

## **Updates on the Tourism Marketing Meetings**

Here are updates on the meetings we have had since the meeting with Anna and Allie on February 21:

### **February 21:**

We had our first meeting with Anna Strange and Allie Reynolds – marketing consultants from Helena and collaborators on our project.

It was a great meeting with representatives from Missouri Valley Marketing, Broadwater County Development Corp., Montana Business Assistance Connection, Radersburg Historical Preservation Inc., Townsend Rotary as well as the County Administration.

We all had an opportunity to introduce ourselves and to state our own personal goals for the project.

After much lively discussion with everyone participating we defined our mission and a list of projects with the following 4 high priority projects:

- Creating a “destination tourism website” and a consolidated social media campaign plan
- Organizing an AirBNB/VRBO training class to help get people interested over the learning curve of starting an AirBNB
- Radersburg signage and historical markers
- A “Beautification” project for Townsend

### **March 2:**

I had a video conference meeting with Anna and Allie to discuss alternatives for the Mission Statement and prioritizing projects for Anna and Allie.

## March 12:

We had a meeting without Anna and Allie to discuss:

- Use of Doodle for deciding on meeting dates, voting on options, etc.
- Mission Statement
- Priority projects for Anna and Allie
- John Hahn's research regarding an AirBnB coop
- An integrated BCDC/Destination website
- Destination website domain names
- Financial Tracking for the Committee funding

We decided that we liked using an online tool like Doodle to poll the committee members.

The mission statement we liked is:

*This group exists to foster collaboration to execute projects related to Tourism, Business Development, Growth, and Historic Preservation while honoring Broadwater County's identity.*

We discussed the priority projects for Anna and Allie. This is a different priority list than the priority list for the Committee. We are paying Anna and Allie to work on projects that we do not have the skills to do ourselves; so, the priority list for them excludes projects that the committee feels we can do ourselves.

For Example: one of the top priority projects out of the Feb 21 meeting was signage and historical markers for Radersburg. These are projects that the Committee can do themselves; so they are a priority for the Committee but not for Anna and Allie.

Priority projects for Anna and Allie:

- Integrated Social Media campaign plan
- Destination Tourism website
- AirBnB training
- Art Installation on structures in Townsend (part of beautification project)

Priority projects for the Committee:

- Working with Anna and Allie on the above projects
- Creating awareness and interest in starting an AirBnB; creating an AirBnB coop (or LLC, Corp. etc)
- Townsend/Radersburg signage
- Townsend/Radersburg historical markers
- Townsend beautification: what exactly does that encompass and what to do
- Radersburg historical building preservation

We had a lot of discussion about John Hahn's ideas and research on an AirBnB Coop. John has spoken to another organization in Montana that is providing that service. From that John had a lot of good ideas and a list of financial/advisory resources.

We had a lengthy discussion about a tourism website and about integrating that with the existing BCDC website. There are a lot of advantages to integrating the 2 concepts into one website and BCDC

seems to fit the bill. Ernie Forrey indicated that depending on how it was done BCDC would have no issues with having an integrated website. Ernie also mentioned that the major issue going forward with a Tourism Destination website is having a someone dedicated to keeping the website updated and current: having a stale/out-of-date website is worse than not having one at all.

Anna and Allie also advocated having multiple internet domain names that all led to the same destination website. A number of domain names were voted on using Doodle and the clear choices by the Committee members were:

- [visittownsendmt.com](http://visittownsendmt.com)
- [visitbroadwatermt.com](http://visitbroadwatermt.com)

In addition we thought that since Townsend is associated with Canyon Ferry Lake and with the Missouri River we should look at buying domain names like: [visitcanyonferrylake.com](http://visitcanyonferrylake.com); [visitmissourivalley.com](http://visitmissourivalley.com)

### **March 16:**

Anna and Allie did a Townsend Tour. We identified many locations as candidates for Art projects on Broadway and Front Street. The old Neifert and White buildings; the old graineries; Jeannie Steels old building (next to Townsend Hardware); the old Art Gallery (or old pharmacy building); the side of the Mint; many locations on the old Gambles building; the east side of the old Townsend Mercantile building (where the auto parts store is) and, of course, the Power Townsend building. Anna and Allie took lots of pictures and will be asking for an RFP from artists.

We also visited (or tried to visit) some of the local businesses. We did go to Goose Bay Glass, Broadwater Blooms, Copy Cup and the Mint. Unfortunately, that was a Monday and the Bakery, Creative Closet and Missouri River Trading Post were all closed.

Anna, Allie, Ernie and I all had lunch at the Mint and discussed in detail integrating a tourism website with the BCDC website. Ernie went over the history of the BCDC website and indicated that he felt that the mission of having the BCDC website and having a destination tourism website were a good fit. Barring technical difficulties the plan will be to integrate the 2 websites designs on the same physical website location.

We also discussed the issue of updating the website to keep it fresh and current. Ernie asked Allie what she thought the cost might be if we hired her to maintain the site for us. Allie was reluctant to give us a quote because it is an hourly billing and totally dependent on how much work will go into updating the tourism destination piece of the website. However we did think that between \$100 - \$300 / month would be about right depending on the amount of work.

Having someone fully responsible for the updating of the website and possible social media is a recurring monthly cost that we need to consider.

### **Financial Tracking on the Funding**

The Committee is comprised of representatives from a number of organizations in the county. MVM has committed \$5000.00 in funding. BCDC has committed \$2500.00 in funding. MBAC has not committed a specific amount but has committed to providing funding. We have also asked the Townsend Area Chamber of Commerce to have

representation on the Committee and if they feel it is worthwhile to commit funding.

To be ensure that we are transparent with all of the Finances, Vic will create a spreadsheet tracking the income and spending by the Committee. The spreadsheet will be available for download from the MVM website and can be provided via email to any of the organizations represented on the Committee.

### **Future Meetings**

Anna and Allie will be creating project proposals for the various projects we have prioritized for them and the costs. We will need to have a meeting to discuss those projects and okay moving forward.

The Committee will need to schedule meetings without Anna and Allie to discuss the priority projects that the Committee can work on without Anna and Allie.

We do have representatives from Radersburg on the Committee and several of the projects involve Radersburg. We need to schedule at least one of the Committee meetings in Radersburg.