

TOURISM TASK FORCE

AGENDA

Zoom

Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

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| 6:00 – 6:05 | 1. Welcome – intro remarks – John |
| 6:05 | 2. Review notes from January 14 meeting for edits/additions – Sara |
| 6:05 – 7:00 | 3. Lloyd Buddy Wesley, Nakoda Language and Historian |
| 7:00 – 7:55 | 4. Panel Discussion with Local Tourism Operators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adam Walker, Canmore Cave Tours• Andrew Nickerson, Mystery Towns• Claude Faerden, Kananaskis Outfitters• Jenna Nodding, Get Outside• Mark Walker, Rent A Tent Canada |
| 7:55 – 8:00 | 5. Wrap up and next meeting – Lisa |
| 8:00 | 6. Adjourn |

**TOURISM TASK FORCE
MINUTES
Zoom
Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.**

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT

John Borrowman	Mayor
Rob Seeley	Councillor
Rachel Ludwig	Industry Representative
Martin Bean	Public Member
Jodi Conuel	Public Member
Sarah Elmeligi	Public Member
Michael Hay	Public Member
David Huggill	Public Member
Sean Krausert	Public Member
Michelle MacDonell	Public Member
Norbert Meier	Public Member
Christie Pashby	Public Member
Carol Poland	Public Member
Geoff Powter	Public Member
Mace Rosenstein	Public Member
Dawn Saunders Dahl	Public Member
Adam Walker	Public Member

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT

Avneet Sahani	Public Member
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ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Lisa de Soto	Chief Administrative Officer
Sally Caudill	GM of Municipal Services
Sara Jones	Executive Assistant (Recorder)

- 1. Review notes/minutes from December 10, 2020 Meeting**
 - No additions/edits.
- 2. Request for Proposal (RFP) Update**
 - The RFP is posted on the Town of Canmore [website](#)
 - Closing date is February 5
 - If anyone is aware of a company that would like to bid, please send Lisa their contact information
 - Any questions related to the bid are to be directed to Lisa
 - If any potential bidders contact you with questions about the Taskforce, the RFP, or the process, please have them contact Lisa

- Sub-committee will need some additional help reviewing the bids from February 6-12
 - RFP bid reviewers: Jodi, Rachel, Mace, Michelle, Norbert, Sarah

3. Frank Kernick, Spring Creek

- Born and raised in Canmore
- Spring Creek land has been in Frank's family since 1927
- Canmore was first a railway town, then became a coal mining town, and now is a tourist town
 - Canmore became the town it was destined to be. People come here to see the beauty the town has to offer.
- Task force needs to think about "who we are and what we will become"
- Canmore will continue to grow and it's important that the past is remembered so people know who we are; celebrating our past is a part of what attracts tourism
- We need to think about what the future will bring and how that will affect tourism; technology, mass transit from Calgary
- Banff cannot grow anymore so Canmore has the opportunity to support the growth of tourism – through additional hotels, commercial buildings
- Second homeowners provide a lot to our community – fill our restaurants, shop at our local retail stores, etc.
- Tourism IS our primary industry

4. Cameron Spence, Travel Alberta

- Travel Alberta is the province's destination development and promotion organization. Works in alignment with the Government of AB to provide support and intelligence to the tourism industry, elevate visitor experiences, execute promotions and partnerships with communities, businesses, and organizations across the province that are building tourist experiences
- Travel Alberta is working on a 2020-2022 three-pronged rebound strategy in response to the pandemic:
 - Respond: managing the COVID crisis and mitigating the immediate impact on AB's tourism industry
 - Restart: supporting AB's tourism sector for continued destination development, awareness promotion, distribution and demand generation to accelerate AB's recovery
 - Currently in this stage
 - Rebuild: Shaping AB's tourism sector for long-term, sustainable and responsible growth
- COVID impact on tourism businesses
 - 89% negatively impacted
 - 30% at risk of closing permanently
 - Near half earned less than 25% of their normal revenue
- Conducted a business impact survey to identify industry challenges:
 - Reduced revenues
 - Ability to service debt
 - Operational bridge funding
- Smart re-bounce strategy, focusing on three main areas:
 - Access: access to and within the province through strategic air service and improved

- provincial infrastructure
 - Marketing: attract high-yield travelers from US (when safe to do so) and long-haul Canada
 - Product: diversified regional and seasonal growth
- Success Measures
 - Quality vs Quantity
 - Longer stays
 - Higher spend
 - Repeat customers for a lifetime
- Travel AB works closely with Tourism Canmore Kananaskis (TCK); work towards identifying what an experience in AB really *feels* like
 - Experiential Travel: connects you with the essence of a place and its people. It responds to travelers' desires to venture beyond the beaten tourist paths, dive deeper into authentic, local culture, connects with people and enriches their lives
 - Ultimate Travelers:
 - Curious Adventurers: traveler that's looking for a different perspective on travel. They are energized about exploring new places, very inspired to learn about a destination (landscapes, authentic culture)
 - Hotspot Hunters: travel is all about accomplishment, taking part in one-of-a-kind experiences, connecting with local experts. Trips are filled with stories and memories around those one-of-a-kind experiences
- The pandemic brought visitors to the area that do not typically travel to the mountains, so the industry had to pivot around that and learn how to connect with these visitors and teach them what is important to know when visiting the Rockies
- Triple Bottom Line Approach: Social, Economic, Environmental
- Value Driven Tourism:
 - When a destination community starts to share its values with the world, through tourism marketing, that value driven marketing actually establishes an expectation in the marketplace; starts to establish a relationship between the community and what sort of relationship they want with travelers
 - Tourism needs to be a force for good
 - How can Canmore make sure tourism is aligned as a force for good?
 - This approach can be created when a community collectively establishes a well-planned, focused, and suitably funded values-based tourism marketing program
 - Example: Tiaki Promise: <https://tiakinewzealand.com/>

5. John Brownlee, President, Canmore Housing & Lodging Association (CHLA)

- How does tourism impact the hotel sector?
 - Economic Foundation: visitors have the option to stay longer than a day trip, which contributes to the local economy. Hotel sector meets the needs of discerning travelers from all over the world and has many great accommodation choices for consumers as well, such as traditional full-service hotels or condominium-based accommodations
 - Job Creation: hotels create jobs and hospitality career advancement. High demand in tourism leads to job stability, which in turn creates demand for housing, schools, and recreational facilities.

- Strengthen Other Sectors: Full accommodations mean other sectors are enjoying high demand such as retail, restaurants, activity providers, transportation, grocery, etc. Hotel facilities need regular maintenance and upkeep, even regular refurbishment, creating demand for trades and suppliers.
 - As an industry of industries, tourism is supporting all of the businesses we have learned to cherish and appreciate as residents of Canmore
- Tourism & Hotel Benefits Summary:
 - Tax Base – a healthy hotel sector, supported by strong tourism, increases the commercial tax base for the town. This helps pay for infrastructure, such as pathways, social services, recreational facilities, etc.
 - Local Business Support – all businesses benefit from a healthy tourism economy and strong hotel occupancies. Hotel guests appreciate individually owned and operated businesses
 - Awareness – tourism creates awareness of Canmore and what it offers as a unique mountain community experience for visitors. Many fall in love with our town after staying in our hotels and become new residents, driving the development and realty sectors
 - Culture – authentic ‘mountain living’, local festivals, a vibrant arts community, and being home to musical artists. Health & Wellness is another defining characteristic of Canmore, all of which attracts visitation and financial support
 - Parking – hotels relieve congestion by encouraging guests to walk, rent bikes, take transit. Paid parking will help the town recuperate infrastructure costs. Most tourists expect to pay for parking in high impact areas
 - Donations & Volunteerism – hotels donate free accommodation for fundraising, providing a ‘soup kitchen’ during COVID, and conduct annual fundraising efforts for local charities
 - Sustains Canmore’s Population – new cultures, diversity, new families who will be the town residents of the future. This all supports school, businesses, and strengthens our sense of community
 - Provide Educational Support – hotels are uniquely positioned to speak to visitors about conservation and wildlife awareness (Wildsmart)
 - Essential Service – hotels provide accommodation for stranded motorists (snowstorms), or temporary housing for health care workers, patients having remote surgeries, contractors and displaced residents during the devastating flood of 2013 as just a few examples

6. Panel Discussion

- **What does Sustainable Tourism mean to you? How do you think of this in the context of your own business?**
 - Cam:
 - A balance between the three pillars – social, economic, environmental
 - Can look at it as responsible tourism – relationship building, shared responsibility with the visitor, share values of the community
 - Every destination is someone’s home – what is it to be a resident?
 - Example: New Zealand; Queensland, Australia
<https://www.bayofplentynz.com/>
[G Adventures \(vimeo.com\)](https://vimeo.com/GAdventures)
https://youtu.be/V_1hZ_DOSDU

- Frank:
 - Growth limit – finite boundary to our community
 - Don't overload our parks
 - Parking vs. capacity on trails – don't just promote downtown, promote the mountains
 - Have transit to places to keep parking/congestion down
- John:
 - Based on our community, people will naturally be attracted to this area. We need to ask experts and communities that have done well in managing their tourism
- **How best can we engage the tourism industry (not just hotels)?**
 - John:
 - CHLA meets regularly with other associations – BOWDA, TCK, BIA, Bow Valley Chambers of Commerce, Town of Canmore
 - Work on being united towards a common goal; coordinated effort can be very successful
 - Cam:
 - Tourism Industry Association of Canada has been working with a company called 2031 on stakeholder engagement across Canada, to elevate shoulder and winter tourism programming
 - Have been very successful in doing this engagement virtually and we could learn some best practices from this
 - Frank:
 - If we want a stable economy, we need to fill the shoulder seasons to have a balance over the entire year
 - Because of COVID there will be big changes on how people get together; will conference rooms be needed in the future?
- **How do we engage tourism frontline workers – when should they be targeted?**
 - John:
 - The month of May would be the best to make the greatest impact and connect with the most people as most summer staff have been hired by then
- **How do we engage with those who are opposed to tourism?**
 - Frank:
 - Canmore has always had people who are against tourism and want Canmore to 'stay the way it is'
 - We have a great plan for development, our Municipal Development Plan. We can grow and do it right
 - You'll never stop the nay-sayers
- **What can be done to put residents at ease that they aren't losing their community?**
 - Cam:
 - Canmore needs to decide what tourism can/should look like – need to define ourselves
 - People are not buying what you do, they're buying why you do it

- Work towards a shared value approach; share with the world what we care about, so we draw visitors that care about the same thing
 - John:
 - Compared to Banff, which is built-out and has been for quite some time, Canmore has options
 - We can manage this and come up with a strategy to steer the course
 - Tourism is inevitable in Canmore; we need to grab ahold of the opportunities, come up with a well-considered strategy, and not fear it
 - Frank:
 - Be respectful, but don't be fearful
- **Tiaki Promise – was it driven by residents, local politicians, or the tourism industry?**
 - Cam:
 - Unsure of the exact process
 - There is a great deal of influence by their indigenous culture
 - There are a few destinations around the world that have adopted these sorts of 'pledge processes' to make sure visitors know the shared responsibilities when visiting communities
- **Affordability/Affordable Housing – how do you support your employees through an affordability lens/housing lens?**
 - Frank:
 - We do not want to have to bus people in from Calgary/Cochrane
 - Developers are adding more staff housing, PAH
 - The fact is, if businesses need staff, they need to provide employee housing
 - We need a balance of market driven housing and staff housing
 - Could have a change in the Land Use Bylaw to ensure a certain percentage of a development has staff housing
 - John:
 - Hotels are not 'slumlords'
 - It is in the hotels best interest for the success of our businesses to provide housing where staff feel safe and have a home-like atmosphere
 - Offers 2-bedroom apartments with a maximum capacity of 3
 - Subsidized housing charging \$450/month rent on \$18-19/hour wage is very reasonable
 - Large apartment complexes being built on Kananaskis Way which is creating a lot of inventory – will help with this issue
 - Cam:
 - City of Lisbon, Portugal has a partnership between the municipality and home sharing programming where there is an incentive in place for those that have space in their homes to allocate to affordability – we could look to this as a best practice
- **Social Contract with Visitors – how do communities manage/enforce the contract?**
 - Cam:
 - Tourism New Zealand offers a lot of resources to their industry partners to

- ensure visitors are exposed to information.
 - In terms of enforcement, unsure
 - Once we establish our brand, TCK needs to partner with the province (surrounded by provincial parks), and the federal government (just outside a national park) and communicate our brand to them so that our partners can help promote it
- **How do we educate our visitors, before they arrive, on what our values are?**
 - John:
 - Hotels can include links to information on Canmore, areas to visit, wildlife awareness, TCK, etc. in their confirmation letters sent to guests
 - But not all visitors stay in hotels
 - All residents can stop and talk to visitors – be friendly and helpful – be ‘local tour guides’ – education involves everyone who lives here, it’s a coordinated effort
 - Cam:
 - Power is in the collective when it comes to destination branding
 - Travel AB has a specific brand platform/brand story for the province, and they provide toolkits and other resources to organizations like TCK so they can amplify the story
 - The more industry partners that adopt the messaging, helps to elevate the message and allows for a more powerful story
 - Rachel:
 - TCK provides a lot of information on their website and on social media pages
 - Could do better/more, but it takes resources. If the community wants more education, TCK needs the community’s help
- **How do we engage with/educate day visitors who may not be checking Travel AB or TCK websites?**
 - Cam:
 - COVID highlighted that day visitors do not have the information needed, or simply did not know where to look for it
 - Comes back to partnering with as many organizations as possible to get the messaging out and set expectations
 - Rachel:
 - Tried having ‘boots on the ground’ (people at trail heads/in downtown area) this past summer, but couldn’t connect with as many visitors as they would have liked because of limited resources
 - Gave radio interviews to try to educate people on how to recreate safely in the mountains – but again, can only reach a small population of day visitors
 - Day visitors are not necessarily engaged with TCK’s brand. Visitors that are engaged with Canmore’s brand likely understands the expectations better
 - John:
 - This past summer we had more Albertans visit, due to the pandemic – need to target them more through social media and directing traffic to TCK’s website

- International tourists can be more pliable as they are not visiting their ‘backyard’ and they want to be careful and respectful

7. Wrap up

- Peter Fordham has resigned from the task force
- If you have feedback on how the Taskforce is going for you or any suggestions of improvements we could make, please reach out and let us know

Actions:

- Send Sara and/or Adam questions for tourism operators to answer/discuss at our January 28 meeting
- Request to have a representative from the Banff National Park Visitor Expert Panel come speak to the task force – once the panel is created
 - Complete survey: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/banff/info/gestion-management/involved/transport-movement>