

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, February 12, 2024
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 Zakia Pirzada, Alderman Fesenmaier, Alderman Howell, Troy Migut; Stephanie Klett (Ex-Off, arrived at 4:16 p.m.), Mayor Klein (Ex-Off, sat in audience).

Absent: Linda Moritz; Comptroller 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 January 8, 2024

Motion by Waspi, second by Migut, to approve the minutes from January 8, 2024. Unanimously carried.

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

Jones gave an overview of her monthly report included in the packet. The Riviera website experienced a huge spike in site visits the day of and the day after this year's wedding show. We are a bit behind on bookings for the comparable time periods in 2024 and 2025. Zola is providing a huge number of leads, however. Riviera revenue is likely to exceed last year's totals.

Riviera agreement for events requesting to have rental fees waived

Commissioners requested that the cost of the waiver be included on the form presented to the Finance Committee and City Council and also in Heather's Riviera Booking Report (i.e. Sales Update chart) as a separate line item. Still brainstorming a way to communicate the application for waiver of fees to Heather, so she can check availability BEFORE and schedule the event on the calendar after approval by Finance and Council.

Update from Tourism Entity – Visit Lake Geneva

Deanna Goodwin explained that there were record crowds for Winterfest this year. No official count yet. Dates were moved around due to weather. A local concrete business donated special insulated "blankets" to keep the snow blocks cold and sculpting went on at night to minimize melting. Every station in Milwaukee and Chicago covered the event plus the Weather Channel and Scripps News.

Public Events:

- Lake Geneva Restaurant Week – April 20 – 28, 2024
- Concerts in the Park – Thursdays June 27 – August 8, 2024
- Lake Geneva Electric Christmas Parade – Saturday, December 7, 2024

Earned Media list:

[Lake Geneva hosts National Snow Sculpting Competition despite warm weather | Local News | beloitdailynews.com](#)
[30 Most Beautiful Lakes to Visit in America \(placestotravel.com\)](#)
[Wisconsin Resort Community \(yumpu.com\)](#)

Stephanie Klett arrived.

Visit's Tik Tok account has reached the 1,000 followers mark since the June 2023 launch. The Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held at Grand Geneva on March 10 through March 12, 2024. Ms. Klett has been nominated for the group's Legacy Award. The Summer Visitors Guide features Donald Driver on the cover with more than 1,000 hard copies mailed and 2,000 copies accessed online in January.

Update from Lake Geneva Business Improvement District (BID) –

Binanti highlighted data from her report.

Event dates for 2024:

Wine Walk (Spring) April 7

Murals in Motion May 15-19

Maxwell Street Days August 23-25

Oktoberfest October 12-13

Wine Walk (Fall) November 3

Light Up Lake Geneva & Shop Small Weekend November 29 - December 1

Director Binanti also informed the Commission that their Strategic Plan with Progress Metrics had been presented at their February BID meeting.

The City website now reflects the current and accurate link to the BID website:

[About | Downtown Lake Geneva](#)

Written financial update provided by City Comptroller

Balance Sheet dated **November 30, 2023** included in current packet

Total Assets - \$1,244,125.43

Restricted Fund Balance - \$525,302.27

Tourism Promotional Grant Program and Requests

Request to revise previously awarded grant – The Big Balloon Adventure

Application was resubmitted to include a more detailed marketing budget. The event will now extend over two weekends, from April 10-24, 2024. They have recently received a \$25,000 JEM (Joint Effort Marketing) grant from Travel Wisconsin. The \$30,000 grant amount approved previously remains the same. They will need digital copies of the new Tourism Commission logo. No action needed.

Art in the Park

Jeff Russart explained the event held annually in Flat Iron Park. The marketing materials will include the newly-approved Tourism Commission logo. Motion by Pirzada, second by Waspi, to approve the grant not to exceed \$17,850. Unanimously carried.

City Website link and Grant Application revision

Spot needed on the City Website for City Hotel information and revision of Tourism Grant Application to reflect the requirement that a link (to above) be included on any marketing materials.

This item is still in progress with Heather Jones to consult with Administrator Nord this week Wednesday.

Review of Riviera Waiver form (previously approved by City Council)

Duplicate agenda item.

Form was included in the packet and discussed above.

Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date –

- Wee Whiskey Fest – missed February deadline, will appear at March meeting
- Debrief/Follow-up form: discuss making this a permanent agenda item after the Grant Requests agenda item; include a debrief form or section that the Commissioners can rate as Meeting Expectations (yes, no, maybe); include a historical chart for each grant applicant
- Grant Application revision: include City website link to City hotels on the grant application to require on marketing materials
- Commissioners are encouraged to do a user interface with the grant application; find on City website and review it individually.
- Chair Waspi will locate the new Tourism Commission logo and forward to Administrator Nord to share with outstanding and future grant recipients.

Monday, March 11 at 4:00 PM

Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to adjourn at 5:11 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier
Secretary