

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES – Special Meeting
Monday, November 28, 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

Meeting was called to order by Chair Waspi at 4:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Brian Waspi, Vice Chair Zakia Pirzada, Ald. Fesenmaier, Linda Moritz, Troy Migut, Stephanie Klett (Ex-Off)

Absent: Alderman Howell, Comptroller Laura Pisarcik (Ex-Off), Mayor Klein (Ex-Off)

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

Tom Reed, Interstate Insurance, 100 E. Main Street, spoke about the success of Winterfest as a first-class event, the 3-year contract with Donald Driver, Miss America's visit, and other marketing ventures.

Steve Monticello, Haberdapper, 253 Broad Street, explained that he has had a business for numerous years in the city but has never seen more promotions and advertising from any previous version of a tourism group/entity in Lake Geneva. He has met more people in his store from all over Wisconsin now. People comment how open it feels, and they keep returning. Steve Schroeder, Lake City Social, comments on the true passion it takes for Visit to be so successful in all the metrics.

Discussion/Possible Action regarding Visit Lake Geneva contract with Tourism Commission

Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to suspend the rule to allow Dave Sekeres, Chair of Visit Lake Geneva, to speak. Unanimously carried.

Dave explained that poster-sized chart he brought to show the current arrangement of the 30% City, 36% Commission, 34% Visit split of total room tax collected. He proposed changing the Visit portion to 51% which, with the added money for professional marketing, would translate into more room taxes overall for the 3-way split.

Sekeres spoke about the need for future security and introduced the idea of a 5-year agreement with automatic rollover of 3-year agreements. He wants the Commission to support the removal of the \$150,000 and instead wants the 51% paid out across the calendar year by month or quarter.

Visit's goal is growth shown through an increase in the current rate of occupancy. Visit currently spends 80% of its share of room taxes on marketing.

Discussion ensued regarding whether 19% is enough for the Tourism Commission. Pirzada brought up the current amount for grants, plus contracts, and money transferred to the City. She was more comfortable with a different split such as 30/34/36 or even as high as 45% for Visit insisting that a jump to 51% was too much.

After more conversation, Pirzada could see the value of increasing the total amount of room taxes collected. Motion by Pirzada, second by Waspi, to increase Visit's split of total room taxes to 51% and deleting reference to the \$150,000 lump sum. Unanimously carried.

Discussion continued about keeping all else the same in the current contract. All references to would be changed to CITY of Lake Geneva hotel and motels found anywhere in the document. Waspi would work with the comptroller to come up with language to level out the payments.

Next, Sekeres honed in on the length of the contract. After conversation among the Commissioners about 3 or 5 years with change of staff triggering contract re-opening to beginning negotiations at least one year earlier than the expiration date or leaving it at 3 years. Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to change the contract language to a 5-year term, adding a contract reopening, in January of the current year, triggered by the exit of two members of the executive team (i.e. Klett and Goodwin) and unless either party gives written notice to terminate, the contract will renew as is for 3 years. Motion carries, 4-0, with Fesenmaier voting no.

Motion by Migut, second by Waspi, to adjourn at 5:49 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier
Secretary

Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date –

- Visit Lake Geneva contract renewal
- Tourism Logo – vote on invoice for work completed
- Link on City website and revision to Tourism Grant Application listing City website page showing City hotels and lodging: review Tourism Grant Application
- October 9 and November 28 minutes

Monday, December 11, 2023, at 4:00 PM