

**Weber County
Friends of the Fairgrounds Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, February 15th, 2024
Golden Spike Event Center Conference Room**

Members Present: Teddy Anderson, Naomi Brower, Jim Harvey, Jeremy Dearden, Sharlan Holmes, Mike Mathieu, Brandon Miles, Lora Parker, Connie Robinson, David Widdison, Susan Clontz

Staff Present: Duncan Olsen, Gabby Spackman, Emily Scoville, Duane Kearsley, Ashton Wilson, Kim Salas, Jennifer Graham, Marty Smith, Todd Ferrario

Excused Members: Tiffany Christiansen, Korry Green, Shae Hill

Welcome:

Chair Connie Robinson opened the meeting and welcomed board members, the meeting came to order at 12:25 pm.

Approval of Minutes:

Connie Robinson motioned to approve the minutes from the January 14th, 2024 meeting. So moved. The motion carried.

Weber County Report & Welcome: (Commissioner Harvey)

Commissioner Harvey expressed gratitude for employees and asked Marty Smith to comment on Egyptian 100 year anniversary. He mentioned that Jennifer Graham is retiring and expressed gratitude for her service, character and skillset.

Golden Spike Event Center Report: (Duncan Olsen)

Duncan Olsen showed farewell slide to Jennifer Graham and then introduced Todd Farrario as the new Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation. Duncan reviewed some 2023 statistics, including 425 events, 501 event days, 429 facilities, 677 facility days and \$1.5 Million in revenue. He spoke about the changes in 2024, such as increasing fees. He asked board members to help express to the public that we are not immune to inflation. He expressed the need for a new strategy and how the Golden Spike Event Center cannot be everything to everyone, which was to say that the facility needs to see larger events that drive revenue not just to the Golden Spike Event Center, but throughout the county. Duncan discussed purchase of new software to add efficiency and adds that he and his team are dialing in the feasibility plan. Commissioner Harvey spoke about how, if the Golden Spike Event Center property was sold to a developer it would bring in \$4 Billion to the County but goal is to make sure that generations to come have a fairground and facilities to enjoy. He adds that, to do this, there has to be a strategy to ensure enough revenue for the Golden Spike Event Center to sustain. He mentioned that in the future there may be a new fairgrounds that is better equipped for the present day needs of the public, such as vehicle access and equestrian needs. Naomi Brower asked if the plan is to sell the Golden Spike Event Center property and buy a new one, to which Commissioner Harvey responded that right now the event center needs to focus on sustaining operations but the ultimate goal is to preserve a Western way of life, either here or at a different location. He adds that if there were a future land purchase for a new facility, it would be further out West. Duncan Olsen reviewed upcoming events.

Weber County Fair Report: (Ashton Wilson)

Ashton Wilson mentioned that a patting zoo will be added to the fair and changes will be made to parking. She announced the passing of Carla Staples, who helped with the fair for many years. Ashton mentioned that she is in the process of trying to book a Taylor Swift cover band.

Committee Discussion: (Chair Connie Robinson)

Jennifer Graham asked everyone to introduce themselves to Todd Farrario. Marty Smith talked about the 100 year anniversary of the Egyptian Theater. He mentioned the Gala that raised a Quarter Million Dollars for the theater and that Maria Osmond sang at the event. Celebratory events will be held throughout the year at the Egyptian Theater. Marty then asked to clarify some of the things Commissioner Harvey discussed. He went on to say that the feasibility study made the Golden Spike Event Center management realize the need to really dive in and understand how to keep the current facility operating. If the West parking lot is no longer available to use in the future, there will be a need for parking that must be addressed. Marty discusses how the feasibility study will not require the fairgrounds to move any time in the near future. He noted that it would take a \$200 Million investment and there is no option for that at this time. Jennifer Graham added that raising fees are necessary to ensure that not just the Golden Spike Event Center but also all County recreational facilities can see needed improvements. Todd Farrario added that what they are trying to do is gather enough data to influence the decisions that move us into the next 30 years.

Discussion/Action Items: (Chair Connie Robinson)

Ashton Wilson went around the room asking if anyone had anything to add. No one had any action items to add or discuss.

Adjourn:

The meeting was ended at 1:00pm. Connie Motioned. So moved. The motion carried.