



## Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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**November 10, 2009**

Human Services Building

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, November 10, 2009 at 10:07am in the Human Services Building, Spartan Room, Allegan, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

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

ABSENT:                      Jan Cushman                      Betsy Hill  
                                         Terry Bonnell

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

#### ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

#### APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES

A motion was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Stephanie Peterson to approve the October 20, 2009 meeting minutes as presented and emailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

#### TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA

The October 2009 contact report and inquiry pie chart were included in today's agenda packet. Ronda reports she had 240 itemized inquiries and 88 individual inquiries for the month, which was down over last years total inquiries of 105. Of the 88 individual inquiries she received, 15 were from Michigan but outside the County, 31 were from out-of-state, and 42 were from unknown locations; most presumed to be contacts from within Allegan County. She also mailed 27 tourist inquiry packets, none of which were Allegan County residents, and reported no Heritage Trail books or CD were sold.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is nothing to report on this month's financial statements and asked if anyone had questions. An invoice from Bruce Cutean for his editorial content in the 2010 guide is expected and we have an ad to discuss under item number 10. WMTA Carefree Travel Ad for Heritage Trail; these two items will probably take up what is left from this year's Tourist Council budget. A motion was made by Dianna Stampfler, seconded by Larry Johnson to approve the financial statements as printed and emailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### 2010 VISITORS GUIDE UPDATE

Kevin stated there are a few things to discuss today. Included with the agenda is an update from Celeste Statler on the guide advertising as of yesterday, November 9, 2009. So far 44 have been sold with 12 ads pending; 17 of those sold are new advertisers, one of which is the Gun Lake Tribe Casino who has purchased the entire back page. Last year there were 50 ads sold; the majority of those who did not renew this year were due to financial reasons.

Next Kevin stated we need to make a decision today on which photos we want on the guide cover. In regards to the last proof received by Celeste, everyone liked the center photo that depicts a boy fishing and was the 2009 summer contest winner, but felt the remaining shots were still unsuitable for the cover. The Council thought the pictures Dianna had recently emailed were good choices and asked if those could be used; Kevin stated only if they are high resolution photos. Dianna reported the photos were taken off various websites of businesses in Allegan County. She would have to contact the site owners to get permission to use the photos and also obtain a high resolution copy. Kevin stated it would have to be done as soon as possible and submitted to Celeste.

The guide articles from Bruce Cutean were emailed to the Council yesterday and copies are also attached to the agenda; Kevin asked if everyone had an opportunity to read them. At this time he would like everyone to focus on the content and not the grammatical errors. He spoke with Bruce this morning who acknowledged the grammatical errors stating they would be corrected during his final edit. Kevin noticed Crane's is mentioned quite a bit and brought it to Bruce's attention; he is aware of this and asked if the Council could provide him with names of other orchards and businesses that should be included in the articles. The issue of including businesses by name presents another dilemma; Kevin stated some want names mentioned while others don't, and others feel only businesses that have paid for advertising should be named. Norm stated if it goes with the flow of the story it should not be a problem and most others agreed, stating the largest of attractions in the county should most definitely be mentioned such as the County Fair, US-131 Motorsports Park, and the new Gun Lake Tribe Casino, among others. Kevin reminded everyone that Bruce was directed to profile all the 'natural' features that could be found in the County throughout the four seasons. He then suggested we have Bruce write a one-page article to highlight all the 'unnatural' things to do, and added it will cost more to do so; everyone agreed the extra article is needed and are okay with the additional costs.

Lastly, Kevin stated a new 'Welcome' page should be written; Al volunteered to write the section and stated members should email him if they have any input. Kevin stated it will have to be completed by November 20.

### 2010 BUDGET UPDATE/DISCUSSION

Norm thanked Dianna for doing a great job of speaking on behalf of the Tourist Council at the Board of Commissioners meeting on October 22, 2009. The Parks Department's budget was cut by \$50,000 resulting in the elimination of funding for the Tourist Council, and Norm and Dianna attended the BOC meeting to voice their concerns. Dianna informed them \$2.86 will come back for every \$1 spent on tourism, which is ranked as

one of the top three assets in the County. The BOC asked them to make a list of items that will be affected in 2011 if the funds are not there; once the list is completed Dianna will email a copy to the TC members.

Next, Norm asked how the Tourist Council can generate revenue and suggested taking photos from the contests and turn them into post-cards; Kevin proposed turning the photos into a calendar. Holding an event has been previously discussed; Kevin would like to see 'New Richmond Days' come back and stated we could collaborate with Manlius Township, the Parks Department, and get sponsorships from surrounding businesses to make it happen. Whatever the event, he stated we need to look for those that will make a lot of money. Larry asked about the Kanoe the Kazoo event; Kevin replied the \$5 per watercraft fee covers the participant's transportation cost only.

#### **WMTA CAREFREE TRAVEL AD FOR HERITAGE TRAIL**

Kevin stated the Council is locked in for the banner ad in the WMTA Carefree Travel Guide they approved during October's meeting. At this point he has not heard whether enough ads have been sold in the County to do a smaller banner ad across two pages, or if it will end up being a larger banner ad over one page. He asked the TC if they would like to run a separate Heritage Trail ad under our banner ad in the guide; a 1/6 page ad costs \$945. He is unsure if there will be enough funds left in the TC budget to cover the entire cost; if the Council feels strongly about running the ad, he could pull from somewhere else to make up the difference.

A motion was made by Al Weener, seconded by Larry Johnson to approve a Heritage Trail 1/6 page ad for \$945 to run under our banner ad in the WMTA Carefree Travel Guide. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **FALL PHOTO CONTEST JUDGING**

Although there were no entries in the youth division, seven adult entries were received for the Allegan County 2009 Fall Photo Contest. Ronda displayed each photo on the computer for the Council to view, and then replayed each one as the vote was tallied. Colleen Lund of Dorr was chosen as the winner of the contest with her photo of pumpkins at Crane's Orchards. She will receive a prize package worth \$65.00 as follows: an Allegan County Heritage Trail book and CD set donated by the Tourist Council, and a \$50 gift certificate at the new restaurant in Fennville, Salt of the Earth, donated by Salt of the Earth. Congratulations Colleen!

##### **2010 MEETING SCHEDULE DISCUSSION**

Kevin directed everyone's attention to the last page of the agenda packet, which is the proposed 2010 meeting schedule; as is usual, most of the meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of every month. Kevin asked if the Tourist Council would be willing to conduct a joint meeting with the Parks Commission on February 2nd, 2010 at 8:30am, which is the first Tuesday of that month. Usually there are not many business items on the agenda in February and Kevin thought it would be helpful for the two groups to meet for some discussion and to stay connected; they both have things that are interrelated. The meeting date proposed in November is on the second Tuesday; Kevin will not be here on the third Tuesday. Also, the off-site locations should be chosen for the March, June, September, and December meetings. After some discussion, the off-site locations were decided as follows:

- Crane's Pie Pantry in Fennville on March 16, 2010
- Tower Marine in Saugatuck on June 15, 2010
- Eesley Place Banquets (old Eesley Mill) in Plainwell on September 21, 2010
- Gun Lake Casino in Wayland on December 3, 2010 at 11am (first Friday in December)

A motion was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Al Weener to approve the 2010 Tourist Council meeting dates and off-site locations as listed above. The motion carried by everyone present.

#### **NEXT MEETING – DECEMBER 18, 2009 @ 11AM AT THE SAUGATUCK BREWING COMPANY**

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

**Larry Johnson** reports the Festival of Trees is coming up at Camp Kidwell on December 3rd through the 6th. The United Way campaign is ongoing and they hope to reach their goal of \$825,000.

**Kevin Ricco** stated New Richmond Park is 99% finished and would have been completely done had it not been for the lousy October weather. The park has turned out very nice and Kevin announced there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony in the spring, most likely April; he will let everyone know when the date and time is determined.

**Stephanie Peterson** reports US-131 is going through track renovations; she stated they had a great year and it is exciting to be able to reinvest in the park.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:50am

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