arrived and chaired remainder of meeting.
- **Public Q & A:** Beth Logan, representing a small property, stated that she wants to support what is best for the county and has no problem with reporting monthly. Kris Schwalen, representing Adventure Inn, Silver Sage, Inca, Moab Realty, and stated that as a small business owner, the time it takes to do the form monthly as opposed to quarterly is cumbersome to her and she, along with the other properties she represents, is opposed to monthly reporting.
- **Discussion and Action Items:**
 - **Monthly only filing status:** Marian presented a copy of the letter that was sent to every lodging property and stated an article also appeared in the Times Independent last week. She reported that in response, the Adobe Abode, Cali Cochitta, 3 Dogs and a Moose, Up The Creek, and Pack Creek Campground, all said no. Arlo asked for the most up to date TRT report as it could reflect and Marian responded that all she could report would be for year-end total figures and January monthly figures which were down 2%. Colin remarked that this fact identifies the problem the filing status change could fix.

Bob stated that it should be understood that this was not meant as a punishment, but rather a means of being able to adjust marketing decisions to trends. Jason inquired if Moab was unique in that the transient tax was collected quarterly and Marian said that we were not unique, that many counties report quarterly. Colin said that at the state level, the other counties have up-to-date numbers to report to the state. Steve very passionately commented on behalf of the small business, he

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felt that it created a undue burden during lean times, that it was unnecessary and that based on the responses from the businesses tonight, as well as in the previous poll, it was unwanted. He did not feel it would make a difference in marketing.

Colin disagreed that the time it takes to fill out the form is a burden and that the tax is collected for the benefit of the community and should be passed through as soon as possible. Bob G. stated that all business owners should know their monthly sales and that it shouldn't be that big of a burden to fill out this form. John stated that his business went to monthly tax reporting and he felt it was easier to come up with one month taxes rather than 3 months and that it only takes 5 minutes to fill out the form, write the check and mail. Marian reported that quarterly properties are the ones that do not pay and that it actually cost us money to collect because they can't pay and then the fines start and \$30.00 turns into \$600.00.

After further discussion Mark moved that the Travel Council recommend to the County Council that all lodging properties be moved to monthly reporting and payment as of January 1, 2011. Jason 2nd the motion and the motion carried on a 6 to 2 vote with Steve and Arlo opposed and Bob J. abstaining.

- **TRT Ordinance recommendations:** Since a portion of the penalty recommendations mentions quarterly properties this item was tabled indefinitely.
- **Out of county business listings:** The Travel Council contacted the County Attorney to discuss the issue before us regarding advertising businesses that are not located in Grand County. We asked them to go over the resolution that created the Travel Council and any other documentation relative that would require the coverage of businesses outside of Grand County. Marian presented the board with Attorney Todd Jenson's findings, which are:
 1. There is no legal problem with excluding businesses that are not located in Grand County. (he stated this is not done on a state level either that only business in the state are included in state collateral.)
 2. The Travel Council should continue to do business as usual.
 3. The point is to drive Grand County tourism to Grand county businesses and to do otherwise would be outside the Travel Council mission.
 4. There is no legal basis for their request,
 5. The Travel Council Advisory Board should make any necessary changes to the Collateral Policy to make it clear and understanding document, and send it to the County Council for resolution.

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Marian told the board that as a result of this opinion changes were made to the existing collateral policy and was being presented to the board for them to approve and send to the County Council for resolution. Bob J. suggested they move on and discuss the collateral policy.

- **Collateral Policy:** Marian presented the board with a copy of the current policy with changes recommended by Bob G. and her, based on the attorney's opinion. Steve inquired what the words good standing meant in 2 c of the policy. He wonder what, outside of taxes not being paid could put a business in "bad standing". Discussion followed on different definitions and why it should be included in the policy. There was some discussion on the clarity of having "and" connecting all the items rather than having that "all the following" must be met. Rachel said that if a property doesn't pay they should not be included in collateral and Marian assured her this collateral policy would do just that if passed. Bob G. suggested that some additions be made that could allow the five businesses that approached the Travel Council to participate in collateral. His suggestions were that after 2e that it say "or" and that a 2f & 2g were added that would state f) is a tourism related business that has provided and conducted adventure activities in Grand County continuously prior to the establishment of the Travel Council; and g) that in the judgment of the Travel Council promotes overnight lodging in Grand County. Bob said this would make it possible to look at these five businesses and give them a possibility of being in the collateral. Marian voiced her disagreement, as did Mark, Arlo and Jason. After much discussion, it was determined that the following changes should be made:

2(d) – Add the word "business" before the word "location".

2(e) - Add "and lodging" before the word "sales."

6 – Replace with "at the total discretion of the Grand County Travel Council collateral may or may not have business listings."

Mark made a motion that the Collateral Eligibility Policy be presented to the Grand County Council with the changes made above, excluding the addition 2f & 2g as suggested by Bob G, for approval. John 2nd the Motion and after further discussion, the motion passed with a vote of 5 for, 1 against, and 2 abstaining.

- **Weather Station:** Marian gave a report that Tina & Callie had researched. She said that as for a National Weather Station the NWS only puts them in at airports. Marian said the cost of purchasing a Weather Bug station was \$7,000 and the cost of adding a camera was \$8,000. There was a discussion on why it would be a benefit to Moab. Bob J. said that he wasn't sure how important it was to have a more accurate temperature but felt it merited some discussion. Jason stated that while he thinks that people pay attention to the weather, he isn't sure it is worth a \$15,000 investment. A discussion followed and Bob felt we should think about it and perhaps get more information.

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- **Director's Report, Marian DeLay:**
 - **Tourism Conference:** Marian asked that board members consider attending the Tourism Conference in Logan on May 12-14th, as she felt that it would be great to have Grand County heavily represented. She stated that Grand County would be sponsoring a "Break Room" and doing a make-your-own granola bar. She asked each member to take a flyer and try to attend.
 - **KCYN:** From April 15th – October 15th, KCYN radio will begin a new program that airs 7 days a week from 7 to 9 AM. The program will give trail info, river rate, news, weather, events, etc. They are selling sponsorships and it will be a big benefit to visitors.
 - **UOT Co-op Grant:** Marian reported that she had submitted the final report for the Co-op Colorado grant and that while the overall result was an increase in Colorado visitors, there was an increase reported by some businesses and a decrease reported by others. Thompson Welcome Center Colorado visitation was up as well. She said it was a strange year with our TRT being down 2%, but Arches visitation up 7¼%. Marian said it is time to start working on the next round which is due in June. She stated that the Utah office of Tourism was awarded 6.95 million which is down just slightly from the 7 million they had last year. Colin said they were surprised they got as much as they did and stated that the Governor turned out to be very supportive of tourism. He also thought the legislature members who visited Moab were also very supportive.
 - **TRT Report:** Marian reported that TRT is down 2% for the end of 2009, the collections were 1,468,957 with 2 properties outstanding and one of those properties 6 months outstanding. Bob asked Marian to email the 2009 TRT report showing the monthly figures to all the board members.
 - **Event Grants:** Wabi Sabi submitted their final report and the event was a huge success with over 600 participants from Canada, Mexico and 12 states including some as far away as Florida & Texas. Marian reported that Jeff Foster, the Arena Manager, said it was a great event for OSTA to show its diversity. She also reported that the Red Rock Racers submitted their final report but they did not spend the entire \$17,000 advertising their 5 events and therefore would not be getting the second half of their grant.
- **Committee Reports:**
 - **Chamber Report, Jason Taylor:** Doing good, nothing new to report
 - **Marketing Report, Colin Fryer:** Colin reported that the marketing committee has not met since the last meeting, have one scheduled in the next two weeks and will work diligently on the co-op policy and our summer/fall marketing plan
 - **California, Steve –** Steve said they had not met. Marian told Steve she has emailed her contact in California and she was putting together a list of businesses for them.
 - **Airport Report, John –** We have the report that the airline is not doing a good job of landing in Moab and cancelling flights, Bob G says that they

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are getting better, but that it is a system wide problem and that there is a management team working to solve the problems. Jason inquired about the signs at the airport and Bob G. explained why the ballooning info was on them and not the airport information.

- **Air service, Bob G.**– Bob G. said it was left for Marian to send out letters and copies of the power point asking for letters of support. Marian said she sent the out and only got 2 returned. Jason & Arlo both said they didn't realize they were suppose to respond to the materials they received. Marian said she would do an email follow up. Bob J. asked Bob G. if he could set some time guidelines and push forward before the season is over. Arlo said he would like to see us do a survey monkey where they answer a few questions like “how many people do you think would come through”, “would you use this service” etc. Arlo felt the statistics would be more helpful than just letters. Everyone thought that it was a good idea and discussed the matter further.
- **Board Member Comments:**
 - **Mark** - Who takes care of our signs out on the freeway, painting, etc. Marian said that were going to be addressing that in the marketing meeting and it was in the budget to fix them this year. Steve asked if a different design and Marian explained that the board would look like our other bill boards.
 - **Arlo** – On April 9th, we are doing a half-day river trip with UOT and UTIC and would like to see some of the board members there. Marian said she would send out invitations if Arlo got one to her.
 - **Bob G** – Are we going to send a letter to the businesses about the decision the Travel Council has made. Marian said she would do so.
- **Future Agenda Items:** Discussion on Staff & Board expectations of one another.
 - **Adjourn:** John made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34pm, Jason 2nd the motion, none opposed.