

Columbia Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes

Annual Meeting Minutes

Prepared by: Myia Davila

Meeting Date: November 16, 2022

Location: Eagle Cotage, Columbia State Historic Park

Called to Order: 5:30 pm by Rosanna Sharps

Present: Rosanna Sharps – Chairman President, John Favela – Vice Chairman,
Jo Rodefer – Treasurer, Myia Davila – Secretary

Board of Directors: Michael Sharps, Janine Osborne, Nate Lint, Howard White, Richard Haratani

Absent Members: Leannha Rhodes

Quorum: Met, 9 members present.

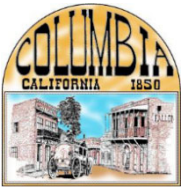
Guests: Jaron Brandon-Tuolumne County District 5 Supervisor
Kristan Robinson-Concessions Specialist

Approval of Previous Minutes: On October 31, 2022, minutes from the October 19, 2022 meeting were approved via email and will be posted on the Chamber website soon.

Nominations: Annual nominations were held immediately before this meeting and the 2023 Board of Directors has been decided. The officers will remain the same.

Officers: Rosanna Sharps-Chairperson/President
John Favela-Vice President
Jo Rodefer-Treasurer
Myia Davila-Secretary

Board of Directors:
Rosanna Sharps
John Favela
Jo Rodefer
Myia Davila
Michael Sharps
Janine Osborne
Nate Lint
Howard White



Treasurer's Report: Jo Rodefer, Treasurer

Current Balance: \$22,078.22 in the bank.

The treasurer is currently working on updating the chart of accounts in QuickBooks so that funds available can be viewed from each Chamber activity and the Skate Park individually. The ice rink is generating revenue above the cost of operation.

Rack card distribution has been quoted to cost \$0.60 per location. The Chamber would like to discuss splitting the cost of distribution with the State.

Motion: to approve Treasurer's Report: Myia Davila; seconded by Michael Sharps; Board all in favor; motion carried.

Columbia State Historic Park Updates: Kristan Robinson, Concession Specialist, indicated that the contract for the City Hotel and What Cheer Saloon is still in progress but the corporation has requested early entry and the request was granted.

The stagecoach RFP (Request for Proposal) has closed, and the proposals are under review.

The concession specialist is working on writing two RFPs for the San Francisco store and the old photo studio. An interest has been made for the Fancy Dry Goods location, but no decisions have been made yet. An additional RFP for lodging and campsites may be released for Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

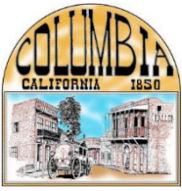
Columbia State Historic Park recently had tourism coordinators from Canada and China visit the park.

Town holiday decorating will be completed by Thanksgiving but will take place over multiple days between November 20-23.

Multiple school groups are scheduled in December.

The exterior maintenance of D Block is now complete. The interior of the buildings will be scheduled between each concessionaire and the contractor.

Restroom cleaning has been reduced from three times daily to twice daily as the seasonal staff reduction has begun. Some staff staggering was arranged to keep the restrooms open later was accomplished.



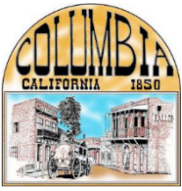
The Fallon Theatre and the Columbia Ranger Station (previously Artificer's Exchange) are the next to have roof repair/replacement. The renovation of the Trask House will take approximately 3-4 months to complete, and the project is pending.

Ranger Kyle has recently been added to the District. The Columbia Ranger Station also acts as a visitor center. In the event of an emergency, concessionaires should still follow procedures of notifying Norcom or 911 and not rely on a ranger being in the ranger station.

Exterior lighting was tested in the summer but there is a public concern of poor lighting around the Fallon Theatre that will need to be addressed.

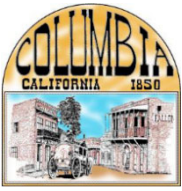
Tuolumne County Updates: Notes were provided by Jaron Brandon, District 5 Supervisor. Secretary Davila read the following notes verbatim:

- **Columbia Fire Update:** Since 1974, the County has identified Columbia as an area needing additional fire investment. And since then, it has not moved forward. Recently more service issues became apparent after the state started a hiring spree. 48 year later, at last week's fire district meeting, the Columbia Fire Protection District and Tuolumne County agreed to move forward with discussions for a full-time professional staffed fire station under the county umbrella – and with one-time funds, staff and myself were able to put \$1.3 million aside to help this transition happen. While we have many details to work out, this is a major win for our community and absolutely necessary after the events of the Gookin Fire and for what we face in catastrophic fire risk. A special thanks to everyone that participated in this over the past year because it has made a huge difference. Our forum in Columbia Elementary impressed upon a number of county staff members in attendance the critical importance of addressing this issue and effective communication broke down the barriers that previous were previously inhibiting even talking about fixing it. Well done everyone.
- **Community Resiliency Center in Columbia:** The past couple of weeks, I've had the pleasure of being at the opening of the beautiful Groveland and Tuolumne Resiliency Centers. These buildings were funded through the National Disaster Resilience Competition and ongoing grants to make it happen. It was so successful, it's become a model for the state. These buildings effectively serve as community centers, learning facilities, service offices and more during non-emergencies. And during emergencies, as safety and staging areas.
 - Now the County is looking to apply again and is pursuing the Columbia Armory. This building currently has hundreds of thousands if not over a million in repair costs due to deferred maintenance, age, and damage to the roof. This is why it's been left vacant since the Farmory, such a wonderful business, had



moved out. This will be a huge win for families and organizations within Columbia that can take advantage of a such a facility for children’s activities, classes, office space, meeting rooms, and maybe event airport facilities . . . all walking distance to Main Street and Columbia Elementary. We’re still early in this but it could means millions of investment into the area for better services and input is *absolutely* wanted – the interest and scoping is there but it’s still very much receiving input and adapting to local needs.

- **Vegetation Management Plan/Fuel Reduction:** To reduce fire risk and support emergency vehicle access/evacuations, the county approved a Vegetation Management ordinance that includes clearing 10 ft to each side and 15 ft above roads as well as on vacant parcels within 100ft of an adjacent structure. The process had *many* public hearings and discussions through the Fire Safety Advisory Committee and achieves on of our Board goals. We’re also continuing to move forward with the tens of millions in grant funding acquired for fuel reduction including SERAL project North of Columbia.
- **Homelessness:** The county is slowly coming to the realization that Harvard Mine Site pallet shelter is not a good idea. As you know, the county is recognizing homelessness awareness month with communication campaigns – but if we’re talking homelessness, it needs to be the *entire* picture and the original resolution did not include the real, severe issues the community faces from elements of that population. That’s why I had these community issues codified in the resolution and will be working to release a property owner best practices sheet to explain the legal environment, how to harden your site, numbers to call, managing interactions, and protecting our homes and businesses. Simply put, it should be easy to get better, harder to languish and become a problem, and we need to empowering communities to understand and address it.
- **Housing Collaborative and Student/Worker Housing:** Last week, the Community Development Department had a meeting with a potential builder for a project along Sawmill flat near the college, providing housing for students, local workers, and others. I hope this will be a downpayment on the employee housing needs for the area and to allow students with families (who currently don’t have adequate rooms in the dorms) to live near campus.
 - I’m also proud of the second TC Housing Symposium through Habitat for Humanity that’s bringing everyone in the housing arena (from banks to realtors to builders and advocates) together to identify and support more housing progress. My group has been working to identify building challenges and had several good discussions about how permitting and planning is currently done.
- **Visit Tuolumne Contract Upcoming:** ¼ of the current hotel tax (TOT) goes back to marketing for our tourism industry and so far, it’s been kick butt. We are now the



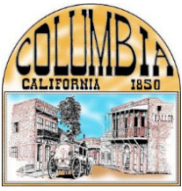
largest access corridor in trips to Yosemite and each year, outperformed other areas in tourism growth, we have more lodging coming in. That in turn is helping to fund investments in critical services to help all of us and Visit Tuolumne is a huge part of that. However, with a mind to cost-cutting, the county will be looking at opening the contract with VT to RFP (or open bidding) instead of sole-source, and also looking at some kind of cap or reduction – I can't oppose this strongly enough, especially without the data to back it up. Why? VT markets our area to the state, nation, and international audience – it gets eyeballs on areas and dollars into businesses. Where we see folks visiting in our historic town, there's a solid chance they are there because of that outreach. Placements in magazines, online ads, content production, travel agent contracts, tourism events, destination development, local event support, and so much more. Keep an eye out for this because a dollar invested in good marketing brings far more money into our area than it costs making discussions about reductions, or changing horses midstream after 30 years, both of serious consequence to areas reliant on tourism and to us all. I would recommend the Chamber that could be so impacted by this decision consider taking a position and emailing the Board of Supervisors at bospublic@co.tuolumne.ca.us

- Other things
 - Working with Public Works to discuss the Main Street Stop Sign near Mercantile
 - Ongoing discussions with county and school to see how we can get the pool back up and running – there's been significant staff transition at CESD.
 - Overlay added to the Italian Bar road, plus ditching and brushing.
 - Another 1/3rd of Jamestown Road will be getting a repair for \$800,000.
 - On December 6th, the Board will be considering recognizing Miner's Day for our independent miners and local company Blue Mountain Mineral. Likely will recognize a miner of the year, so if you see John or someone at BMM, wish them a happy miner's day and thank them for their work.
 - CERF Funding: The county is continuing to look at the economic development \$5 million planning funds. The contractor for it will be Sierra Business Council.
 - I'm *SO* proud of the Chamber for it's amazing work in getting the Ice Rink. What an incredible amenity and my thanks also to the Community Development Department for their work in seeing it through. They knew it was important to us and made it happen.

Sincerely,

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Jaron E. Brandon



Event Update: Harvest Festifall on October 8 and 9, 2022. Myia Davila, event coordinator indicated that the profit and loss was completed. The Festifall had a total of 32 vendors and total profit to the Chamber was \$2,115.00

Event Update: Boo Boulevard on October 29, 2022. The Chamber assisted the Columbia State Historic Park by providing \$500 for candy donations. The Chamber sold \$276 worth of bags which helped offset the candy donation, but the Chamber is still at a financial loss for the event. The Chamber is unclear if the \$500 donation will be expected annually. Boo Boulevard had less visitation than the previous year, but Central Valley District Interpretive Manager Mike Merritt indicated that the event was “better controlled” and coordinated in 2022 than in 2021.

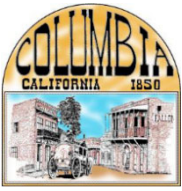
The participation in this event is considered a long-term investment as it drives continued park visitation but not necessarily increased revenue for concessionaires on the day of the activity.

Event Update: Columbia Ice Skate Park is now open and doing well. Reservations have doubled since opening day and the park continues to gain momentum. The Ice Skate Park has created two job opportunities and a third will be needed once the Ice Skate Park can support a third employee.

Groups from outside of the county have been booking and a Facebook boost within 50 miles has increased reservations. The Ice Skate Park has received visitors from as far away as San Francisco, specifically for the activity. As of 3:30 pm on November 16, 2022, the Skate Park has received 220 bookings for 695 skaters. This has generated a net revenue of \$7,100. The concessions are averaging about \$60 per day and have generated approximately \$400 so far. A 30 day run projects 1,415 skaters in November 2022 for a net revenue of \$16,000.

The session capacity has been reduced to 40 skaters per session as 50 skaters may be too crowded. The Skate Park may want to invest in additional skates as limited sizes could affect bookings. Thus far, no issues have arisen regarding parking or queuing on Yankee Hill Road. Marketing strategies moving forward will focus on cross promotion with Columbia State Historic Park concessions and other local Columbia businesses.

Friends of Columbia: Richard Haratani provided a report indicated that the next meeting will next week. The docents would still like to participate in ice skating, in costume, and a good day may be on December 11, 2022, between the Equestrian Parade and the Las Posadas event.



Event Update: The Chamber was informed that the Equestrian Parade was cancelled. The coordination of the event was supposed to change this year and the organization taking over did not make arrangements to do so. A request for the Chamber to take over the event was made. The Board of Directors will need to review the parameters, insurance requirements, and other details before moving forward with the request.

Event Update: Las Posadas Nativity Parade, December 11, 2022. Event coordinator is Daniel Wright (not present) and previously reported that everything was in order with the exception of arranging a tax collector. A suggestion was made to reach out to Tuolumne County Tax Collector, Justin Birtwhistle. The suggestion will be presented to the event coordinator for outreach.

Event Update: Columbia Town Christmas Party, December 14, 2022. Event coordinator is Nate Lint. Set up will be at 4:00 pm, event will start at 5:00 pm, and dinner will be served at 6:00 pm. Treasurer Jo Rodefer will contact concessionaires for donations to raffle. The event will take place of the December Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meeting.

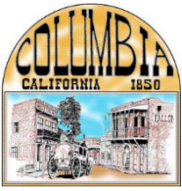
Event Update: Columbia Winterfest Days of Music & Gold, 2024. Event coordinator is Michael Sharps. Depending on how well the Skate Park performs, Winterfest could occur in 2023.

Event Update: Victorian Easter, April 9, 2023. Event coordinator is Rosanna Sharps. Planning For 2023 is underway.

Event Update: 4th of July 2023. Event coordinator is Jo Rodefer. The 4th of July will be on a Tuesday in 2023. The poles have been removed and will be removed much faster next year. Planning is underway.

Event Update: Columbia Art Show, September 17, 2023. Event coordinator is Kim Kyhl. A discussion ensued about the event being one day and on Sunday. Some thoughts were that the event was scheduled on Sunday to draw more visitors to Columbia on Sunday as Sundays tend to be slower days for visitation.

Event Update: Harvest Festifall, October 14 and 15, 2023. Event coordinator is Myia Davila. The Chamber will work on an electronic application in addition to the paper application process. The event coordinator will reach out to participants from 2022 to "save the date" and reserve spaces for those who want to participate in 2023. Requiring costumes has proven challenging and creating a barrier for some vendors to participate. Wording on the information sheet will be changed to "costumes highly encouraged." The event coordinator will review the applications for participation and ensure that the vendors meet participation requirements (no selling of solar panels or modern-day items).



Event Update: Las Posadas will be on December 10, 2023. Event coordinator is Daniel Wright.

New Business: Cinco de Mayo-Barbara Balen. Ms. Balen did not attend the meeting but Teresa Torbett indicated that a fiscal agent may be needed for the event and asked if the Chamber would be interested. More information will be needed regarding the event before any decisions can be made.

Other Business: A new concession may be in the Fancy Dry Goods. If this happens, the Chamber will need to make arrangements for the storage of event items. At this time, the State Park does not have any availability for storage.

Motion: to adjourn Myia Davila; seconded by Richard Haratani, Board all in favor; motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: Adjourned by Rosanna Sharps, 6:58 pm

Next Meeting Date: January 18, 2023; 5:30 pm at Eagle Cotage