Talkeetna Area Chamber of Commerce

Economic Development Committee

Meeting

2/25/2019 @ 12:00 p.m.

Attendance: Niina Baum, Shawn Thelen, Rick Creamer & Roadhouse owner

Meeting began at 12:05 p.m.

This is the first Economic Development Committee meeting for 2019 under the new board of directors. The focus of the committee is to address the lack of economic growth in the winter season. Topics of interest regarding winter economic development were brought up and discussed. The committee picked eight topics/issues they felt were the most prevalent at the moment and feel these topics (listed below) should be addressed.

Proper plowing of key locations in Talkeetna.

During the winter months the Chamber Kiosk and Welcome Sign are surrounded by snow. This makes access to business flyers and information nearly impossible for winter tourists to access. During summer tourism the Welcome Sign is a popular place for tourists to take their photo, in the winter they cannot due to the snow pile up. This reduces exposure of the town on media platforms. Ideally it would be nice to also help some of the area’s other nonprofits, like the museum, with plowing to ensure that tourists have continual access to these places, even if it is just to walk by and browse through the windows.

Chamber Kiosk

Welcome Sign

Nonprofits like the museum

Ranger Station Hours

Currently the ranger station is not open on the weekends during the winter. It is a vital source of area information, and weekend tourists cannot access that information.

Talkeetna Lodge Hours

Currently the lodge is not open during the winter season. As winter tourism and other industries increases it will be essential to have the lodge open in the winter season as well.

Comprehensive Winter Trail Map

There is no comprehensive winter trail map of all the trails in Talkeetna. Talkeetna has many ski, bike, dogsled, and other winter trails to offer. Unfortunately there is no one source to find where all these trails are. A comprehensive trail map that could be printed and published digitally would help create exposure of all the great winter recreation there is in the area, in addition to getting all the trails mapped on popular phone apps such as All Trails and many more.

Certification and Training

Many of the seasonal jobs in Talkeetna require certifications or training like first aid, wilderness first aid, alcohol serving, customer service etc… Since much of the hiring for the seasonal positions begins in March, it could be beneficial to hold certification and training seminar in Talkeetna for new hires and for anyone interested in furthering their experience.

Housing

There is a lack of housing and affordable housing in Talkeetna. If there was more year round housing we could better offer and sustain year round careers/jobs. In addition it would help bring in more permanent residents wanting to live in the Talkeetna area. Currently many employers are housing employees in trailers in their own backyards.

Diversifying from Tourism

Currently Talkeetna is mostly supported by the high amounts of summer tourism. We would like to see some organizations/industries that operate year round come to the area to create more economic stability throughout the whole year.

Update on the Airport and Riverfront Management Plans

These plans were created to help boost economic growth and health in Talkeetna, but how far along have the plans been implemented, do they need extra support, are they ahead or behind schedule? All questions we would like to get an update on so we can better support and help the plans move forward.

The committee is accepting any additional members to join and help contribute the economic development of Talkeetna.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.