



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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September 21, 2010

Eesley Place Banquets

717 E. Bridge Street, Plainwell, MI, 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, September 21, 2010 at 10:47am at Eesley Place Banquets in Plainwell, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

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

ABSENT:	R.J. Peterson	Betsy Hill
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Also Present:	Kevin Ricco, Director
	Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Stephanie Peterson, seconded by Al Weener to approve the August 17, 2010 minutes as presented and emailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is not much to report; basically there was no change from last month's financial statements. So far, if the Board of Commissioners approves the budget, the Tourist Council will have the same budget as this year which is around \$3000. There may end up being more from the ad sales received from the visitor's guide.

TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA

The Council thanked Ronda for putting together the booth at the Allegan County Fair which was held last week. Reporting on the August contacts, Ronda said there were 252 inquiries concerning 655 separate items; the item showing the highest percentage of inquiries was 27% for camping/parks. Heritage Trail sales were up with 9

books and 3 CD sets being sold. There were 48 tourist packets mailed, none of which were requested by Allegan County residents; 17 came from other counties and 31 were from out-of-state.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CVB DISCUSSION CONTINUED

Included in the agenda packet is the draft letter composed by Larry for the owners/managers whose lodging facility qualifies them for a CVB; anyone who has revisions should get with Larry. Kevin would like to establish a time line to keep the whole process moving forward. The largest hotels should be met with first and even if they agree to the formation of a CVB, we should still meet with all the qualifying properties. Larry will be the pitchman and will be accompanied by Stephanie and Kevin. With the exception of Fridays or the last week of the month, Kevin's schedule is pretty much open for any other day in October.

Next, the FAQ sheet from Norm was reviewed in anticipation of questions that may come up while meeting with the owners. It should be stressed that having a CVB will not cost them anything and since the Tourist Council has existed since 1983, we have a track record to draw on and are not starting from square one. Now is the time to form a CVB before the casino opens and more hotels are built. Once we establish that the qualifying properties are on board and the resolution would pass, a 501(c)3 Non-Profit must be formed which Al stated takes about six weeks. As a target, Kevin would like the 501(c)3 completed by the first quarter of 2011. Stephanie will contact the Comfort Inn to set up the first meeting.

2011 VISITORS GUIDE – UPDATE

Kevin received an email from Celeste with an update on the 2011 Visitors Guide. So far, the advertisement sales are on par with last years ads; again the Gun Lake Casino will have the full back page cover and a few others have also purchased full page ads. Work has begun on the articles and Kevin is hoping to have them for review by the next meeting. Celeste reports we are starting to get recognition from businesses who know the guide and are excited for the opportunity to place an ad. Kevin stated the goal is to have more return on the revenue therefore additional pages will not be added to the guide unless ad sales warrant them.

NEW BUSINESS

WMTA AD OPPORTUNITY

Kevin was contacted by Brad from WMTA asking if we would like to run the same banner ad as last year. After informing him the Tourist Council is short on funds, Brad was able to bring the cost down to \$500 for the same ad which is a lot less than last year. Kevin stated we do have the funds that could be used for the ad.

A motion was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Al Weener to approve placing a two page banner ad for \$500 in the 2011 West Michigan Carefree Travel Guide. The motion carried by everyone present.

SUMMER PHOTO CONTEST JUDGING

There were five adult and three youth entries submitted into the Summer 2010 Photo Contest. After tallying the votes, Will Wallgren of Saugatuck was named the adult winner for his fantastic photo submission "Sailing on Lake Michigan"; he will receive a \$30 gift certificate to Crane's Pie Pantry Restaurant in Fennville. Alyssa Selby of Allegan was declared the youth winner for her wonderful picture "Butterfly on a Clover Flower". Her prize is a \$40 gift certificate to enjoy the corn/haunted maze at Cranes Orchard and U-Pick in Fennville. Prizes were donated by Crane's Pie Pantry Restaurant and Crane's Orchards & U-Pick.

NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 19, 2010 @ 10:00AM IN THE SPARTAN CONFERENCE ROOM

ROUND TABLE

Al Weener reports Sturgeon for Tomorrow has applied for and received two grants for sturgeon habitat restoration on the Kalamazoo River.

Jan Cushman reminded everyone of the Creative Arts Festival in Otsego this weekend, September 25.

Lue Crane stated Crane's has been very busy this year, especially late summer and September. Business is way up and she is happy that the Honey Crisp season is over!

Larry Johnson informed the group the United Way Kick-Off will be at Jaycee park in Allegan on September 25 from 11am to 1pm and lunch will be served! A former board member for Camp Kidwell has bequeathed a \$100,000 donation to the camp; it will likely be used to pay down the camp's outstanding land payment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

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