



## Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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**April 20, 2010**

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, April 20, 2010 at 10:05am in the Spartan Conference Room on the lower level of the Human Services Building, 3255 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Suite 102, Allegan, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

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

ABSENT:                        Luetta Crane                     Dianna Stampfler  
                                      Terry Bonnell

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

#### ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

#### APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by RJ Peterson, seconded by Al Weener to approve the March 16, 2010 meeting minutes as presented and emailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is \$4000 in the advertising account that represents proceeds of \$1100 from the guide's advertising sales and \$2910 transferred into the Tourist Councils' budget. The bulk of that will go towards the advertisement in the WMTA Lighthouse Map and the Carefree Travel Guide. Kevin was disappointed the invoices for the ads were not received until February while they had been expected in 2009, although we were able to back charge most to last year. He commented the goal was to spend everything in last year's budget and we did that; nothing was left over. Christie Fontaine, who designed the Heritage Trail interpretive signs for the City of Wayland and Hamilton Township, was paid \$400. Also to come out of the account is the cost of \$1668

to produce the signs and exhibit bases, although the City of Wayland and Hamilton Township previously agreed to reimburse the County \$2000.

A motion was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by RJ Peterson to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion passed by everyone present.

#### **TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA**

Turning to the March 2010 contact report and inquiry pie chart, Ronda reported 518 itemized inquiries and 258 individual inquiries for the month, which were down from last year's totals. She also mailed out 88 tourist information packets and sold one Heritage Trail book. Of the 88 tourist packets mailed, 41 were from outside the County and 46 were from out-of-state. Also included in the agenda packets is a synopsis of the first quarter internet clicks for all the parks on the WMTA website which totaled over 700 visits in the three month period.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

##### **RIBBON CUTTING UPDATES – NEW RICHMOND, EQUESTRIAN TRAILS**

Kevin reminded everyone of the two upcoming ribbon-cutting ceremonies; the Equestrian Trail celebration is at 2pm on Friday, May 21, 2010 at Silver Creek Park, and the New Richmond Bridge Park event is at 10am on Saturday, June 5, 2010. He noted there is also a WHAM (Walking Horse Association of Michigan) judged riding event taking place at Silver Creek Park on Saturday of the same weekend and the campground is close to being totally booked; as long as the weather holds out, there should be a great turnout for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. We are still in need of volunteers to help direct parking at both events. Please contact Kevin if you would like to help out.

##### **PURE MICHIGAN PHOTO CONTEST UPDATE**

After the last meeting when the Pure Michigan Photo Contest was discussed, Kevin was told the County would not contribute the whole amount of \$3800 (from the Economic Development account), but would consider providing a portion of the cost if the Tourist Council was able to raise some of the funds themselves. The deadline to enter the contest is May 15, 2010, so there is just not enough time to raise the money. Kevin stated it is too bad because he still believes this would have been a great way to promote the County.

##### **HERITAGE TRAIL INTERPRETIVE SIGN UPDATE**

Jan was happy to report that, since working on this project since 1998, the last Heritage Trail interpretive signs were finally delivered for Heath Township and the City of Wayland. She is picking up the signs today from Kevin and will deliver them in the next couple days to the local units, both have agreed to reimburse the County \$1000 each towards the cost of the signs. Jan wrote a letter of appreciation she will send to the volunteers who helped bring the Heritage Trail together, and she would like everyone on the Tourist Council to sign the copies.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU DISCUSSION**

Kevin passed around information regarding the process to create a CVB; he has been in contact with Dave Lorenz from Travel Michigan, who was very helpful and sent the information. First, a private non-profit group must step up to operate the CVB (the Tourist Council). Next a referendum must be passed by the eligible properties, who get one vote per room. The CVB's district would not include those who are already in an established assessment district (specifically the Saugatuck/Douglas CVB), and hotels must qualify to participate by having 10 units or more that are dedicated to transient travel. Once the referendum is passed, hotels built in the future that qualify within the assessment district would have to participate with the CVB. Other aspects discussed include:

- The CVB does not have to stay within Allegan County borders when forming the organization.
- The organization has to be a 501c3 non-profit group.
- The room assessment would be capped at 2% of the cost of the room and would appear on the user's bill.
- A Convention and Visitor's Bureau is not a government organization and is totally funded by its members and participating properties (who are then promoted by the CVB).
- Participation is optional for hotels/motels under 10 rooms.
- Chamber members and businesses can also participate by becoming a member of the CVB.

Currently, the main concern is there are not many available properties that would qualify at this time. Kevin stated now would be the best time to form the CVB before the anticipated wave of new hotels are built around the Wayland Casino. Kevin stated he and Ronda could continue to help, although the long term plan is the CVB would eventually acquire their own staff. Another aspect to consider is the State requires annual audits that run between \$6000-8000 per year. Norm stated we should probably have a special meeting to talk about the requirements and to see who really wants to participate in forming the organization. Kevin suggested inviting Dave Lorenz to come and answer questions and before the meeting, find out how many hotels would qualify and the number of eligible rooms. The special meeting could be held probably the latter part of May; Kevin will check with Dave to see when he would be able to attend.

#### WINTER PHOTO CONTEST JUDGING

Ronda brought up on the laptop for the Council to view each of the four adult entries into the 2010 winter photo contest; none were received in the youth division. After tallying the votes, Allegan resident Pat Jenkins' wonderful view of the snow and ice-covered trestle bridge in Hamilton was determined to be the winner. She will be awarded a \$25 Allegan County Parks 2010 season pass; a copy of the Heritage Trail guidebook and 2-disc CD set (total value of \$15); and four tickets (valued up to \$68) for the Star of Saugatuck, a one and a half hour boat cruise on the Kalamazoo River; total prize package valued up to \$108. Her winning photo will also be featured in the 2011 Inside Allegan County visitor's guide. Congratulations Pat!

#### NEXT MEETING – MAY 18, 2010 @ 10AM IN THE SPARTAN CONFERENCE ROOM

#### ROUND TABLE

**Larry Johnson** reported United Way and the County's goal to raise \$800,000 for the organization was exceeded; they are currently at \$815,000. Perrigo is a huge contributor by matching all of their employees' donations. Fundraisers for Camp Kidwell are also underway; a garage sale is planned over Memorial Day weekend at Chestnut Farm on M40 South. There is also a can collection in progress which was organized and started by a local teenager who wanted to raise money for the kids of soldiers to attend camp. Also, on May 8<sup>th</sup> there is a ride-a-thon event happening at the camp. For more information on the Camp Kidwell events, please visit their website at [www.campkidwell.org](http://www.campkidwell.org).

**RJ Peterson** stated the plans for the McClendon property in Saugatuck have been announced; people who want to sue are having a meeting tomorrow at the Performing Arts Center. Also, the consolidation movement is moving forward very quickly.

**Al Weener** informed everyone the group Sturgeon for Tomorrow is hosting a Boy Scout sleepover at the dam on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> to do some sturgeon guarding and have a short program in the afternoon. He also reported both a 5' and a 6' sturgeon were recently tagged; one at the dam and one in Saugatuck near Coral Gables.

**Kevin Ricco** announced all the County parks would be officially open next weekend on Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>. Also, the equestrian campsites will be completely converted at Ely Lake and Pine Point campgrounds in the next couple of weeks.

**Norm Smith** asked if Celeste from Total Market Strategies has recently contacted Kevin. He replied he has and would be meeting with her soon to discuss some ideas she has for next year's distribution of the guide.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business a motion was made by RJ Peterson, seconded by Larry Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 11:30am. The motion carried by everyone present.

Minutes Submitted By:

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Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk