



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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September 16, 2008

Crane's Pie Pantry

6054 124th Avenue, Fennville

10:00am

Minutes of a Scheduled Meeting of the Allegan County Tourist Council

A scheduled meeting of the Allegan County Tourist Council was called to order by Vice Chairperson Norm Smith on Tuesday, September 16, 2008 at 10:00am at Crane's Pie Pantry Restaurant in Fennville, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

PRESENT: John Shagonaby Norm Smith
 Dianna Stampfler Larry Johnson
 Jan Cushman Betsy Hill
 Al Weener

ABSENT: Ann Kilmartin Stephanie Peterson

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, Director
 Angel Schneider, Parks and Tourism Clerk
 Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST MEETING MINUTES

A motion by Dianna Stampfler, seconded by Betsy Hill, to approve the August 19, 2008 minutes as presented and mailed. Motion carried unanimously.

TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT

Angel distributed the tourism contacts report for August 2008. There were 356 contacts total for the month of August. Angel informed the Council this would be her last meeting and Ronda was taking her position. She also stated that Ronda may make revisions to the Tourism Contacts Report in the future. Angel reported that she received a check from the Allegan Chamber for payment of the Heritage Trail booklets.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin reported that Administration was cutting \$1500 from next year's Tourist Council budget under the miscellaneous category. He stated that other departments within the county were also seeing low to moderate budget cuts; most likely due to the high number of foreclosures and home depreciations in the area.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Co-owner, Lou Crane gave a short presentation on the history of Crane's Pie Pantry Restaurant and Orchard located in Fennville. She informed us that H.B. Crane purchased the farmland in 1916 and started the fruit orchard. Lou and her husband took over the family farm in the 1950's during a period when the orchard wasn't doing well and was sinking fast. In an effort to become more profitable, they decided to bid \$550 for a used cider press and donut machine in 1957. With no directions or knowledge of how to use their new machines, they began experimenting with different methods and recipes until perfecting their apple donuts and cider. As customers wanted more their business grew into 280 acres of fruit trees where U-Pick-It is a seasonal favorite, along with a popular restaurant that serves many homemade delicious treats year round. Lou declared, "If I knew then what I know now, I may have been too scared to take over the farm when we did!"

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

'09 VISITORS GUIDE –CONTENT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS, MAPS, ADVERTISING

Kevin and Norm are the only two who have submitted their first and second drafts for the writing assignment that are due October 1. Kevin recommended everyone not wait until the last day to submit their assignments so as to leave time for editing and approval of the article before the advertising deadline of October 17. The goal is to put together a 32-page visitor's guide and Kevin stated that the total cost was around \$18,000 to \$19,000 last year and added less funding will be necessary this year. He reported that most people do not use the M-LIVE site, so it will be discontinued to help lower production costs for the 2009 guide.

Norm reported that Allegan DBA is taking out a full-page ad and is offering a reimbursement to anyone who advertises. Although advertisers can purchase an ad for \$175, there are very few who are repeats from last year and most are new. So far, approximately \$8,000 has been committed for advertisements and sales are not done yet. The council discussed feedback from various advertisers who are unsure of advertising again. One of the reasons given is they question the number of responses that come from the ad, although most also say they have never kept track. It was suggested that, to help advertisers monitor how well the ad is working, they should either start asking customers directly or offer an incentive for the customer to "mention this ad..." Kevin stated that some may be holding off until the last minute in hopes of getting a discount.

The discussion turned toward maps as Kevin reported the recreation map had not been updated in a couple of years. He spoke with Valdis Kalnins from Land Information Services who said it would not be a problem to update the map by the end of November. Kevin stated that he needed to know today what maps the Council wanted to include in the guide. After much discussion, it was decided the guide would include:

- Two maps, an advertising map and recreation map, would be printed back-to-back and inserted as a pull-out from the center of the guide.
- Both maps will be revised so they will appear less cluttered.
- The recreation map will include beaches, parks, golf courses, and various trails.
- The backgrounds for the maps will be beige.
- The maps will not include city, township or municipal boundaries.

NEW BUSINESS

WMTA – '09 CAREFREE TRAVEL AD AND TRADESHOWS

A motion by Larry Johnson, seconded by Al Weener, to approve an expenditure of \$1320 for a prepaid '09 Carefree Travel ad. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion by Larry Johnson, seconded by Betsy Hill, to approve an \$800 expenditure for distribution of our guide during eight tradeshows at \$100 per show. Motion carried unanimously.

SUMMER PHOTO CONTEST JUDGING

The Council voted on the photo contest entries and chose pictures submitted by 17-year-old Angela Barber of Otsego in the youth division, and Will Wallgren of Saugatuck in the adult division. They both received a \$25 Crane's Pie Pantry gift card and a copy of the Heritage Trail CD and guidebook. A motion by Al Weener, seconded by Betsy Hill, to award the prizes to Angela Barber and Will Wallgren for the summer photo contest as judged. Motion carried unanimously.

GEOCACHING

Kevin enlightened the Council of Geocaching by describing it as a fun, recreational activity using a GPS unit to locate a hidden treasure. Worldwide, people of all ages can participate by going to www.geocaching.com to search for Geocaches that are concealed in their area, or to post information about one they have hidden themselves. The idea is, once the Geocache is found, the treasure is removed and then replaced by a trinket that is left in place for the next person to find; preferably something special that may reveal information about the last person.

Kevin brought to attention that someone is posting on the Geocache website without our consent the Heritage Trail logo along with text taken from the guidebook. Kevin stated this person may not be aware of the copyright infringement he has imposed, and added that this can be an opportunity for us to make contact and possibly promote Heritage Trail. Diana agreed to get in touch with the individual and inform him to contact Kevin to get written permission to use the Heritage Trail material, and also discuss it's usage to support both our efforts to draw people to the trail.

MICHIGAN HISTORY AWARD

Diana nominated Jan for a Historical Society award for her contribution in putting together the Heritage Trail CD and booklet and was happy to announce she had won in the non-publication/individual category. On September 26th, the award ceremony will be held in Grand Rapids where Jan will be recognized at 4:30pm during the reception. Anyone who would like to join Jan as she accepts her award can buy a ticket for \$27 which includes the ceremony and dinner. After the ceremony there will be a press release to name the award recipients.

NEXT MEETING

October 21, 2008 @ 10:00am in the Spartan Conference Room of the Human Services Building.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Dianna Stampfler

Dianna inquired whose term was due to expire by the end of the year. Although there is only one vacancy at this time, there are two County Commissioners who are interested in taking a seat on the Tourist Council. Dianna commented about the need to evaluate the attendance policies and how members need to make a commitment to attend all the meetings. Kevin stated that a member cannot miss three or four meetings in a row and expect to remain in touch with what the Council has been working on. Angel expressed her interest in joining the Tourist Council. It was discussed that a review of member's attendance should be a part of roll call at each meeting.

Kevin Ricco

Kevin reports the Parks Commission obtained the easement agreement for the New Richmond Bridge project last Friday. He stated they were one day away from losing the funding for the project. It is expected that the project will be out for bids in the next two weeks.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55am.

By: _____
Ronda Foreman