

**Big Sky Chamber of Commerce
Growth and Development Solution Group
PO Box 160100
Big Sky, MT 59716**

**Minutes
Monday, October 11, 2004
Ophir School Library, 6 p.m.**

1. The meeting was called to order by chair Jon Holtzman at 6 p.m. Members in attendance: Katie Alvin, Kathy Bouchard, Jim Dolan, Kevin Germain, Jan Jirout, Michael Ketschek, Suzy Samardich and Lloyd Rixe. Others attending: Dave O'Connor, Jack Eakman and Ernie Hall. Other committee members include: Peggy Bert, Pete Bolane, Jill Bough, Charlie Callander, Debbie Hinkley, Taylor Middleton and Mike Oshier.
2. The minutes for September 27, 2004 were approved as written.
3. Jack Eakman will serve as facilitator for the meetings with Kevin Germain designated as backup if Jack is not present. A minute keeper was not designated at this meeting.
4. Those not attending the initial meeting (Jim Dolan and Jan Jirout) and guest Ernie Hall commented on their backgrounds and interest in the project.
5. Review of items identified in earlier meetings:

Following an overview of how the list was developed the group reviewed the first four of the top eight items listed.

- **Accessibility:** identified by previous groups as a major weakness.

The discussion began with the lack of accessibility being considered as a double-edged sword. On one hand it limited development of the area. On the other it controlled development of the area. The group considered the estimate that Big Sky was at the 20% build-out stage and postulated that 50% build-out could be reached in ten years. It posed questions about what that would mean to traffic, safety, commuting times, the quality of life. It agreed with a comment that the primary concern for residents – and visitors – was ground accessibility, not air accessibility. Air traffic was dependent on customers and would expand accordingly. Ground traffic however would expand regardless. Although there was an urge to get into details discussion was halted with an agreement that accessibility was a primary issue to be addressed and could and would have great impact on Big Sky's quality of life if not dealt with.

- **Disconnected and sparse shopping opportunities/ opportunities other than recreation are lacking.**

The group considered this question in several ways, deciding that the part of the concern related to tourist needs was more properly addressed by the business issues group. However the group also noted that a lack of shopping opportunities more related to home owner/family needs led to some of the traffic concerns on 191. In addition higher prices in Big Sky led locals to drive to Bozeman – in some ways exacerbating the problem since lower volume purchasing in Big Sky meant that Big Sky merchants couldn't get price discounts from suppliers. The resort tax adds to the expense differential. The group considered what impact on commercial development might be possible. It was suggested that the community's primary influence from a quality-of-life standpoint might come in promoting a master plan that would cluster commercial development in a core area so that it comes "the way we want it to come."

- **Ski destination with room to grow and develop.**

While this item was considered a "given" that was really part of the business opportunity discussion. However it also led back to a discussion about the status of build-out. The concern was that while such a situation offered the existing work force at all skill levels abundant opportunities it also raised worries about what build-out would lead to. One concern voiced was that Big Sky's development was attracting a lot of wealth – usually associated with political, financial and legal power. This could threaten locals' ability to influence the direction of development. One member counseled others not to lose enthusiasm because of what was already done and to remember that there still was 80% left to be developed.

- **Abundant public lands.**

Again, this was considered a "given". However it raised a discussion about the status of various governmental land swaps which had consolidated development areas. One member said such land swaps had essentially been completed in the Big Sky area. However others asked if it were possible that the federal government, to consolidate holdings in other areas or perhaps to raise cash, might consider selling off parts of the national forest surrounding Big Sky. According to several members that would take a specific act of Congress, but it was not ruled out. The group agreed that a way to monitor activity in that area was needed.

Further discussion of the list of items from previous meetings, as well as discussion of information from the Blue Water Task Force strategic planning notes, was tabled until the October 25 meeting.

6. Where do we go from here?

A think piece from Mike Oshier was distributed to members. Everyone is expected to read it and consider it's suggestions in the context of developing a plan for the committee.

Vision/Mission/Goal Statement: Members agreed that such a statement should be considered. Jon Holtzman will do some preliminary work for consideration at the next meeting.

Several members accepted research assignments.

- 1) Katie Alvin will contact the Gallatin County Planning Commission to survey materials relevant to the committee's assignment. She will also take a look at the Commission's meeting schedule, procedures for approving projects in Big Sky, opportunities for citizen input, and ways the community can be informed about issues that affect us.
 - 2) Kevin Germain will make the same inquiries of the Madison County Planning Board.
 - 3) Several members will contact other resort communities, or do internet searches, to seek information about master planning, community regulation relating to development, community concerns about growth and development. Suzy Samardich will handle Colorado areas, including Telluride, Aspen and Vail. Kathy Bouchard will research Park City, Utah. Jan Jirout will handle Jackson. Kevin Germain will contact Truckee and Mike Ketschek will deal with the Whistler resort community.
 - 4) By copy of these minutes Mike Oshier is asked to follow up with a contact to the author of a Bozeman Chronicle article, Daniel Glenn, on the New Code of the West. Please see if Glenn has any advice on materials or resources (other than immediately hiring his firm).
7. The next meeting will be November 8 at 6 p.m. in the Ophir School Library. By popular demand the meeting time will be expanded to an hour and a half until the group decides to do otherwise.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 7 p.m.

