

City of Fruita – Fruita Tourism Advisory Council
Regular Meeting – Minutes
March 28, 2024
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Kristy Driver, Mark Hamlin, Kelley Griffin, and Johanna van Waveren

Members Absent: James Williams, Kayla Bowers, and Libbie Early

Staff in Attendance: Shannon Vassen, Ciara DePinto, and Ammon Pierce

Guest in Attendance: Barb Bowman

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Johanna van Waveren, the Chair for the Fruita Tourism Advisory Council (“FTAC”), called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was present at the meeting.

2. Public Comment

Ms. van Waveren opened the meeting for public comment. After seeing none, or anyone that wanted to provide a comment to the FTAC, this agenda item was closed.

3. Guest Speaker – Barb Bowman from Care for Colorado

Barb Bowman spoke on behalf of Care for Colorado Coalition. Ms. Bowman spoke about the Stewardship Pillar, and how they formed a partnership with Leave No Trace. Together they developed the Colorado Leave No Trace Principles. These include know before you go, stick to trails, leave it as you find it, trash the trash, be careful with fire, keep wildlife wild, and share our trails and parks. As a result, they developed the Care For Colorado Coalition (CFC). This Coalition includes the National Parks and the Forest Service. The CFC has a new toolkit which includes a CFC Brand Book, CFC Logos, posters and print ads, trailhead signage, map module, brochures, stickers, and social media graphics. Ms. Bowman discussed what is in the toolkit and how communities are using it to educate both visitors and locals. She explained that the toolkit can be modified for each entity. She hoped that the FTAC would be interested in partnering with the CFC. Ms. Bowman asked what the biggest impact is. Ms. Van Waveren said that people staying on the trails was probably the biggest one. Ms. Griffin asked who paid for the toolkit. Ms. Bowman said that the Colorado Tourism Office paid for it. There was some discussion around using the CFC messaging and having a positive spin on the different information sent out by the City regarding tourism and visitors.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Minutes – Strategic Planning Meeting – February 22, 2023

The FTAC discussed the minutes from the previous meeting, as the minutes were very brief. The FTAC recommended no changes. Ms. Griffin made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Kristi Driver seconded the motion. All that were present were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

5. Colvita Creative Report

Jill Coyle from Colvita Creative gave a presentation covering a research update, media plan overview, new creative review, and a marketing plan update. Colvita is going to send out a survey to check the effectiveness of the current campaign endeavors. They are sending it out through multiple channels. Colvita will then utilize the results to guide strategies moving forward. Ms. Coyle discussed the envisioning board comparison from 2022 and 2024. In 2022, there was a bigger focus on activities vs. 2024 where the focus was more on community and the town. The opportunities envisioning board comparison was also shown and in 2024 some of the opportunities identified were off-season activities, while in 2022 tourism and visitors were top priorities. In the 200 surveys that Colvita has completed, mountain biking is the biggest thing that comes to mind when people are thinking about coming to Fruita. Ms. Coyle said the survey went out again last night and they are hoping to get more results. Next, Ms. Coyle discussed the media plan. She explained that the media has been running since the beginning of the year on more controlled environments. She said that Colvita is getting ready to kick off a big marketing campaign in April. Ms. Coyle said that they were using the creative content that they obtained last year and updating their ads with the new images. She then showed a video and some ads with the new images. Ms. Coyle also said that they are doing another Influencer campaign. MTN KIMBO is coming to the area to do some hiking around Fruita. Ms. Driver asked if the media campaigns were going out April 1st. Ms. Coyle said they have been running the ads since the beginning of the year but are getting ready to launch more. Ms. Driver thought that they were behind the curve beginning April 1st. She explained that she was completely booked for April and May. Ms. Griffin said they are getting more bookings for late summer. Ms. Van Waveren thought that maybe it was a good thing to run the ads a little later in an effort to try to fill the down times. Ms. Driver explained that she thought that the ads needed to begin a couple of weeks sooner.

6. Staff Report

- a) Mr. Vassen said that the FTAC will be gaining a new member; Hayden is in the audience today but will be on the Board at the next meeting. The City Council has removed the voting member of City Council from the Board which creates the opening. Ms. Griffin is also reapplying for her seat on the Board.

- b) Sales tax is up 11% and lodging tax is up 12% compared to the prior January.
- c) Colorado Riverfront Concert Series has Tab Benoit playing on June 15 and Firefall will be in the Fall. Mr. Vassen said that the City does get free tickets and to let him know if anyone would like tickets.
- d) Mr. Pierce explained that organic social media is going well. Facebook is at a huge increase. Ms. Driver asked why such a large increase. Mr. Vassen said that content and the number of postings have both gone up. Ms. Van Waveren asked which posts have been shared the most. Mr. Pierce explained it was one of the Grand Mesa. He then went on to say that Instagram is at a 9.2% increase.
- e) Mr. Vassen let the Board know that the photo shoot from the Colorado Tourism Office has been moved from April to the end of May so that they can be present during the Mike the Headless Chicken Festival. He said that the CTO hired a group out of Denver called Illuminati Media. Ms. Griffin said that if there was a need for photos of families on the river, she knew a family that would be perfect for those shots. Ms. Driver asked what weekend it was. Mr. Vassen explained that it will be May 31 and June 1. Ms. Driver asked what photos was asked for. Mr. Vassen said downtown, hiking, NCA, women shopping, and river activities, were all photos that had been requested.

7. Mini – Grant Requested – Ride the Rockies

Ms. Driver asked what the City was doing for Ride the Rockies. Ms. DePinto explained that the City was coordinating the route, volunteers, local business participation, and safety. Ms. Driver asked about the party at the end of the race. The Grand Junction Sports Commission is going to be a sponsor for the party on Saturday. Ms. Driver asked if the streets would be closed off. Ms. DePinto said that yes, Aspen Ave would be closed off and riders would come around the circle and down Aspen Ave and the finish line would be in front of Aspen Street Coffee on Peach Street. Ms. Driver wants to know specifically what Ride the Rockies is wanting the money for. Ms. DePinto said that Ride the Rockies must pay for trash, entertainment, and tents. Mr. Vassen also explained that all participants will be receiving Fruita swag with brochures and different discounts to encourage riders to shop locally. He explained that Ride the Rockies can give an accounting of funds to the FTAC if needed.

Mr. Hamlin moved to approve the Ride the Rockies mini grant. Kelly Griffin seconded the motion. All that were present were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

8. Other Items

- a) Ms. Driver asked about the reprinting of the visitor's guide. Mr. Vassen explained that they were almost ready to go to print, but after talking about changing the campaign, he didn't know if they should print just a few and then make the changes. Ms. Driver said

that the Board did want to make some minor changes to verbiage, but not change the entire campaign.

- b) Mr. Vassen explained that the new mountain biking trails are open. He said that the City is working with the BLM on signage and a few other things to get the project wrapped up. Ms. Driver said that the FTAC should be marketing these a lot as they are new and will drive interest.
- c) The Board had some questions about Crowdriff and how that works. Mr. Vassen said that it is normally \$22,000 a year and CTO subsidized the purchase, so the City only paid \$7,000. Ms. Griffin asked about the Flicker account. Mr. Vassen said that it was free and full of pictures. He explained that the City would be taking some of the old photos off, putting new ones on and organizing them a bit.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.