

Colorado Tourism Board Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2022

Attendance:

Board Members: Bob Stinchcomb, Tammie Thompson-Booker, Peter Piccolo, Nick Ragain, Rachel Brown, Alex Boian, Representative Matt Soper, Laura Valdez, Phil Washington

OEDIT: Eve Lieberman, Executive Director

CTO: Tim Wolfe, Director; Andrea Blankenship, Director of International Tourism; Taren Mulch, Director of Visitor Services; Andrew Grossmann, Director of Destination Development; Elizabeth O’Rear, Director of Grants and Funding; Shelley Cooper, Director for Marketing; David Fishman, Senior Manager of Operations; Natazshya Rodriguez, Brand Manager; Jackson Feld, Destination Stewardship Specialist; Kaiti Jacobson, Program Manager; Sami Wells, Grants and Funding Manager; Hilary Lewkowitz, Destination Development Manager; Hayes Norris, Communications Manager; Will Anderson, Administrative Coordinator; Hope Smith, International Promotions Manager; Christina Tuchman, Marketing Manager, Michelle Wulfson, Marketing Copywriter

CTO Contractors: Liz Birdsall, International Specialist; Barb Bowman, Destination Stewardship Contractor; Dave Santucci, Destination Development Consultant

Handlebar PR: Caitlin Johnson, Carly Holbrook

Miles: Hannah Brown

MMGY: Kim Lennox, Mira Whang, Jaime Bartow, Carrie Gill

Karsh Hagan: Kathy Hagan, Renae Newman, Joe Vollbracht

Meeting called to order at 12:05 pm

Welcome & Introductions, *Bob Stinchcomb, CTO Board Chair, Tim Wolfe; CTO Director*

- Introduction to Eve Lieberman, new Executive Director of OEDIT
- Discussion around remaining two Board Meetings for the fiscal year
 - Meetings are time-limited for deep dives on subjects
 - Proposal to have one “retreat” per year, potentially June, 2023
 - Proposal to look at moving May board meeting due to conflict of lining up with last day of legislative session
 - Follow-up to come from CTO for event proposals
- Approval of previous meeting minutes
 - Motioned by Pete Piccolo
 - Seconded by Phil Washington
 - Approved by acclamation

Director's Report & Budget/Audit Updates- *Tim Wolfe, CTO Director, David Fishman*

- Director Tim Wolfe
 - Roadmap 2.0 finalized
 - 2021 Tourism by the numbers & economic impact review
 - 2022 & Looking Forward projections
 - 2022 market growth flat
 - Many areas still behind pre-pandemic levels, including international, convention, domestic business, group travel
 - Denver hotel occupancy up to Nov. 2022 trending down from pre-pandemic levels
 - Mountain vacation rental levels down for the next four months, in part due to international travel restrictions not being fully lifted
 - Review of Grant Recipients
 - International Marketing forecast
 - Recovery began 2021, with full North American recovery expected in 2023
 - Visa wait times are negatively impacting this recovery
 - Denver recovering at about same pace as rest of the country, more so in leisure travel rebound
 - Strategy review
 - Recap of UK trade mission
 - Major initiatives overview from CTO
 - Includes new Marketing Portal, Michelin Restaurant Program, Welcome Center updates, Stewardship Council, Marketing Recovery Grants, Research initiatives
 - Question regarding if Colorado is perceived as an expensive destination and is that why recovery is slower
 - Not necessarily, but market share is diluted with other areas opening to travel (CA, FL, NY, etc), but high US dollar and visa wait times are impacting recovery from international destinations
 - Conversation surrounding tax spending and how to stay competitive as a destination as other states begin pushing to bring in more tourism
- David Fishman, Senior Manager of Operations
 - Contracts list review & financial update
 - Next meeting budget changes will be covered
 - Final audit report had no findings or recommendations for the CTO

Destination Development Update- *Andrew Grossmann, CTO Director of Destination Development*

- Dark Skies program is going well and more updates to come as it continues through 2023
- Reimagine Colorado Tourism Update
 - Task 3 of the \$2.4 Million CARES Act grant CTO received in January, 2021
 - Review of program objectives
 - FY23 Reimagine Team listing
 - 19 total including production team, CRAFT facilitators & CRAFT industry mentors
 - Program Elements review for Reimagine Destinations Program & Reimagine Industry Associations
 - Reimagine Destination Partners listing
 - 10 new destinations & 14 repeat destinations

- Reimagine Industry Partners
 - 9 repeat & 2 new Industry Associations
- Status update
 - 24 destination assessments conducted
 - 22/24 workshops delivered
 - 14/24 workshop summary reports
 - 16/35 scopes of work approved
- Success stories from around the state highlights

International Update- *Andrea Blankenship, CTO Director of International Tourism*

- International Marketing
 - 2021 overall better than expected
 - Recovery has begun
 - CO is generally a desired destination
 - Headwinds include Visa wait times, inflation & strong US dollar
 - Visa wait times up to 2 years in some nations
- Importance of International
 - International tourists are Colorado's highest value tourist, spending 3X more than domestic tourists
- Recovery
 - Canada & Mexico recovering at similar pace to US
 - North America recovery expected in 2023
 - European recovery expected 2024
 - Longer-haul destination recovery expected 2025
 - Colorado as a whole is recovering better than the US at large
 - 2022 flight capacity exceeding 2019 levels
- EDA Fund Usage review
- Upcoming 2023 activities
 - Multiple trade shows, sales missions & FAM trips
 - Consumer campaigns in Australia, France, Germany, Mexico & UK
- Questions/Comments
 - Best international market for 2023 possibly Germany
 - Denver International Airport working toward Vision 100 & direct air link to Africa

Marketing Update- *Shelley Cooper, Deputy Director of Marketing*

- PR Update
 - Hayes Norris- CTO
 - Highlight of recent media coverage
 - Handlebar PR
 - Note of large feature in Hemispheres Magazine on United Airlines & upcoming prestigious feature in New York Times
- SMARInsights- *Denise Miller*
 - SMARInsights measures effectiveness of advertising campaigns for the CTO
 - Research methodology includes surveying travelers, comparing their reception of Colorado Tourism media advertising between those aware and not aware of
 - Review of how methodology behind research
 - Most recent surveys conducted from October-November 2022
 - Focused on Summer/Fall "Shine a Little Brighter" campaign & "Do Colorado Right" campaign
 - Spending on these efforts has gone down, but traveler awareness is increasing



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- Biggest ROI came from “Shine a Little Brighter” campaign
 - This campaign focuses more on bringing in travelers versus “Do Colorado Right” being more focused on sustainable travel while already in-state
- Travelers aware of Colorado advertising seek out travel information via official sites and publications at a much higher rate
- Advertising had a larger impact on areas outside of Denver/ Cities of the Rockies travel region
- Colorado ranks among the highest in the nation for perceptions of sustainability, only behind Alaska & Hawaii
- Questions/Comments
 - CTO using this research to design marketing seasonally to see what is most effective
 - CTO is happy with the ROI, but funding going forward will be challenging and budget will have to work harder as the cost of media is rising and competing tourism markets have more money to work with

Wrap Up & Q/A

- *Bob Stinchcomb, Board Chair*
 - Next meeting will be held March 8th, 2023 and keep an eye out for May date changes and retreat communication

Meeting Adjourned at 2:00 PM

- Motioned by Tammie Thompson Booker
- Seconded by Pete Piccolo
- Meeting adjourned by acclimation