



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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July 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, July 20, 2010 at 10:12am 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: Norm Smith Jan Cushman
 Betsy Hill Terry Bonnell
 Larry Johnson

ABSENT: Stephanie Peterson Luetta Crane
 Dianna Stampfler Al Weener
 R.J. Peterson

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, Director
 Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk
 Debbie Leverence of Allegan
 Joe Leverence of Allegan

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Kevin noted the quorum has not been met therefore no business will be conducted during today's meeting.

APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES

No quorum.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

There are no comments regarding the financial statements at this time.

TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA

The June contact report was included in the meeting handouts. Ronda stated it was a busy month with contacts up over both last month and last year counts. Total contacts were 440 with 1190 itemized inquiries; 100 tourist packets were mailed with 69 being requested from out-of-state. It was also noted 72 people requested more information after hearing about us through the Inside Allegan County visitor's guide.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Norm welcomed two guests who are in attendance, Debbie and Joe Leverage, owners of Baker Allegan Studios in Allegan. They handed out a brochure to the Council that promotes their studio and other fine art businesses located in the City of Allegan. They spoke about the importance of like-businesses networking together to draw patrons to their shops and stretching their advertising dollars, which has worked very well for them. Betsy agreed stating the more businesses there are in an area the more people that will come; the hardest part is getting all the merchants to realize that.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CVB DISCUSSION CONTINUED

Kevin stated that unfortunately, the key folks are not in attendance for today's meeting therefore, there is not much to discuss regarding the formation of a CVB. We still need to organize a meeting for all the qualifying property owners who have ten or more rooms since we have to pass a referendum before a CVB can be formed. Kevin stated we need to get an exact list of all the eligible properties to find out who would be interested so we know if a CVB would be worth pursuing. The discussion will continue during next month's meeting.

2011 VISITORS GUIDE – Q'S FROM CELESTE

A couple of weeks ago Kevin forwarded to the Council an email from Celeste asking for contact information she could pass onto the writer who is working on the seasonal articles. To date no one has replied so Kevin thought he would mention it again today. At the last meeting it was agreed to have a staff writer from Total Market Strategies write the four season articles with a fifth one regarding all seasons. Celeste was hoping to have the writer meet with someone who could talk about the specific seasons and activities so they could start writing the articles. Kevin stated he could do it but thought it would be helpful if Tourist Council members were also involved. Norm stated he met with Celeste last week and suggested the writer go back and read the past articles since they have similar content and can be rewritten in a different format.

NEW BUSINESS

SUMMER PHOTO CONTEST PRIZES

Kevin stated it has been taking too long to get the prizes to the winners of the photo contest and would like to decide on the prizes before the next contest deadline. He noted the next prizes should be related to the fall since they will be awarded in September. The last couple of years, Crane's Orchards have donated tickets to their hay maze; Kevin will ask Lue if this would be possible again. Witches of New Salem located in Dorr, is another popular Halloween attraction that may be willing to donate a prize. Norm suggested Montage on Brady Street in Allegan, or Salt of the Earth in Fennville. Kevin stated this gives him some ideas to work with and he will see what he can do.

NEXT MEETING – AUGUST 17, 2010 @ 10AM – DOSTER EMPORIUM

Next month's meeting will be held at Doster Emporium located at 12915 Doster Road in Plainwell. Jan stated whoever would like to stay for pizza after the meeting, please give her a call and once she has a count, she will order the pizza before the meeting.

ROUND TABLE

Larry Johnson passed out Camp Kidwell brochures and a flyer for a golf outing "Driving for Literacy" at Cheshire Hills Golf Course on August 6, 2010. The fundraiser is being sponsored by Allegan County Imagination Library and United Way of Allegan County.

Jan Cushman reminded everyone of the Creative Arts Festival in Otsego on September 25, 2010.

Betsy Hill informed the Council she will not be in attendance for the August meeting. She also reminded everyone of the Plainwell Island City Festival that is happening this coming weekend.

Kevin Ricco reported that a couple of weeks ago the City of Wayland was awarded some assistance through the State for their downtown area through the Michigan Downtowns program. The intent is to improve downtowns and make them focal points by giving them expert advice. He also wanted to mention briefly that next year's County budget is not looking good. Kevin stated the entire Parks, Recreation, & Tourist Council budget is in jeopardy. He is concerned that even after taking a 22% cut for 2010 we will be asked to take yet another large cut for 2011 while some departments may not be asked to make the same sacrifice.

Norm Smith asked about the casino stating he heard they are having financial difficulties. Kevin stated that is true although he has also heard they have applied for a loan and if approved, the tribe hopes to have the casino open sometime in February of 2011. Next, Norm asked about New Richmond Park; he took his boat to the park a couple of weeks ago and the docks were underwater. Kevin informed him the water from recent rain has receded and the dock is now above water.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Minutes Submitted By:

Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk