



## Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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**May 19, 2009**

Spartan Conference Room

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 Chairman Norm Smith on Tuesday, May 19, 2009 at 10:05am in the Human Services Building, Spartan Room, Allegan, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

PRESENT:	Norm Smith	R.J. Peterson
	Dianna Stampfler	Al Weener
	Luetta Crane	Larry Johnson
	Stephanie Peterson	Betsy Hill
	Jan Cushman	

ABSENT: Terry Bonnell

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

#### ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Kevin requested an addition under New Business, 13a Total Market Strategies Agreement.

#### APPROVAL OF APRIL MINUTES

A motion was made by R.J. Peterson, seconded by Jan Cushman to approve the April 21, 2009 minutes as presented and emailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

#### TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA

Ronda reported 240 contacts were received in April with 583 itemized inquiries. The two categories with the highest percentage of inquiries was the camping and parks category at 20% and restaurants with 19%. Sixty-six tourist packets were mailed; forty-two were out-of-state and twenty-four were in state, only four were mailed inside Allegan County. Although fifteen Heritage Trail books sold in April, there were no sales of the CDs for the month.

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is nothing new to report for this month's financial statements and asked if anyone had any questions. A motion was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Betsy Hill to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion carried by everyone present.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### KALAMAZOO RIVER HERITAGE WATER TRAIL – OPENING UPDATE

Kevin updated the Council stating he sent out a press release yesterday that announced a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the first segment of the Kalamazoo River Watershed Heritage Water Trail at 9:00am on May 30, 2009. The grand opening coincides with the Kanoe the Kazoo event that Allegan County Parks and Tourism is sponsoring with the Allegan Conservation District that will begin at New Richmond Bridge County Park and end in downtown Douglas. Kevin stated the hope is to have all the interpretive signs up along the water trail in Kalamazoo and Allegan County by this fall. Although there is currently a trail guide that can be downloaded and printed from the website at [www.kazoowatertrails.org](http://www.kazoowatertrails.org), the printed guide is anticipated for sometime next year.

### SOCIAL MEDIA – TC ON FACEBOOK

Since the last meeting, Diana has formed two facebook groups, one for the Allegan County Tourist Council and the other for the Allegan County Heritage Trail. She has already posted a call out on the TC Discussion Board for the Allegan County Photo Spring 2009 Contest with a deadline of June 1, 2009, and will post in the event section information on the Kanoe the Kazoo event. Vicki Knuckles, the City of Allegan Arts and Entertainment Director, has directed some folks to visit the facebook pages, though no emails have been received. To view the pages go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), sign-up for a free membership and search for either group.

## NEW BUSINESS

### SWOT/ISSUES UPDATE

Included in the agenda packets are copies of the SWOT (Strengths,Weaknesses,Opportunities,Threats)/ISSUES last updated in March of 2008 and also the Tourist Council's Goals and Objectives from 2005 that Kevin found and printed for everyone's information. He would like the Council to review the documents and make any revisions they deem necessary. After much discussion, amendments were made as follows:

#### Strengths – internal

- Addition - Heritage water trail
- Deletion - Web site project (Web site remains listed)

#### Weaknesses – internal

- Addition - Lack of contact between county attractions
- Deletion - Web site
- Deletion - Council turnover (continuity)
- Deletion - Inability to find Council replacements

#### Opportunities – external

- Addition - Social media outlets
- Addition - Allegan County tourism expo

#### Threats – external

No change

During the discussion, Norm had an idea to hold an Allegan County Tourism Expo and everyone agreed this would be an excellent opportunity to get everyone in the county together to promote tourism; spring break was suggested as a good time to hold the expo before the prime tourism season. A motion was made by Al Weener, seconded by R.J. Peterson to put together a group who will organize an Allegan County Tourism Expo for the

spring of 2010. The motion carried by everyone present. R.J. stated he will bring a list of tourist attractions that are located within Allegan County to the next meeting. Kevin then informed the TC he will be delivering an Economic Development presentation to the Board of Commissioners in the latter part of June and anyone who is available should attend to show his or her support; he will notify everyone of the date of the meeting.

#### WMTA – LIGHTHOUSE MAP

Kevin passed around copies of the West Michigan Tourist Association's "Lake Michigan Circle Tour & Lighthouse Map" and directed the Council's attention to the TC ad inside. While the final deadline to commit to a 2010 ad is September 15, 2009, the TC is a current advertiser and has been given the first right of refusal which has a deadline of June 15, 2009. To rerun another 1/6 page panel ad will cost \$500 or the ad could be increased to either a 1/3 page panel ad for \$850 or 1/2 page panel ad for \$1400. Advertisers get a discount when their ads run in both the WMTA map and "Carefree Travel 2010-2011" magazine; the publications are distributed all over with 250,000 copies printed annually. Kevin suggested the Tourist Council commit to at least a 1/6 page panel ad and Dianna asked if the decision could wait until next month in order to give the Marketing Subcommittee a chance to meet.

#### MARKETING SUBCOMMITTEE

Kevin stated the Tourist Council has discussed the subject of forming a Marketing Subcommittee for quite a while and there are too many things going on to wait any longer. It is imperative a subcommittee become a reality in order to do research and make recommendations to the TC. Dianna offered to head-up the group and Stephanie and Norm volunteered their services. Although Terry is absent from today's meeting, he had previously shown interest in being involved in a Marketing Subcommittee so he will be asked to take part. Dianna shared some ideas she would like to pursue, such as researching marketing trends in the area and combining advertising efforts with local businesses by sharing the cost to purchase a full-page banner ad. She would also like to keep track of calls that are in response to our ads and start building a database containing contacts and businesses.

#### MT. BALDHEAD PROJECT – RJ PETERSON

R.J. informed the Tourist Council of a project he is involved in to further develop Mt. Baldhead in Saugatuck. The concept is to build a year-round restaurant on top of the scenic sand dune with a new and improved parking lot and set of stairs that would draw tourist to the area. R.J. stated money is not the problem; getting everyone on board to carry out the project has become the challenge. Although people believe the project is a great idea they just don't know how to make it happen. In R.J.'s opinion, Mt. Baldhead is the most valuable piece of property in Allegan County and developers have to convince the City to lease the land in order to move forward with the project. A motion was made by Al Weener, seconded by Stephanie Peterson for the Allegan County Tourist Council to endorse and support the proposed restaurant on top of Mt. Baldhead. The motion carried by everyone present.

#### TOTAL MARKET STRATEGIES AGREEMENT

Kevin stated the goal of the agreement between the Tourist Council and Total Market Strategies is to outline each party's responsibilities. After review of the agreement, a motion was made by Dianna Stampfler, seconded by R.J. Peterson to approve the Total Market Strategies Agreement as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **NEXT MEETING – JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> AT 10AM, CAMP KIDWELL LUNCH AT CHESHIRE HILLS GOLF COURSE**

#### ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

**Stephanie Peterson** reported US 131 Motorsports Park is holding their annual golf outing on June 4, 2009 from 9am – 4:00pm at the LYNX Golf Club in Otsego, and ends back at US 131 Motorsports Park in Martin with a barbecue, prizes and a special race performance. The all day event cost \$70 per person or \$275 for a foursome.

Stephanie also passed out complimentary two-day passes for admission into US 131 Motorsports Park on Friday and Saturday, June 5 and 6, 2009.

**AL Weener** announced there is a fundraiser for the sturgeon fishery at the Saugatuck Brewery on July 22, 2009.

**R.J. Peterson** reported he is going to Lansing tomorrow for a meeting with the State in hopes of getting a Harbor Authority setup for the State and Counties. The County, Saugatuck, and Douglas Townships would own the Harbor Authority and 20% of profits would go back to the marina. In R.J.'s opinion, this is the way to accomplish preserving future public lake access. He stated this could benefit everyone in the county and he is trying to get everyone to take the next step towards the goal.

**Kevin Ricco** wanted to mention the statistics from the trade shows where WMTA's magazine and lighthouse map are distributed are included in everyone's agenda packet for their information.

**Lue Crane** stated she does not feel she is a contributing member on the Tourist Council and most recently is having some health problems. She thought about putting in her resignation but after speaking to Kevin prior to the meeting, she has decided to hang in there and will help out wherever possible. Everyone showed his or her support for Lue assuring her she will soon catch on and the Council values her input.

**Betsy Hill** informed the Council of a Blue Grass Festival sponsored by Faith Chapel Ministries in Kalamazoo on June 20, 2009 from 3:30pm to dusk; approximately six groups will perform. To raise money for the festival they are having a BABFBF 'Build-A-Burger For Bluegrass Festival' at 6:00pm on June 4, 2009 at Faith Chapel Ministries in Kalamazoo.

**Jan Cushman** announced the Otsego Chamber of Commerce is having their annual 'Free Movie Night! Friday Night at the River!' Beginning at dusk, the movie is projected onto the outside of the museum on North Farmer Street in Otsego. There are three more family-friendly movies scheduled and Jan reports since the event was well attended last year, the Chamber is hoping for another a good turnout this year.

**Larry Johnson** asked everyone to spread the word; the 4-H Club is looking for 58 host families (four are for the chaperones) in Michigan to house Japanese students between the ages of 12-18 who will be arriving later on this summer; they hope to match up kids who are close to the same age. The host family will be eligible to go to Japan to visit their student's family; contact Larry Johnson at 616-396-1426 or email johnsonsal@aol.com for more information.

**Dianna Stampfler** brought a copy of the Hometown Gazette for everyone to view; on the front page was the article regarding the Allegan County 2009 Winter Photo Contest naming Marsha Behm of Allegan as the contest winner and included a large-sized print of her photo. Dianna also stated the Felt Mansion plans to hold a green blue grass festival sometime this summer.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made by R.J. Peterson, seconded by Larry Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 11:58am. The motion carried by all present.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk