

Convention and Visitors Bureau
Board Meeting/ Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 15, 2005 – 8:15 a.m.

Meeting Call to Order: Marilyn Josephson

Roll Call: Present - Judy Heinmiller, Darsie Culbeck, Karen Hess, Shane Horton, Herb VanCleve, Marilyn Josephson

Absent - Tom Crandall, Jeff Butcher

Also Present - Lori Stepansky

Approval of Agenda: All approved

President's Report: Ferry Service – Marilyn proposed the question that Haines as a community band together to show the dissatisfaction of the AMHS schedule and current situation with pulling the Fairweather off-line. It was noted by Karen that it would be more effective for several members of the community to go to Juneau for the fly-in discussion taking place next week. Darsie suggested getting a petition started showing the community support for improved ferry service to Haines. Marilyn and Karen will meet with Robert to discuss writing the petition, as it is a community issue.

Old Business: Pavilion structure for dock – Lori indicated that her last discussion with Manager, Robert Venables, the architect design company came back with a figure of over \$400,000 for constructing the dock pavilion. Lori's last discussion with Robert about this also indicated that now she has returned from her trip, contacting the architect company would be pursued further. Shane questioned being able to write an RFP and have a local company construct the pavilion. Karen noted that the actual design has to be completed by an architect company. Karen stated that she participated with Lori and Robert in the initial conference call with the architect company. Karen also stated that she contacted Rod Pflieger of NWCA about the possibility of NWCA contributing financially to the project. Rod forwarded it to John Hansen, the president of NWCA, who forwarded it to a person in the organization that handles such requests. She wrote to Karen requesting additional information, which Karen sent to Robert. Karen has not heard yet from Robert about the requested information being sent on to NWCA. When Karen and Marilyn meet with Robert, they will ask him about the status of the pavilion. Judy noted that there is a potential issue about the land ownership of where the pavilion would be placed and suggested that there are concerns and interests about how the building would look proposing that the structure be designed to look like other Ft. Seward buildings. All agreed that designing the structure to blend

in with the Ft. Seward buildings should not be difficult and would be beneficial to the overall idea of the potential location.

Miami Cruise ship sales call - Karen has set up an appointment with Royal Caribbean and has requested one of two appointments with Norwegian and is waiting to hear about a possible appointment with Radisson. Karen will be down in Miami area anyway for a convention with a Holland America event, so March 7, is looking like the date of the appointments. If other appointments are not confirmed, Lori will be making her travel arrangements very soon.

Ballot initiative/NWCA - Lori stated that a few members of the CVB Board participated in a conference call about the ballot initiative for taxing cruise ship passengers. Marilyn questioned the status of the issue. Karen commented that she understands it is in the 'wait and see' position at this time as the state has 60 days to review the issue.

Logo/Branding campaign – Lori stated that Manager Robert Venables wanted to meet with her several weeks ago about options for pursuing the logo/branding campaign issue in a more cost effective way. They tried to meet before her recent trip but it did not happen. She will try to establish the meeting with him about this topic again but will proceed with writing the RFP in the next week. Lori also stated that she has communicated with Trevor Sellars of Aasman Design in Whitehorse about lower end options for successfully achieving this project and received positive feedback.

New Business:

Budget – Restructure was approved – Lori stated that her proposed plan for giving Julie Shook a raise with increased job duties as well as having three staff aides for the season with one being employed for 9 months was approved. Lori stated that the first draft of the budget was due in on the 11th of the month and a copy was included in the members' packets. Lori suggested the idea of having a position called Events Coordinator instead of the longer-term temporary employee which was an idea recently brought up at a Chamber luncheon. Herb noted that such a job would be a full-time, year-round position. Karen stated that such a position with more responsibilities at \$10 an hour was not enough and it should be at least \$12 an hour. Karen then suggested hiring the longer term temporary employee at \$12 an hour for 30 hours a week and extend the time frame of this employee working as an option while having the responsibilities of this position include events coordinator related duties. If the position shows itself to be required for year-round and things start improving with more events, it could be reviewed again next year to be budgeted as a full-time, year-round position. Lori indicated liking this idea as the temporary employee status of the position keeps the employee burden down in the budget. Shane Horton stressed how viable such a position would be to the community as there are events and activities that have taken place in the

past that Haines lost which might have been retained if someone was on the job focusing on solutions to problems that arise with such events. Darsie suggested for the other two temporary staff positions that Lori contact universities for intern options as he acquires staff through this program. Darsie will be sending Lori a list of university contacts to post an intern job opening and send her a copy of his job posting to model one for the CVB. Lori will also do some recalculating for a slight increase in pay for the longer-term, temporary employee position being included in her draft of the budget.

First draft has been turned in – As previously stated, Lori turned in her first draft of the budget by February 11.

Haines Day at Nugget Mall – Lori reported that John Venables is organizing a Haines Day at Nugget Mall on March 26 and may have acquired low cost hotel rooms. Herb will be going and doing a tractor pull event for the kids in the mall. Lori indicated that she might be going and setting up the Haines table. It was agreed that it is a good idea and John Venables was acknowledged for his enthusiasm and efforts for putting things like this together. It was noted by Judy that this event is taking place Easter weekend and all questioned the timing of this event. It was agreed that it might be a good weekend for this but it was also brought up that the snow-machining event on the Chilkat Pass takes place this weekend as well.

Directors Report:

SATW Fam Trip – Lori reported that the two itineraries for the SATW (Society of American Travel Writers) fam trip in April and May had to be re-written several times but were finally posted on the SATW website for the members to view and sign up for. Lori stated that Amy Cockerham informed her that the openings were filling up fast and were generating a great deal of interest. How many and who is signed up for these trips will be released next month. Lori reported that one itinerary was with a strong Tlingit Culture theme while the other was an outdoor adventure theme.

Computer training – Lori reported that she had met with Todd Rafferty and his brother, who recently moved to Haines and use to work for Microsoft, about software that interfaces with the HTML codes and software that would be better for streamlining information into the database system of the visitor center. Lori is awaiting news from Julie Cozzi about when a training session for Julie Shook and herself will be set up, but she anticipates being able to have some changes made to the web site relatively soon. Lori also stated that she has worked on other programs for web site management but is not up to speed with dealing directly with details of HTML code and because of this, it is not a simple maneuver to change colors and pictures, etc. The new software will improve this.

ABA Convention – Buses, Cruise Ships, and accommodations – Lori reported that her trip to Chicago for the American Bus Association convention went well and she found it very notable that 98 % of the companies there that have Alaska in their itineraries are associated with the cruise ships as they do land and sea tours. Lori said the itinerary possibilities that would benefit Haines broadened immensely as even though a lot of the tours deal with the Skagway cruise ships, Haines would have a good opportunity to take advantage of the scenario. Lori indicated that this convention was her first with ABA and if she had more knowledge about how it operated, she could have taken more advantage of opportunities, but she will be even better prepared for next year.

Holland America Meeting with Linda Huston – Lori reported that she, along with Karen and Marilyn, met with Linda in Seattle and the meeting went well. Lori stated Linda would be working with her to arrange another High School Senior luncheon and possible educational/environmental tours for the community. Karen stated that she knew Lori was a little reluctant to mention it, but Karen felt she could say with confidence that although nothing is definite yet, Holland is looking at increasing their calls to Haines next year with either two ships or more frequency from one ship which would average to about one ship a week.

Grant-writing workshop in Juneau – Lori reported that Foraker Group is having a grant-writing workshop next Wednesday in Juneau and she will be attending this.

Telephone – Bill review/phone system – Lori reported that she reviewed the Visitor Center phone bills and was able to cancel a monthly bill that had been coming in for an old 800 number that no one knew about. It was an 800 number used for Canadians to call the Visitor Center. There was also an old calling card account associated with this disconnected phone line that the 800 number was on. The contact name for the calling card was Susan Bell. Services of three-way calling and call forwarding were noted on the main line and discontinued. All together, about \$35 a month was eliminated from the phone billing. Lori also re-iterated issues of having the phone system for the Visitor Center rewired and updated as soon as the budget is approved while relaying the story of one of the Visitor Center phones overheating and creating a burning smell.

Ads for Haines – Lori reported Haines ads appearing in Alaska Magazine, Alaska Airlines, Alaska Business Monthly Powerlist, AAA Western Canada/Alaska Tourbook and on-line, Trailer Life Directory (print and on-line), Guidebook America On-line, and Sunset Magazine which she stated was getting a great deal of immediate response. Deadlines were met for Premier travel, Alaska Yukon Travel Guide, and the March issue of Alaska Magazine. New photos were also supplied to PPI Group, the

advertising/media company for Holland America, Carnival, and Princess in-room information.

VBA Board of Directors – Rod Pfleiger of NWCA contacted Lori about being on the board of directors for VBA, Visitors Benefit Alaska. Lori stated that VBA advocates ATIA issues and their main purpose is to educate Alaskans on the benefits of tourism in the state.

Heli-Skiing / OLN – Lori reported that she was told that heli-skiing in the Chilkat Mountains received recognition as a top adventure activity in the world on a recently aired program. She thought the program aired on OLN channel but was currently working to determine information that it may have aired on the Discovery Channel.

Food Network – Lori reported that a program that has aired on the Food Network previously highlighting Birch Boy Syrup products would be shown again on February 28 at 10:30.

Public Comments:

Set Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 15, 2005, Assembly Chambers, Public Safety Building.