

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
Monday, November 11, 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, Alder Fesenmaier, Cathy Stoodley, Troy Migut

Absent: Alder Howell, Stephanie Klett (Ex-Off), Mayor Krause (Ex-Off), Comptroller Pisarsik (Ex-Off)

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

None.

Approval of the Tourism Commission minutes from October 14, 2024. Motion by Waspi, second by Stoodley, to approve the minutes from October 14, 2024. Unanimously carried.

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

Jones reviewed the Riviera website analytics pointing to Google as the top traffic source. Heather included the new Tourism website data www.lakegenevahotels.org. Will be more meaningful once more months are added. Heather will be having the websites refreshed with new pics next month. She is doing corporate marketing through eblasts and trying to push these bookings into the off-season for easier parking options.

Update from Tourism Entity – Visit Lake Geneva

Deanna Goodwin pointed out highlights in her October report. The Christmas Parade is Saturday, December 7 beginning at 5:00 p.m. Winterfest dates are January 29 through February 2, 2025. Free parking ends February 1st. Visit Lake Geneva's website continues to grow for sessions, pageviews, and users. As Instagram use grows, the Visit staff celebrates with every new 1000 subscribers. There are currently over 15,000 subscribers. TikTok videos are created, posted, and shared with success on other platforms. New in the monthly online newsletter in a section with Event highlights. Seems to be popular. Walk ins at the Visit building in Flat Iron Park are at 15,000 year-to-date. Donald Driver was the keynote speaker at this year's Annual Dinner and Impact Awards in October.

Visit Lake Geneva's Bundle Up Campaign continues through the end of December 2024.

Visit has launched a new program, Volunteer Ambassadors. These ambassadors will welcome new Partners, make Partner retention visits, and give Special Events/Administrative support. Details and a special Ambassador application can be found online.

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

Alex was not present, so Commissioners read through November report. Tree Lighting Ceremony and Kick-off for Shop Small Business on Friday, November 29, at 5:00 p.m. in Flat Iron Park and continuing into downtown stores for window decorating contest/votes. Looking for two more walls for murals in Spring 2025. Will begin forming a committee to apply for Vibrant Space Grant. Three Board members to be appointed in December 2025. BID rectified an error (no minutes showing the change in 2018) in how assessments are collected for revenue generation. Will be sent to City Council for final approval in November.

Written financial update provided by City Comptroller

Not on agenda and nothing in packet.

Approval of the 2025 Budget

Waspi reviewed the proposed budget. Motion by Waspi, second by Stoodley, to approve the Tourism Commission 2025 Budget. Unanimously carried.

Discussion/Action on Tourism Promotional Grant Program and Requests:

Bird Watching Kits for Hotel Visitors – City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee

Avian Committee is assembling ten total bird watching kits (backpacks) for local hotels to check out to guests. The idea came from a similar program in Albuquerque. The average age bird watcher is 50 years plus. The backpacks and contents are covered by the Lake Geneva Rotary Club. Motion by Pirzada, second by Waspi, to award \$4000 for marketing. Unanimously carried.

Lake Geneva Winter Bridal Expo – Celebration Management

This is the fifth year for the event which continues to be remarkably successful. They are asking for the same amount as last year. Waspi gave a reminder to add the hotels link (from the City website) and the official Tourism Committee logo on marketing pieces and event website. Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to award \$15,000. Unanimously carried.

World's Tallest Glass Tree – Mackglass Community, dba World's Tallest Glass Tree

Rob Elliott presented the information for the event grant. They use recycled/collected glass in our local communities and will continue collecting year-round with a program called, "Don't Trash Glass." The event is held in Williams Bay. They received a Travel Wisconsin GEM matching grant. Waspi reminded the applicant to add the hotels link (from the City website) and the official Tourism Committee logo on marketing pieces and event website. Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to award \$38,000 for the marketing portion of the proposal further requiring Elliott to submit a detailed budget for the December Tourism meeting. Unanimously carried.

Baseball-Softball Travel Tournaments – Geneva Lakes Family YMCA

Mike Coolidge explained the grant application and need. Ann Fullmer also spoke about a page of the YMCA website dedicated to promotion for tournaments and deals offered by City hotels and businesses. Waspi reminded the Commissioners that grant money can be used for municipal development, in this case, City ballfields. Option 3 would be appropriate to bring back in the future with more detailed, sustainable plans. Motion by Fesenmaier, second by Pirzada, to award Not to Exceed \$300,000 for Option 2 presented in the packet. Unanimously carried.

Rediscover Wonder – Lake Geneva Children’s Museum

Barb Krause and Adam St. Marie of the Lake Geneva Children’s Museum gave the details for a fundraising event called Rediscover Wonder on March 15, 2025. The event is to be held at the Riviera – date is confirmed. The museum will be built on land near (north of) Veteran’s Park and is on track to be finished in two years. Motion by Pirzada, second by Fesenmaier, to award \$32,000 for the one-time event, not to be used for Riviera rental fee. Unanimously carried.

Women’s Weekend 2025 – Geneva Lake Women’s Association

This year’s event theme is “Adventure Begins Here.” The theme should draw in a greater age range. They have expanded their marketing to Madison. Last year’s amount was \$16,000. Waspi gave the reminder to add the hotels link (from the City website) and the official Tourism Committee logo on marketing pieces and event website. Motion by Waspi, second by Stoodley, to award \$20,500 for the April 25 through April 27, 2025, event. Unanimously carried.

Final Event Evaluations from organizations receiving Tourism Grants – None; noted this is now a recurring item on the agenda.

Discussion/Act concerning revisions to the Tourism Grant application.

Change “printer” to “printed” page 3 Section 3 paragraph 2 last sentence. There is another change needed to “our” logo. The Commission agreed that the second version in the packet should be used going forward with Section 1 – Application and Section 2 – Evaluation. Chair Waspi will contact the clerk to explain and verify the changes.

Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date –

- Place Heather’s contract in packet for discussion.
- City of Lake Geneva Grant for roll up doors at Riviera Beach
- World’s Tallest Glass Tree application
- Tourism Grant Application revisions; include ONLY second version from October packet.
- Placer.ai – Discuss subscription benefit for Tourism administration.
- Placer.ai for current Grant Applications and for Event Evaluations

Monday, December 9, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Motion by Waspi, second by Pirzada, to adjourn at 5:38 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier, Secretary