

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

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

Roll Call

Present: Chair Brian Waspi, Ald. Fesenmaier, Alderman Howell, Linda Moritz, Troy Migut, Stephanie Klett (Ex-Off), Mayor Klein (Ex-Off, sat in audience)

Absent: Vice Chair Zakia Pirzada, Comptroller Laura Pisarcik (Ex-Off)

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

Dave Sekeres, 315 Amber Drive, Whitewater, spoke in favor of the Visit 3-year contract revisions and the great relationship between the Tourism Commission and Visit.

Approval of Tourism Commission minutes from November 13, 2023, and November 28, 2023, Special Meeting

Motion by Howell, second by Moritz, to approve the minutes from November 13, 2023, and November 28, 2023, Special Meeting. Unanimously carried.

Motion by Howell, second by Waspi, to suspend the rules to move Item #10 to this point in the agenda. Unanimously carried.

Update regarding Visit Lake Geneva contract with Tourism Commission

The contract now includes revised Paragraph 5:

5. VLG Room Tax Revenue and Term. Beginning with the room tax collected for the period from January 1, 2024 and continuing through the period of December 31, 2028 the Tourism Commission shall forward an amount of 51% of all room tax amounts collected by the City to VLG to be used as provided herein.

Provided there are sufficient funds transferred to the Commission, distribution of room tax by the Commission will be 51% of all room tax collected by the city (72.86% of Commission received funds) paid in quarterly disbursements to VLG. Disbursements to be made no later than 60-days following the end of each quarter.

Also included in the revised contract, Paragraph 8 (below):

c. Notwithstanding the above, if Stephanie Klett or Deanna Goodwin are no longer serving as one or more of the top leadership positions of VLG, contract parties agree to immediately begin good faith renewal negotiations with the contractual terms of this agreement to potentially be modified to begin on the subsequent January 1st.

Fesenmaier called attention to the addition of the reference in Paragraph 5 of 72.86%, which was not previously discussed. She also wanted a section (below) from Paragraph 5 re-inserted as the deletion was never discussed:

“If following the execution of this Agreement, the Wisconsin Room Tax Act changes with respect to the amount of room taxes or the allocation of room taxes, the Commission and VLG, agree to re-negotiate paragraph 5 of the Agreement according to the changes in the statute to become effective the year following the change.”

Fesenmaier also asked that the words “at least” be inserted before “180 days” in Section 10 Termination Paragraph A to allow negotiations to officially begin even earlier.

These changes were accepted by Visit and the Commission.

Motion by Waspi, second by Moritz, to approve the Visit 5-year contract with two most recent proposed changes and all previously-referenced updates. Voice vote: 4 – 1, with Alderman Fesenmaier voting no.

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

Heather Jones gave a recap of the Riviera website data. She explained that ads will be placed on Google soon for the upcoming engagement season. According to a CNN article, wedding proposals continue to be on a downward trend due to the 2019 pandemic. She is showing new record amounts in the Riviera catering commissions.

Most notable was the website traffic with the City of Lake Geneva at spot #5.

The Riviera rentals are on pace compared to 2022 numbers. Jones is working on a website refresh and new marketing materials just in time for engagement season.

Update from Tourism Entity – Visit Lake Geneva

Deanna Goodwin reported the success of this year's Christmas Parade with 80 floats, including the State Championship Badger High School Varsity Football team, plus great weather and huge crowds. Winterfest 2024 is quickly approaching the last week in January with 15 competing teams and a new layout using the Center Street side of Flat Iron Park. Fox 6 and CBS Chicago are booked for live broadcasts from Winterfest.

Earned media:

[Best U.S. Towns That Are Great in the Summer and Winter \(fodors.com\)](https://www.fodors.com/travel/usa/best-us-towns-summer-winter)

[The Seven Best Christmas Towns In Wisconsin \(onlyinyourstate.com\)](https://onlyinyourstate.com/best-christmas-towns-wisconsin/)

[2 Wisconsin Towns Among The 'Most Romantic' Small Towns In The U.S. | 1310 WIBA \(iheart.com\)](https://www.1310wiba.com/story/2023/12/13/2-wisconsin-towns-among-the-most-romantic-small-towns-in-the-u-s/1310-wiba-iheart-com/)

A holiday and winter media kit will be released soon. The Visit Bundle Up campaign will be accepting donations at the Visit Center through December 31st. The Donald Driver contract is now extended into Fall 2024.

Riviera Agreement for events that request rental fees waived

Continue to January meeting to include the Riviera Waiver form in the packet for review by the Commission.

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

Binanti explained that the 2023 Wine Walk had substantial participation with over \$5000 raised for the Never Say Never Playland. Forty businesses had window décor for this year's contest; Guac Star won first place.

BID's December regular meeting included representatives from the DOT for an in-person presentation regarding the future Hwy. 50 project. There were 85 attendees.

Alex will work with the City Clerk to fix the link on the City website to BID's current website.

Written financial update provided by City Comptroller

No new information was included in the packet. The 2024 City Budget, Tourism section, was previously presented to the Commission but not voted on.

Tourism Promotional Grant Program and Requests

Baseball/Softball Travel Tournaments, Geneva Lake Family YMCA

Mike Coolidge, YMCA Sports Operation Direction, presented the grant application details regarding the sports field maintenance work at City-owned Veteran's Field. All six fields were renovated in 2021, with a grant from the Tourism Commission. The fields required rehab before the beginning of the 2024 season. Motion by Howell, second by Migut, to approve the \$16,281.60 grant. Discussion regarding funding source. Motion by Fesenmaier, second by Waspi, to amend and clarify this would be a municipal development grant funded under that line item in the Tourism budget. Amendment and main motion unanimously carried.

Tourism Commission Logo and other possible changes

Howell suggested version #3. Motion by Howell, second by Moritz, to approve version #2. Withdrawn after discussion. Motion by Howell, second by Waspi, to adopt for official use Logo Version #1. Unanimously carried. Motion by Waspi, second by Migut, to approve the \$280 invoice for the logo design. Unanimously carried.

Addition of link or QR code to all marketing materials including print and social media (Continued from July 2023 meeting). Potential revision to Tourism Grant Application to include that the grantee lists the City website page URL/link (mirrored from the Riviera webpage) showing City hotels and lodging

Heather will work with Administrator Nord to place hotels links (from Riviera website) on the City website. This website link will then appear on marketing materials for grants awarded. Place on January agenda for review and possible action regarding Tourism Grant Application revision. Continued by consensus.

Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date –

- 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
- Riviera Waiver Form (as approved by Council) – review only; include copy in packet
- Visit 2024 Signed Contract – review only; include copy in packet

Monday, January 8, 2023, at 5:01 PM

Motion by Moritz, second by Migut, to adjourn at 5:50 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier
Secretary