

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, July 14, 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

Meeting was called to order by Chair Waspi at 4:01 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Brian Waspi, Vice Chair Zakia Pirzada, Alder Fesenmaier, Troy Migut; Mayor Krause (Ex-Off),

Absent: Alder Frame, Shelley Rowell, Stephanie Klett (Ex-Off), Comptroller Laura Pisarcik (Ex-Off).

Comments from the Public limited to 5 minutes, limited to items on the agenda:

Nancy Douglass, General Manager, WLKG 96.1 FM, spoke about the need to correct a misperception about the radio station. She gave a handout showing their coverage area (included with these minutes). Their promotion is for overnight stays and repeat visits.

Approval of Tourism Commission minutes from June 9, 2025

Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to approve the minutes from June 9, 2025. Unanimously carried.

Heather Jones, Independent Contractor for Tourism Commission, Meet at the Lake Promotional Activity

Heather Jones gave her monthly report noting that the 2026 Riviera bookings are well ahead of the 2025 pace.

Update from Tourism Entity – Visit Lake Geneva

Deanna Goodwin reviewed the data from her monthly report. Email subscribers continue to increase. Nominations are now being accepted online through August 31 for the 2025 Impact Awards. Last “Concert in the Park” will be August 7th.

Included in June 2025 Earned Media Highlights:

<https://wnanews.com/2025/06/20/you-too-can-create-amazing-dishes/>

<https://www.worldatlas.com/cities/11-serene-wisconsin-towns-for-a-weekend-retreat.html>

Update from Lake Geneva Business Improvement District (BID) –

Alexandra Binanti gave detailed information regarding her monthly report and data.

Lemonade Crawl will be on August 20.

Art Crawl, new event in September.

Pumpkin Crawl, new during Oktoberfest.

Trying to stay ahead of challenges with the Hwy. 50 construction, BID is concerned with rent rates in downtown. These rates are not comparable to Madison, Chicago, and Door County.

BID will be asking the Common Council in August for an adjustment to the BID District map.

Written financial update provided by City Comptroller

Balance Sheet from May 31, 2025

Total Assets \$999,149.67
Restricted Fund Balance - \$1,075,073.65

Tourism Promotional Grant Program and Requests

Gala Days and Nights: Musique of the Night – Geneva Lake Women’s Association

The GLW grant is for three events that will be cross-marketed. Commissioners were concerned with the total of the marketing budget included in the application. *Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to approve a total of \$35,000 (Ladies Day Luncheon, Gala Days and Nights, and Women’s Weekend 2026) with no specified amounts among the three events. Unanimously carried.*

Sylph, A Contemporary Ballet – Dawn Spring Dance Projects

It was explained that the ballet would be performed in the round and include a workshop therefore encouraging the overnight stays. The projections included in the grant details are based on the data from their 2024 October premiere. *Motion by Pirzada, second by Fesenmaier, to approve the marketing budget for their August 27 and 28, 2025, mid-week event. Unanimously carried.*

Venetian Festival – Lake Geneva Jaycees

Grant application was amended to include a radio ad and billboard. *Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to approval an additional \$2650 for updated marketing included in the July packet. Unanimously carried.*

Fieldwork at veterans Park – Geneva Lakes Family YMCA

Grant application was amended to reallocate money (not additional funds) for Vets Park field maintenance – grass edged around the fields, pitching mounds and batter boxes free from holes, proper drainage, additional seeding, and removal of weeds. The invoices submitted for reimbursement will detail the work completed. *Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to reallocate up to \$9300 for maintenance as listed in the amended application. Unanimously carried.*

Final Grant Evaluations from organizations receiving Tourism Grant

Rediscover Wonder, Geneva Lakes Children’s Museum –

This evaluation would be a good exemplar to use for a one-and-done event.

Wee Whiskey Fest, Geneva Lakes Whiskey Club –

Commissioners felt that this needed to be scheduled off-season. The size of the grant is of concern.

Winterfest Ice Sculpture Walk 2025, VISIT Lake Geneva – No comment.

The Balloon Adventure, 531 Fund –

There is a tremendous regional and out-of-state reach with this event plus advanced ticket sales.

Field Work at Vets Park, Geneva Lakes YMCA –

Numbers for the tournaments exceeded expectations.

Wisconsin Cheese Festival, Adams PG and Lake Geneva House of Music –
Needed more details and analysis.

**Tourism Commission related forms, paperwork, and grant procedures review:
Criteria/Guidelines for awarding grants, to be included on the grant application**

Part 3 (and other spots) on the Grant Form: staff can revise by removing the QR code and add the actual URL/link to <https://www.lakegenevahotels.org/>. *Agreed by consensus.* Waspi noted that he believes we should follow the JEM Grants guideline that for-profit events, in most cases, should be self-sustaining after three years.

Commissioners suggested adding Exemplar Grants to the City website for applicants to use as samples.

Riviera Ballroom Complimentary Request Form, Heather Jones

Jones added the payroll costs to the Riviera Comp Request Form for an accurate reflection of the true cost of the donation.

Promoting the Tourism Commission’s website listing City hotels

Heather Jones will market the Tourism Commission website for City Hotels using Google Ads. *Motion by Pirzada, second by Migut, to approve up to \$3000 for Google Ads for promotion of <https://www.lakegenevahotels.org/> asap. Jone will include data analytics in her monthly report. Unanimously carried.*

Knowles-Nelson Grant and Matching Funds

City Administrator will submit a grant request for August meeting using past grants on file for municipal development.

**Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date –
Monday, August 11, at 4:00 PM**

- Knowles-Nelson Grant (see above)
- Budget – add line items for municipal development projects including maintenance; City limits entrance signs and wayfinding kiosks
- Switch Riviera Contractor individual grant requests to line items in the City budget
- Placer.AI update – September
- Downtown Banners – September
- Hwy. 50 Construction Written Update with Plan for Visitors - September
- Note: Include Future Meeting Date on the agenda

Motion by Migut, second by Waspi, to adjourn at 5:31 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier, Secretary