



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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August 17, 2010

Doster Elevator Emporium

12915 Doster Road, Plainwell, 49080

10:00am

Minutes of a Scheduled Meeting of the Allegan County Tourist Council

A scheduled offsite meeting of the Allegan County Tourist Council was called to order by Chairperson Norm Smith on Tuesday, August 17, 2010 at 10:55am at Doster Elevator Emporium in Plainwell, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

PRESENT: Terry Bonnell Stephanie Peterson
Larry Johnson Jan Cushman
Norm Smith Dianna Stampfler
Luetta Crane

ABSENT: Al Weener R.J. Peterson
Betsy Hill

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

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF JUNE AND JULY MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Stephanie Peterson, seconded by Jan Cushman to approve the June 15, 2010 meeting minutes and July 20, 2010 meeting minutes as presented and emailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin directed everyone's attention to the revenue report that shows a balance of \$4300; the brochure distribution service for 2010 will soon be paid leaving a balance of approximately \$3100. From that, WMTA membership renewals and advertisements will be paid. Although the County budget has not been completed, Kevin anticipates the cuts will not be as drastic as first expected. Last week he was first asked to reduce the Parks Department's budget by 10%, next he was asked to take a 5% cut. The Tourist Council's budget for 2011 will be \$3060; last year's budget of \$4318 included the revenue earned from the visitor's guide.

TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA

The July 2010 contact report and inquiry pie chart were passed out with the agenda packets. Ronda reports she had 675 itemized inquiries and 315 individual inquiries for the month, which was up from last year's totals of 652 itemized inquiries and 281 individual inquiries. From the known contacts, 30 were from Michigan but outside the County and 38 were from out-of-state. She also mailed 58 tourist information packets and sold one Heritage Trail book and one CD set. Next she informed the Council she received a 2nd quarter report from the Travel Michigan website where a total of 1814 clicks were made on the parks and campgrounds, most of which were for Silver Creek Campground. Dianna suggested doing a survey and press release regarding how well the County is doing.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CVB DISCUSSION CONTINUED

Kevin stated not much was discussed during last month's meeting because the quorum had not been met. He researched the area and came up with a list of eligible properties, which consist of five hotels that have ten or more rental units; Jensen Motel & Campground in Casco Township near South Haven, Budget Host Motel in Allegan, Comfort Inn in Plainwell, Castle in the Country in Allegan, and Sleepy Hollow Resort in Casco Township near South Haven. The next step is to meet with the owner or manager of each property. Since there are so few properties eligible at this time, meeting with them one on one instead of as a group may be best.

To make the pitch Larry stated the owners must be told how a CVB would benefit them and the whole County. There would be no cost to them; their rooms would be assessed at 2% and would show up on the patron's bill. The benefits are not exclusive to hotels; tourist attractions (along with other restaurants and businesses) could opt in for a paid fee. The CVB would bring together the hotels and tourist attractions where they can be better represented and promoted. Also, in anticipation of the casino opening and likelihood of more hotels being built, a CVB would better serve the area by taking it out of the government's hands. Kevin stated this is the perfect approach and everyone agreed that Larry should be the spokesman.

Next, Norm suggested putting together a FAQ sheet to compile questions prior to meeting with the hotel reps; email questions to Ronda before the September 21, 2010 TC meeting. Once the owners/managers agree to the formation of a CVB, Dave Lorenz will put together the referendum which will have to be passed by the five eligible properties. Once passed, all future hotels that meet the criteria and are within the CVB footprint would automatically become a member and their rooms would be assessed.

2011 VISITORS GUIDE – UPDATE

Kevin gave a brief update on the 2011 visitor's guide. According to ongoing conversations he has had with Celeste Statler, she is encouraged by the response she has been receiving from advertisers. Businesses who have checked out the guide are calling her wanting to place a new ad. Kevin stated if we can get those who advertised last year along with some new advertisers, we will be in great shape for the next guide.

NEW BUSINESS

HERITAGE TRAIL – GETTING IT LISTED WITH TRAVEL MICHIGAN

Dianna sent a note to Travel Michigan asking how we can get the Heritage Trail driving tour listed on their site. In order for it to qualify, not only must it have all the designated stops but must also list what can be found in between the stops. Dianna will forward the email listing all of the requirements to the TC members. Jan stated Betsy and she had planned to drive the route again to check on the signs; they will take note of what is located between the sites and will forward the information to Dianna.

NEXT MEETING – SEPTEMBER 21, 2010 @10:00AM – EASLEY MILL

ROUND TABLE

Stephanie Peterson reported the next big event at US131 Motorsports Park is the Funny Car Nationals on September 11, 2010.

Jan Cushman reminded everyone of the Creative Arts Festival in Otsego on September 25, 2010. She also thanked everyone for coming to the Doster Elevator Emporium for today's meeting.

Larry Johnson reported 4H will have a food booth at the Allegan County Fair September 10-18, and he invited everyone to come have a bowl of soup, chili, or lamb burger.

Terry Bonnell stated without presumptions, if Al Weener and RJ Peterson decide to resign from the Tourist Council, he does not believe they should be replaced since it is still unknown what the future holds for the TC.

Lue Crane informed everyone she has the prizes for the summer photo contest; a gift certificate for lunch at Crane's Pie Pantry Restaurant & Bakery for the adult winner and a gift certificate to Crane U-Pick Orchard and Corn Maze for the youth prize. She stated it has been a good season so far at Cranes.

Kevin Ricco stated he has accepted an invitation from the West Michigan Tourist Association to be on their Board of Directors. They meet four times a year at different locations throughout west Michigan and during their October meeting they will vote to confirm his seat.

Dianna Stampfler stated she will post a reminder on the Tourist Council's facebook page regarding the September 1st deadline for the summer photo contest. She will also post an announcement for the extended deadline of December 1st for the fall contest.

Norm Smith reported he had a first time experience on his recent vacation out west while dining; they felt a tremor that originated from Yellowstone National Park.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made by Terry Bonnell, seconded by Larry Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 12:35. The motion carried by everyone present.

Minutes Submitted By: _____
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk