

# Visit Bend Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2015

**Location:** Bend Visitor Center

**Present:** Doug LaPlaca, Kevney Dugan, Nate Wyeth, Tawna Fenske, Hank Therien, Lisa Sidor, Matt Williams, Dave Nissen, Greg Harper and Michelle Mercer.

**Guests:** Chuck Arnold (Bend Downtown Association), Bette Fraser (The Well Traveled Fork), Shannon Hinderberger (The Riverhouse), Rose McCulley (Hilton Garden Inn and Hampton Inn), Andy Goggins (Pine Ridge Inn), Stephen Hamway (The Bulletin), Jack Newkirk (The Oxford Hotel), Rocky Adrianson (The Riverhouse), Amanda (Super 8).

## Call to Order

Doug LaPlaca called the meeting to order at 8:00am. Introduction of staff, board and guests followed.

## Financial Report

Scott Greenstone was absent due to a family emergency. Doug LaPlace presented the FY2015 YTD finances to the Board in his absence.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, Visit Bend will present revised plans to the City of Bend.

Chuck Arnold asked whether the Visitor Development Fund allowed Visit Bend to bid on the middle school basketball tournament.

## Marketing Updates

Nate Wyeth updated the Board on the winter advertising campaign.

New app for the Bend Ale Trail will be circulated to the breweries for review.

Doug reported that we are fully into media planning for FY2016.

Northern California is a more complex market, so Visit Bend plans to hire a media planner. Dave Nissen asked how much that would cost. Doug

responded that a negotiated fee of 15% is typical, but that the details of the contract still need to be worked out.

Creative media will also be directed to California.

Greg Harper reported seeing an increase from California, also due to direct flights coming to Redmond.

## **Group Sales Updates**

Kevney Dugan briefed the Board on current bids, leads. Oregon Senior Games, advertising sales and updates.

Bend's shoulder season is a continued focus for events.

Kevney invited the Board and guests to feel free to ask him about how they feel their links are working.

Doug gave an update on Visit Bend's effort to bring Ironman to the area. Bend is a tough fit for that big an event. Recently, a possible venue idea fell through due to size restrictions and busy summer months. Visit Bend will continue to in their efforts.

Michelle Mercer inquired about the dates for the Oregon Chapter of the Future Farmers of America conference. Kevney reported that it will take place in March of 2016 and 2017.

## **Public Relations Updates**

Tawna Fenske presented highlights on recent press coverage, media pitches, and upcoming coverage and other PR initiatives.

Multi photo posts on Visit Bend's Facebook page are very popular. Questions stemming from waterfall photos are increasing. The photos link directly to Visit Bend's blog.

Doug LaPlaca asked what is trending in media? Tawna is seeing more interest in family and film. She is also seeing an uptick in golf.

Also very popular are in-the-moment posts, such as snow on patio furniture in town.

Also popular are posts of several photos, in which viewers are asked to name their favorite. This prompts lots of feedback.

Video on Facebook allows people to view rather than click on a link.

Dave Nissen made a comment about submitting short videos to Facebook. He experienced paddling on the Deschutes River, where he missed taping a beaver lodge, an owl flying over the river, and a herd crossing the road.

Jack Newkirk commented on the rising number of inquiries about the upcoming eclipse in 2017.

Doug LaPlace announced Tawna's reduction in hours due to her personal increase in authoring new books.

This led to the announcement of Visit Bend's new marketing manager position.

Dave asked if Visit Bend had received a flood of applications. Doug answered that we had, and mentioned the new cubicles being built.

Bette Fraser asked if Visit Bend had seen a rise in certain types of social media. Tawna answered that it depends on the demographics of the readers. Twitter is not as popular, and there seems to be more females on Facebook and Instagram.

Nate reported that family fun has moved into the top ten subjects on social media.

Doug recognized Visit Bend's creative staff with the announcement to the Board of winning the 2014 Outstanding Oregon Advertising Award.

## **Presentation of Visit Bend's Fiscal Year 2016 Business Plan and Budget**

Doug LaPlaca presented a general overview and the strategic plan of Visit Bend's FY 2016 business plan and budget. Detailed Z sheets are available for the Board's review.

Dave Nissen asked Doug to send the Board a breakdown on the Seasonal Advertising Allocation pie, as to where winter advertising goes, ie. Seattle.

Dave also asked for a comparison pie chart from 2007. Other years will allow him to look at progression and seasonal growth.

Doug reported that several good applications for grants for the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund.

Visit Bend is involved in conversations to create a regional partnership and brand for Bend's sports commission. This would be under the umbrella of the Central Oregon Sports Authority. Central Oregon Visitors Association, the Deschutes Fair and Expo Center, as well as Sunriver are talking with Visit Bend about how Bend is lacking a dedicated sports arena. Michelle Mercer asked if funding and design is in the works for a facility, and Doug answered that a feasibility study will be taking place.

### **Board Roundtable**

Matt Williams asked who is promoting the Bend Marathon, being held April 25<sup>th</sup>. The Pine Ridge Inn was not initially familiar with the event, and now report they are full for the weekend, due to the event. Kevney responded that the promoters are from Portland, but Visit Bend needs to work harder to let lodging partners know about these large events. At the end of March, the marathon had 1,200 runners registered for the marathon and half marathon. Dave asked if the marathon was a Boston qualifying event, and Kevney stated that he would find out.

Greg Harper asked if Visit Bend could add occupancy objectives to our reports.

No further comments from the Board.

### **Public Comment**

Chuck Arnold reported that website referrals to his Downtown Bend Association website has seen growth that mirrors that of visitbend.com.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30am.

Minutes taken by Lisa Sidor.

