

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, September 11, 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

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

Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Zakia Pirzada, Ald. Fesenmaier, Alderman Howell, Linda Moritz, Troy Migut, Mayor Klein (Ex-Off).

Absent: Chair Brian Waspi, Stephanie Klett (Ex-Off), Laura Pisarcik (Ex-Off).

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

None.

Approval of Tourism Commission minutes from August 14, 2023

Motion by Pirzada, second by Howell, to approve the minutes from August 14, 2023.

Unanimously carried.

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

Jones reviewed the Marketing Update including website statistics. We are now booking the Riviera out into 2025. The meeting planner event, originally scheduled for May, but rescheduled due to the Wrigley Drive construction, has been cancelled. Jones will hold individual tours as needed. Heather's contract expires at the end of October. The current contract was included in the packet for review and changes will be presented at October's meeting.

Update from Tourism Entity – Visit Lake Geneva

Goodwin gave highlights from the monthly report. The Annual Dinner and Impact Awards will be held on October 24 at the Abbey Resort. Mark your calendars for the Lighted Christmas Parade, December 2, and Winterfest 2024, January 31 through February 4. The Geiger Tour, leading to print and digital stories, featured 13 writers including many new faces. The Visit Lake Geneva website continues to set new records in all categories. TikTok is also gaining momentum since the June launch.

Update from Lake Geneva Business Improvement District (BID) – Alexandria Binanti

Alex showcased the increase in traffic with their updated website and social media push. A detailed chart is included in the packet listing the BID-sponsored events. A business networking event is planned for the end of September. Binanti plans to attend the September Housing Summit, sponsored by Walworth County, concerning workforce housing and school families, which are both impacted by the number and quality of Short-Term Rentals in the city. Mural in Motion is now rescheduled for May 2024.

Written financial update provided by City Comptroller

Balance Sheet from August 31, 2023

Total Assets - \$860,099.84

Restricted Fund Balance - \$525,302.27

It was noted that there is approximately \$9000 left for 2023, taking into account outstanding grants and unpaid contracts.

Tourism Promotional Grant Program and Requests**Abominable TRAIL Race, ASR Events**

Without objection, continued to October.

Abominable SNOW Race, ASR Events

Without objection, continued to October.

2024 Tavern League of Wisconsin Spring Conference, Walworth County Tavern League

Applicants explained that though the event is at Grand Geneva, the capacity is 350 rooms, and the overflow from the expected 1000 total room stays will be booked in the city limits. The \$10,000 requested is for shuttle buses. The Commissioners asked them to return in October to focus their budget on marketing expenses not shuttle buses.

Lake Geneva Lions Club Oktoberfest, Doug Bartz

The event will be held at Lake City Social. The group was asked to rename their event to avoid confusion with the BID's Oktoberfest on the same dates. They will be choosing a different date for next year's event. The event's main attraction is the Corn Hole Bags Tournament with 32 2-person teams plus families. Although the ask was for \$20,000, the Commissioners focused on funding the marketing portion of their budget. Motion by Pirzada, second by Howell, to approve the October 7 and 8 Oktoberfest grant for \$5,000. Unanimously carried.

Tourism Commission Logo and other possible changes

Visit Lake Geneva needs the original logo from the City to make changes. There is a need to clarify the logo, so the public and taxpayers understand the funds are from room taxes not property taxes. Motion by Zakia, second by Moritz, to continue to the October meeting. Unanimously carried.

Addition of link or QR code to all marketing materials including print and social media

In a continued effort to direct visitors to hotels within the City limits, the Commission has been discussing the requirement to use a web link and/or QR Code for more accuracy in guests finding and booking City hotels. If a QR Code or link are used from the Riviera webpage, Heather cannot accurately track the source of the inquiry. Through input from Heather and Deanna, it was suggested that the City website mirror the Hotels page from the Riviera "Hotels and Lodging" specific webpage. This will allow users to go directly to the hotels listing but on the City website. The City can then provide website analytics and tracking for the Commission, etc.

The link and/or QR Code to the City website page will then be required to be included on the Grant Recipient Marketing Website. The grant application revision can be scheduled for the October meeting. Motion by Pirzada, second by Moritz, to continue to the October meeting. Unanimously carried.

Initial discussion regarding Visit Lake Geneva with Tourism Commission (contract opens July 1, 2023) No update. Continued to October meeting.

Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date –

In addition to above,

- Request by Commissioners to have Comptroller provide last three years amounts paid to Visit (for contract and room taxes) and room taxes total collected.
- Link or QR Code on promotional materials – continued to October for grant application revision; verify city website has mirrored hotels and lodging page from Riviera website; include city website metrics for this page in a separate report under Heather Jones' report
- Contract negotiations update with Visit – include the current contract and any drafts in the October packet.
- Heather Jones contract renewal (expires Oct. 31, 2023) – Please include current and draft contract in the October packet.
- Agreement for Riviera for events that are comped.

Monday, October 9, 2023, at 4:00 PM

Motion by Pirzada, second by Moritz, to adjourn at 5:18 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier,
Secretary