

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
MONDAY, January 10, 2022 – 4:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

Meeting was called to order by Chair Waspi at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Brian Waspi, Vice Chair Dana Trilla, Alderman Hedlund, Alderman Fesenmaier

Ex-officio Members: Visit Lake Geneva Director Stephanie Klett (via Go to Meeting).

Absent: Zakia Pirzada, Linda Moritz

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

None

Approval of Tourism Commission minutes from December 13, 2021

Trilla moved, second by Alderman Hedlund, to approve the December 13, 2021 minutes, second by Pirzada. Unanimously carried.

Update from Stephanie Copsey (Independent Contractor for Tourism Commission) Meet at the Lake

Copsey reviewed salient points in her data-filled reports. She continues to book the Riviera in 2022 and 2023 with the increased rates. The bookings for 2021 equaled 2018 totals, and 2022 will exceed last year.

The engagement season online campaign began December 20, 2021.

Update from Tourism Entity – Visit Lake Geneva

Deanna Goodwin noted the public event dates for 2022:

- Winterfest & Downtown Ice Sculpture Walk – February 2-6
- Lake Geneva Restaurant Week – April 23-May 1
- Concerts in the Park – Thursdays, June 30-August 11
- Electric Christmas Parade – December 3

Earned Media Highlights now includes direct links to the articles.

Chicago continues to be the top website view at 18.4%.

Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) continue to see increases in followers.

The 2022 Visitors Guide is currently online while the print version will be distributed in a few days.

The annual Downtown Ice Sculpture Walk, companion activity to Winterfest, will include 36 businesses thanks to the Tourism Grant. Last year 26 downtown businesses participated. New events include Bonfires on the Beach along with igloo rentals and live entertainment Friday and Saturday nights from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Update from Walworth County Visitors and Convention Bureau – No report from WCVCB.

Chair Waspi was in contact with their Board. Half the contract amount was issued. We are awaiting the final accounting to find out how much of that will be returned to the City. They should be ready to appear in February.

Update from Lake Geneva Business Improvement District (BID) – No report. Oktoberfest invoices are still outstanding.

Written Financial Update provided by Comptroller

Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2021

Total Assets \$ 985,515.35

Outstanding Grant Balance \$628,223.75

Restricted (Uncommitted) Fund Balance \$ 306,608.95

Electric Vehicle charging station(s): Seth Elder, Parking Manager

Nothing was in the packet; however, Seth did refer to the conflicting state legislation from the December Public Works Committee packet. In order to own and operate electric charging stations in Wisconsin, the municipality would have to be a regulated power company according to current state statute. Door County has a successful electric vehicle charging program according to Klett. The Tesla Company is offering charging stations free to patrons at Grand Geneva, The Abbey Resort, and Lake Lawn. Alderman Fesenmaier tried unsuccessfully to add a charging station requirement to the recently-approved PIP for Kwik Trip Wells Street location. Klett explained that Visit Lake Geneva has had inquiries about availability in Lake Geneva. Federal Funds may be available along with Utility Commission purchase and donation or Tourism Commission grant money. Lot I was suggested as one possible location. Seth will return soon with more information and options.

Geneva Lake Museum Grant: previously awarded, status update

The Gygax Dungeons and Dragons exhibit has been delayed due to COVID. There is now an ad hoc exhibit committee working on nationwide marketing. The exhibit is actually 60% completed. There will be a soft opening in Spring 2022 with a full Grand Opening soon after. Invoices to-date will be submitted.

Discussion/Action on Tourism Promotional Grant Program and Requests

Winter Wedding Riviera Photoshoot: Stephanie Copsey

Due to availability issues, Copsey asked that the grant date be modified. Motion by Waspi, second by Hedlund, to grant \$1500 for the Winter Wedding Photoshoot beginning January 22 through February 28. Unanimously carried.

Wisconsin Valley Media Group: Bacon Fest 2022

The applicable permits from the City, per the new application, have not been granted at this time. By consent, the grant application will be continued to the February agenda.

Wisconsin Valley Media Group: Jazz Fest 2022

Discussion centered on the fact that the event was not being held within the City limits. Applicants made the case that the overnight stays would be at City hotels. They did not ask Geneva Township for any funding, per the grant application. It is an off-season event which the Tourism Commission believes is important.

Motion by Waspi, second by Trilla, to award \$10,000 for marketing activities as listed in the packet. Unanimously carried.

Wisconsin Valley Media Group: Taco Fest 2022

This event is also located outside the City limits but is an off-season event that was very successful last year. Motion by Trilla, second by Waspi, to award \$10,000 for marketing activities as listed in the packet. Unanimously carried.

Lake Geneva Jaycees: Pub and Grub 2022

This is an off-season event that had success last year in its trial, first run. Proceeds will be donated to Veterans of Walworth County. They are hiring a professional marketing firm this year and will have one base, Lake City Social, from which to register beginning Friday night. The extra and earlier night of a Friday registration should encourage even greater overnight stays. They saw 77% of the participants from last year come from out-of-state. There were questions about funding non-marketing promotional portions of the \$20,000 proposed grant budget. Motion by Hedlund, second by Trilla, to award \$15,000 of the grant. Unanimously carried.

Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date –

Walworth County Visitor and Convention Bureau contract

City of Lake Geneva logo versus Tourism Commission logo on grant marketing materials

February 14, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

Motion by Hedlund, second by Trilla, to adjourn at 5:45 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier, Secretary