



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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January 19, 2010
Spartan Conference Room
Human Services Building
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 Chair Norm Smith on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 10:00am in the Spartan Conference Room on the lower level of the Human Services Building, 3255 122nd Ave, Suite 102, Allegan, Michigan..

Roll Call showed the following members:

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

ABSENT: Luetta Crane Terry Bonnell
 Larry Johnson

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

ELECTION OF 2010 OFFICERS – CHAIR, VICE CHAIR

Jan Cushman nominated Norm Smith as Chair of the 2010 Tourist Council. A motion was made by RJ Peterson, seconded by Al Weener to close the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Norm Smith as the Chair of the 2010 Tourist Council. The motion carried by all present.

Betsy Hill nominated Stephanie Peterson as Vice Chair of the 2010 Tourist Council. A motion was made by Betsy Hill, seconded by Al Weener to close the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Stephanie Peterson as the Vice Chair of the 2010 Tourist Council. The motion passed by all present.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MINUTES

A motion was made by RJ Peterson, seconded by Stephanie Peterson to approve the December 18, 2009 meeting minutes as printed and emailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA

Ronda reported the total inquiries in December were 98, which are up when compared to last year's total of 27 or last months' total of 63. She stated towards the end of the year there was an increase in inquiries regarding the equestrian trails, reservations, season passes, and special use permits. Total itemized inquiries were 248 and 18 tourist packets were mailed throughout the month.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is not much to report since the 2010 Tourist Council budget has no funds to speak of, other than the \$2900 already spoken for. The only exception is a per diem expenditure on the last page of the report that should have been applied to the 2009 budget; Ronda was asked to check on the matter with the Finance Department. Included in the handouts, everyone received a copy of the 2009 year-end report. Kevin explained there are still a couple of invoices that will be applied to the remaining funds shown in the 2009 budget; once those come through we will be pretty close to spending the entire amount.

A motion was made by Stephanie Peterson, seconded by Jan Cushman to approve the financial statements as printed and presented. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2010 VISITORS GUIDE – UPDATE

Kevin stated the new guide is one of the nicest we've had. The only problem he found is with the clarity of the advertisers' map; a higher resolution map was submitted but the printer used the first draft instead. Kevin spoke to Celeste Statler from Total Market Strategies about the problem and she is currently checking into it. She stated to Kevin this never should have happened and she will make it right. Kevin went on to report the Tourist Council will get a reimbursement of \$1100 from TMS for our share of the advertising revenue, which is a first; in years past, we usually ended up breaking even once the printer was paid in full. Kevin also requested a copy of the guide on disc so it can be posted on the www.visitallegancounty.com website. He is pleased with this year's result and feels it is the best guide yet and the Tourist Council expressed their agreement.

On another note, Norm reported that as of last week Friday, Total Market Strategies is no longer a part of the Kalamazoo Gazette. Major things are going on in fact, Celeste will have to reapply for her same position with the Gazette. We will have to wait and see how it all plays out and how it will affect next year's guide. Regarding the error with the advertisers' map, Norm suggested maybe we could get a discount towards the 2011 issue.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Norm stated he had a discussion with Board of Commissioner, Steve McNeal; he asked him what the BOC recommends for the Tourist Council moving forward since the Board had voted to fund the TC with no more than the already allotted \$2900. According to Norm, Steve recommends the TC get on the agenda as soon as possible to go before the BOC with a one-page statement of facts regarding everything the TC does to promote the number two resource in the County...Tourism. He also stated the TC should request the BOC restore their funding. He believes there may be some sympathetic Commissioners who will be willing to listen. If they decide to proceed, Kevin stated Ronda could provide them with total year statistics that can also be presented to the BOC. He also suggested the TC ask to have their per diem and mileage reimbursement reinstated; at this time they are the only group who are not getting compensated. Norm will contact Becky Blaine in Administration to have the item added to the BOC agenda, hopefully by their meeting next week on Thursday, January 28, 2010. Next, he will draft the one-page letter that states everything the TC does, along with how reinstated funds will be used. Once completed, Norm will email it to everyone for his or her review, and will inform everyone once the date of the meeting is set.

On a different subject, RJ met with the paper companies, EPA, DEQ, and others, regarding the delisting of the lower Kalamazoo River from the superfund site. He stated everyone involved is for this action and it could be big for Allegan County because we could then qualify for federal funding. In RJ's opinion, this committee should endorse this effort and others like it. He believes endorsements go a long way when looking for outside support.

A motion was made by Al Weener, seconded by RJ Peterson to do further research on the delisting of the lower Kalamazoo River and write a letter of support. The motion carried by everyone present.

NEW BUSINESS

TOPICS FOR FEBRUARY JOINT MEETING WITH PARKS COMMISSION

Kevin reminded everyone of the joint meeting with the Parks Commission at 8:30am on February 2, 2010, and asked if anyone has topics for discussion. One suggestion would be how the two groups could work together and come up with a marketing strategy that would benefit both groups. Another topic is the two ribbon cutting ceremonies that are coming up in May for New Richmond Park and the equestrian trails; Kevin is looking at the first Saturday in May for New Richmond, and the third Friday for the trails. The two ceremonies have to be planned and include choosing the guest speakers. Dianna asked if it would be a good meeting to invite State Representative Bob Genetski to; at this time she has no idea if he would be able to attend. Kevin stated that would be fine, and asked if she could get him to commit prior to the meeting. If anyone has more suggestions for the next meeting, please let Kevin know as soon as possible.

NEXT MEETING – FEBRUARY 2, 2010 @ 8:30AM IN THE SPARTAN CONFERENCE ROOM WITH THE PARKS COMMISSION

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Stephanie Peterson stated an exciting new event is being planned for the track that will be a great benefit for them and the County; she cannot officially make the announcement until all the details are in place.

Betsy Hill informed everyone she would be absent for the February meeting.

Kevin Ricco asked if anyone has heard from Terry Bonnell recently; the last he heard Terry is no longer with the fair. Stephanie will call him to see how he is doing and ask if he plans to return to the Tourist Council; the TC values Terry's input and would love to see him continue and be a part of the group.

RJ Peterson stated he would like to make a recommendation to the Parks Commission as it relates to tourism in Allegan County.

Al Weener stated he is excited about the delisting of the lower Kalamazoo River.

Dianna Stampfler mentioned the trail meeting that is coming up this Thursday, January 21, 2010, in the Zimmerman Room upstairs; non-motorized trails in southwest Michigan will be the topic of discussion.

Norm Smith announced he is contemplating running for a seat on the County Board of Commissioners and is still trying to decide if that is something he would like to do. Also, he has heard construction on the Wayland casino is ahead of schedule.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made by Dianna Stampfler, seconded by RJ Peterson to adjourn the meeting at 11:45am. The motion carried by all present.

By: _____
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk