

Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce & Business Association
Thursday, April 4, 2019 Board Meeting Notes

Present: Cindi Hickey, Luis Rodriguez, Arlis Duncan, Robert Roos, Don Tolefson, Tim Balfour, Mike Gantenbein, Sandi Whittle, Jerry Hayes, Erik Johnson

Absent: Bobby Abernathy, Joe Surges

Welcome to New Board Member Don Tolefson – Jacksonville Realty & Applegate Valley Realty

Don & Debbie Tolefson recently moved their real estate business to 186 California Street from their previous in-town location off of 5th. The Tolefsons moved to the area 13 years ago from Southern California and started their Applegate Valley Realty business. With their move into town several years ago they are interested in becoming active within the Jacksonville business community. Don is also a board member for the Children's Advocacy Center of Jackson County.

Old Business

- **Celebrate the Shamrock Promotion Follow-Up:** *report will be sent separately*
- **Victorian Christmas** - Planning Committee Chair – We still need someone to coordinate the meetings and team leads for one of our major event. There is good documentation/notes on all aspects of the program, along with mentoring by members with experience over the past years. If interested and would like to get more information contact Tim Balfour.
- **Member Mixer – Magnolia Inn, April 18**
- **3rd Street Park Project** – no update. Need to identify a person to lead this initiative or decide to let it go.

New Business

- **Welcoming New Businesses** – Discussed the role of the board in reaching out to new businesses to welcome them, see what help they may need, make them aware of the Chamber and encourage them to become members.
- **Budget 2019** – Tim Balfour presented a proposed budget. As a non-profit the revenue and expenses run very close. Discussion involved need to increase revenue from Membership, Enhanced Advertising Package, and Victorian Christmas donations.

Proposed budget was approved.

- **Political Candidates at Mixers** – Discussed member inquiry about having a candidate for a local election speak/attend a meeting or mixer. Board voted against allowing any campaign related activity at Chamber events. Our limited meeting schedule and time resources can not accommodate.

- **2020 Booster Home Tour** – Robert Roos & Tim Balfour reported on a meeting with the Jacksonville Booster’s Home Tour planners. Interest had been expressed about including some type of special offer from local businesses for people doing the tour – such as a discount. The tour attracts 200-250 people per day for a 2-days the first weekend in May.

Robert & Tim shared some of the discussion from the meeting related to the Booster’s mission, their business members and how that related to Chamber membership, (There are 37 Booster business members - 6 of which are not Chamber members.) and what may suit the business community and the Boosters.

Decision was that it would be difficult to have a consistent special offer among all businesses. Some businesses benefit from the people coming in for the tour but that it isn’t

Use of Trolley – The Boosters are interested in using the trolley to transport tour guests. They used 2 Allaboard trolleys last year but are moving to a tighter route. This would encourage more participants to walk between tour sites and have just one trolley for transportation.

Use of our trolley for the tour means eliminating the narrated history tours for the first weekend in May. On average over the past 3 years for that weekend we have had 54 passengers with revenue of \$309. 2018 had only 32 passengers with \$180 in revenue.

The board approved allowing the Boosters to rent the trolley at a rate that would cover the direct expenses of driver and gas. Tim will calculate this cost and share with the Boosters.

- **Journey Back In Time Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides** – Gary Rose has received approval by the city council to operate his wagon ride business in town. He is working through different options and does not have a set offering at this time. He has considered wine tours in the immediate area and is exploring other ideas. He has a business license with the city.

He has approached the Chamber requesting support. At this time he is not a member. For special events he is asking to be paid \$300/day to cover most costs of bringing the horses to town and he will still charge for the rides.

We will look into this for Victorian Christmas. Increased sponsorship will be needed to cover this expense of \$1,800. As for other events, consideration will be given.

Tim will talk with him about Chamber membership in order to have a website listing and to make his information available. It is still undetermined what his business offering will be. But most people appreciate the optics of having the horse-drawn wagon rides in town.

- **Art Walk** – Anne Brook from Art Presence is working with a couple other parties on creating an art walk of some type. They have circulated a questionnaire to local businesses to get input. Dates/Times and level of participation. More information will be shared

when available. It was mentioned that Jason Robison– Crown Jewel may have some insight from the Ashland Art Walk.

- **Illegal Vacation Rentals** – Tim shared a concern from some lodging owners of the negative impact that places working through AirB&B and VRBO who are not collecting lodging tax are having on their businesses. The lower rental rates charged by these other vacation rentals are causing other lodging properties to reduce their rates. The rental rates are often lower for competitive comparison purposes, but they are often off-set by additional costs such as cleaning and booking fees. The lower rates may also result in reduced levels of local transient lodging taxes being collected since the tax is applied to the room rental revenue.

City code requires a property to fall in either historic or commercial designation to be a short-term vacation rental. This is done for reasons of residential quality of life.

Tim will prepare a position for consideration at the next board meeting. The position will address support of necessary code changes related to fines, Chamber membership requirements as well as policies for the Visitor Information Center and how we deal with requests from these illegal rentals.

- **Handicap Access** – As a heads up Tim Balfour informed the board of upcoming meetings with the city and others regarding handicap access. These meetings will explore issues related to ADA access and Tim will be focusing on business related needs. More information will be shared as this develops.