



THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE

Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: rotary.org rotary5470.org northforkrotary.org

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180 - Chartered 12/20/22

Vol 59 Issue 20 – July 16, 2020

Guest Editor: Bain Weinberger

LAST MEETING: July 9, 2020 (Virtual Meeting held via Zoom)

President Campbell presided.

Visiting Rotarians: none

Other Guests: none

Key Guest: No key guest

(Annette now has the key).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- We had 60% turnout for the Zoom meeting today.
- \$600 of the \$4300 needed for aid to Senegal has been raised. The Board will be discussing options to raise the additional \$3700.
- Felix will be leaving town permanently on August 15th. An in-person Club meeting in Town Park on August 13th dedicated to saying farewell to Felix is being proposed. The Club P.A. system can be used if power is available.
- Club member John Zachman will be working as Program Assistant for North Fork Senior Connections.
- Anyone wishing to take over as Newsletter Editor is welcome to do so.
- The next Board meeting is Wednesday, July 15th at 1:00. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend the Zoom meeting. Contact President Campbell (or any Board member) for details.

PROGRAM: The Real Estate Market & The Pandemic

Club Member Bob Lario gave the presentation today, and started with an overview of the sequence of events as the onset of the Covid-19 virus impacted the local real estate industry.

- Feb 27: Bob and Linda survived a 5-day trip to Las Vegas for the ReMax International Convention with 7000 realtors from around the world. The first quarter of 2020 was strong with 220 sales in Delta County compared to 198 in the first quarter of 2019. Inventory was tight but stable, and interest rates were low.
- Mar 10-12: The situation begins to get serious with the virus as various sporting and other events started being cancelled. "This is for real".
- Mar 25: Governor Polis issued a "Stay-at-Home" order. Public gatherings and unnecessary travel were prohibited. As a "critical business", real estate and associated operations were allowed to remain open, but with protective protocols in place. Mt. West Real Estate closed their office to the public and maintained minimal staff in the office. Agents worked from home. Buyers could look at property, but additional qualification measures were put in place to ensure buyers were serious and ready to buy. In

addition, strict protocols were established to maintain social distancing and to minimize touching in order to limit the spread of the virus. Vacant land was easy to show and did not require the agent be present at all. Sellers were allowed to take their properties off of the market, but none did so.

- April: Additional clarification was received, tightening the protective restrictions even more. Agents could no longer bring buyers into homes. Virtual tours were available for some properties. Some agents resorted to showing buyers homes via video chat using their cell phones. When eventually agents were also prohibited inside homes, the sellers themselves provided video phone tours of their properties. These restrictions as well as travel restrictions seriously depressed the market (there were four closings in April in 2020 in the North Fork, as opposed to 12 in 2019). Appraisers, inspectors, title companies and county offices were still able to operate, but with a high degree of uncertainty. In response, an addendum was added to the sales contracts providing additional flexibility on dates. Title companies added an option of “curbside closings” to allow buyers and sellers to stay in their cars for document signings.
- Clients were informed that, while many deals would be delayed or fall through, and the level of activity would decline, there would be an eventual end to the pandemic. Property values would likely not decline and interest rates would stay low. Delta County would be considered a good place to live even more than before due to low population density. The stay-at-home orders also emphasized to people how important their homes are. There was also a big increase in the number of people browsing the internet, looking at real estate, resulting in numerous leads for potential buyers. For all of these reasons, it was felt that there would be a pent-up demand for Delta County real estate, and there would be a surge of activity once things opened up again.
- Economic disruption caused by the pandemic has not impacted Delta County very much. Many new residents brought their businesses and sources of income with them when they moved here.
- May 2: Governor Polis changed “Stay at Home” to “Safer at Home”, opening up in-person property showings (with safety protocols still in place). The expected surge took place, with lots of buyers showing up.
- June: The market exploded. Inventory is tight, but demand has significantly increased. The market has a “consciousness of urgency” on the part of the buyers. There were 16 closings in June of this year, compared to 17 a year ago. Bob expects this to continue through the rest of the year, despite ongoing economic uncertainty, in particular high unemployment.

Q and A

Q: Are in-town houses still worth more than out of town houses?

A: The local market is so diverse, it is difficult to compare. However, the core area of Paonia is very popular, and homes in that area are selling at a good value.

Q: What is happening with investment properties, such as rental property?

A: Commercial property has always been a small part of the market, so not much activity there. Not a great area to be in business. The rental market is strong, so there are a lot of people interested in rental investments. Vacant land is also real strong, and there is a lot of interest in land listings. Much of this is due to strong interest in cannabis cultivation for CBD.

Q: How did home inspections go during this period?

A: Some people in Delta County took the virus seriously, others did not. However, no sellers reported any concerns about inspectors coming into their homes.

UPCOMING MEETING PROGRAMS:

Date	Speaker	Program	Member
7/16/20	Debra Muzikar, Exec. Director Blue Sage	Speaking on the Blue Sage	Ed Bliss
7/23/20	Lenore Cambria		Pam Bliss
7/30/20		Fifth Thursday	
8/6/20			Betsy Marston
8/13/20			Jackie Parks
8/20/20			Kevin Parks
8/27/20			Karri Polson
9/3/20			James Schott
9/10/20			Peggy Szvetcz
9/17/20			Greg Thompson
9/24/20			Bain Weinberger
10/1/20			John Zachman
10/8/20			Judy Beggs
10/15/20			Felix Belmont
10/22/20			Bill Bishop
10/29/20		Fifth Thursday	
11/5/20			Sarah Bishop
11/12/20			Norm Lewark
11/19/20			Nick Lypps
11/26/20		Thanksgiving	
12/3/20			Randy Campbell
12/10/20			Annette Choszczyk
12/17/20			John Coombe
12/24/20		Christmas Eve	
12/31/20		New Year's Eve	
1/7/21			Susie Coombe
1/14/21			Glenn Dahlgren
1/21/21			Marsha Grant

