

Trustee Report – Charles Wood

I attended the Colorado Association of Ski Towns (CAST) meeting, August 28-29 in Durango. Much of the meeting presentation was about Durango and how it is dealing with issues, many of which may apply to Nederland. There were also presentations by two consultants regarding the future of the ski industry. Highlights included:

Durango Virtual City Hall (<http://www.durangogov.org/index.aspx?NID=815#>) - Intended to engage citizens in discussion of town issues. “Virtual City Hall is an online forum for civic engagement. Read what others are saying about important Durango topics, then post your own statement. City officials will read the statements and incorporate them into their decision process.”

Durango Youth Engagement- Durango has a program in which teens (8-12th grade) are invited/encouraged to participate in a “Youth Advisory Commission” or act as youth liaison to various town advisory boards.

Durango Infrastructure- Durango has devised an infrastructure improvement index, which continually grades different aspects of city infrastructure for functionality. The grades (A-F) are based on agreed standards and indicate what infrastructure needs the most attention.

Durango Congestion/Parking- Durango feels it has been successful in addressing some of its downtown congestion by implementing a “all may park, but all must pay” program for public parking. Parking is metered and those areas where demand is most cost the most to park.

Consultant – Jeremy Nelson - Regeneration strategies. Discussed land use. General theme was that “people want ‘authentic’”. Especially tourist/ski focused towns, people want to feel the town is “authentic ” and its history should be ‘fun’ not ‘dead’.

Consultant – Nate Fristoe- RRC Associates- Discussed changing demographics of skiers. There is a significant drop off in first time skiers since 2009 and this loss is unlikely to be recovered, as the older these people get the less likely they are to take up skiing. Increasing trend in female skiers quitting, as they get older. Individual lift ticket prices have increased significantly compared to season passes, discouraging first timers. Climate change is making the duration of ski seasons less predictable and generally shorter. For these reasons, resorts/towns need to look for additional non-ski attractions, especially in summer.

Rural Broadband- We were also reminded of the Connect Colorado Rural Broadband Act (<http://openstates.org/co/bills/2014A/HB14-1328/>) , passed in April, which will make “10s of millions of dollars” in state grants available annually to companies that install high speed internet service in rural areas.