

The Intentional Tourist
by Jarrod McCartney
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We have a problem and we need your help. There are too many good ideas to explore and too many problems to solve for Heritage Tourism, the City of Red Cloud or anyone else to solve on their own. Oftentimes, it's not our place to pursue a particular project because we lack the authority to do so or are simply ineligible to apply. Sometimes, the project might not meet our mission even though we believe that it would be of great benefit to the community.

There is no magic formula to get community development work done and while there might be grant funding, it often comes with strings attached or requires matching funds that are often out of reach for most people and organizations. While the last few years have seen politicians throw a lot of money around, it would be a mistake to think that will continue. Even with funding and momentum, your project might encounter hoops to jump through. If I were to write a narrative relating the behind the scenes work we performed in order to piece together the funding for the Hotel Garber project, you would likely get bored around page 100 (or even page 2) and turn on *Yellowstone* instead.

Unfortunately, we cannot dispense vigilante justice like *Yellowstone's* John Dutton, no matter how many Carhartt vests we buy. Instead we're stuck with anthropologist Margaret Mead for our inspiration: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." So here are my keys to getting that new pool, youth center, community celebration, or other project or event started: 1) research your topic thoroughly and document your sources, 2) get organized and get others organized, 3) market to and educate the public, 4) be civil and have 1 on 1 conversations, 5) seek professional help to supplement and guide your work, not replace it, 6) partner with existing organizations when possible and 7) fundraise, fundraise, fundraise, and then fundraise some more. All of this will take patience, persistence, and having uncomfortable conversations with people. It may lead you to seeking a different type of professional help than what I mean in #5 even. But if the work is important, you absolutely cannot wait around for someone else to do it.

Make no mistake—getting stuff done in any community is hard and often thankless work. There were definitely times where I felt like giving up on the Hotel Garber project. But as we get set for the Groundbreaking on October 7, I am filled with pride when I consider what it took to get to this point and what the project will mean for Red Cloud's long-term sustainability. I promise if you stick with whatever it is you want to see happen in Red Cloud, you'll feel that way too. Next month, I'll make a pitch for you all to join the "Energizing Entrepreneurial Ecosystems" ("E3") and break down the 7 steps listed above.