

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, October 9, 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Pirzada at 4:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Zakia Pirzada, Ald. Fesenmaier, Alderman Howell, Linda Moritz, Stephanie Klett (Ex-Off), Mayor Klein (Ex-Off), Comptroller Laura Pisarcik (Ex-Off)

Absent: Chair Brian Waspi, Troy Migut, Administrator Nord (Staff Liaison)

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

Dave Desimone, W4191 Southland Road, Linn Township, Director of Black Point Museum spoke in support of renewing the Visit Lake Geneva contract.

Approval of Tourism Commission minutes from September 11, 2023

Motion by Pirzada, second by Moritz, to approve the minutes from September 11, 2023.

Unanimously carried.

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

Heather Jones reviewed her three-page report. Fesenmaier asked about the Riviera website. Jones explained that the website is through wix.com and is registered and paid for by the City.

2024 Independent Contractor Agreement, Lake Geneva Cooperative Convention Center Special Events Coordinator

Heather Jones contracted salary increases about 9% from \$64,000 annually to \$70,000. No other changes from the contract expiring October 31, 2023. Motion by Moritz, second by Pirzada.

Unanimously carried.

Update from Tourism Entity – Visit Lake Geneva

Deanna Goodwin gave highlights from the monthly report.

Interesting Earned Media links: [12 Most Scenic Wisconsin Towns - WorldAtlas](#)

[Coolest Small City in Every State | Best of the U.S. | Fifty Grande](#)

[14 Best Winter Vacations in the USA, from Sand to Snow \(shebuysttravel.com\)](#)

The monthly partner meeting will be October 19 at Pier 290 with Peter Barca, DOR Secretary.

Annual Awards dinner is October 24 at the Abbey in Fontana.

Mark your calendars for the Christmas Parade on December 2 and Winterfest from January 31 through February 4.

Winterfest will expand into both sides of Flat Iron Park due to the bigger blocks/form being used for the snow sculptures. The center of the park will have smaller sculptures and added activities.

The Visit website has exceeded three million pageviews, setting an all-time record.

The Visitors Center on Wrigley Drive will host a cold weather clothing drive from October through December.

Update from Lake Geneva Business Improvement District (BID) – Alexandria Binanti
No report.

Written financial update provided by City Comptroller

Balance Sheet from September 30, 2023

Total Assets - \$1,032,243.26

Restricted Fund Balance - \$525,302.27

Comptroller Pisarcik briefly discussed the 2024 proposed budget from the packet. She noted that the Tourism Commission may transfer to the City's General Fund an amount for interest only, not principal, for the Riviera renovation bonds until 2025. She explained that there is no cap for municipal development transfers. She pointed out that the 2024 budget lists \$271, 425.000 in the municipal development line mainly for the Hillmoor project – Knowles-Nelson grant matching portion.

Tourism Promotional Grant Program and Requests

Abominable TRAIL Race; ASR Events, LLC

Event is being held November 18, so the application is withdrawn due to lack of time.

Abominable SNOW Race; ASR Events, LLC

Bill Wolfe presented the grant application event scheduled for Saturday, January 27, 2024 (weekend before Winterfest). This is the ninth year for the event with six years held in Lake Geneva (hosted at LG Ziplines and Adventures, Geneva Township). Attendance is 60% from the Rockford, Chicago, and Milwaukee areas including attendees from 25 states. The Winter Obstacle Course is an entirely unique experience. Motion by Pirzada, second by Moritz, to award a \$7000 grant. Unanimously carried.

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

Applicants were not present.

Lake Geneva Winter Bridal Show; Celebration on Wells

Charlie Lorenzi presented the Marketing Plan and Budget and gave details regarding the success of the event in previous years. Motion by Howell, second by Pirzada, to approve the January 20 grant for \$15,000. Unanimously carried.

Update regarding Visit Lake Geneva contract with Tourism Commission

Stephanie Klett explained that they have met once with Chair Waspi and talked in very broad terms, with no specific proposals or changes to the current contract. Visit is happy with the current contract. They are receiving 35% of any room tax amount collected over \$500,000 and are benefiting from the increased room revenues over the past two years.

Vice Chair Pirzada asked about adding new events to their contract. Klett explained that Visit, according to Section 4 of the contract, is providing tourism promotion and development. Section 8 Services does list the four events that Visit actually does manage and promote: Concerts in the Park, Winterfest, Christmas Parade, and Restaurant Week.

Pirzada asked that Section 8iii in the contract be modified to "Assist the Commission and City of Lake Geneva promote City of Lake Geneva events." No motion was made.

Pirzada also asked about expanding the RFPs to all City hotels not just those on the list in the packet. Goodwin was given permission to address the Commission and clarified that bigger

event planners use Visit to narrow down the information to larger properties and other needs listed in the RFPs. Planners do not want to be inundated with every property, just those that fit their specifications for the event. Smaller event planners tend to do their own research from the Hotels and Lodging page. Goodwin insisted Visit would lose credibility if all properties were shared in the RFP results. Discussion will continue to the November meeting.

Tourism Commission Logo and other possible changes

Visit Lake Geneva brought a few draft logos. The City does not have an original digital copy, however. Goodwin will reach out to local artist, Neal Aspinall for a quote to create an original and to add Tourism Commission on the logo. Motion by Pirzada, second by Howell, to continue to the November meeting. Unanimously carried.

Riviera Agreement for events that request rental fees waived

The City is in the process of revising its fee waiver policy. Heather Jones report shows that the Riviera was comped/donated 6 times in 2023 with no paperwork. Jones says there is no process nor forms in her files showing past history. Five of the six times the Riviera fees were waived in 2023 was for Winterfest through Visit Lake Geneva. Goodwin will check with City Administrator Nord for calculations used in the draft fee waiver policy proposal. Winterfest, along with Concerts in the Park, the annual Christmas Parade, and Restaurant Week are specifically noted in the Visit contract (Section 8f).

Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date –

- Tourism Logo – Goodwin will bring a quote
- Link on Grantee website – continued to November; revise Grant Application to include that the grantee lists the City website page URL/link (mirrored from the Riviera webpage) showing City hotels and lodging.
- Contract negotiations update with Visit – continued to November meeting with a request by Commissioners to include the current contract and any drafts in the November packet.

Monday, November 13, 2023, at 4:00 PM

Motion by Howell, second by Moritz, to adjourn at 5:40 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier
Secretary