



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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October 19, 2010

123 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 Parks & Tourism Director Kevin Ricco on Tuesday, October 19, 2010 at 10:05am in the 123 Conference Room on the main level of the Human Services Building, 3255 122nd Avenue, Allegan, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

PRESENT: Luetta Crane R.J. Peterson
 Jan Cushman Betsy Hill
 Al Weener Larry Johnson (10:18am arrival)

ABSENT: Stephanie Peterson Dianna Stampfler
 Norm Smith Terry Bonnell

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

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Al Weener, seconded by RJ Peterson to approve the September 21, 2010 minutes as presented and emailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated the remainder of this year's funds will be used to pay the writer for the content in the 2011 visitor's guide which will be around \$1000, and the WMTA banner ad that was approved during last month's meeting for \$500. The Board of Commissioners passed the budget last week and as expected, next year's budget will be the same as this year, \$3000.

A motion was made by Al Weener, seconded by Jan Cushman to approve the financial reports as presented. The motion carried.

TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA

Ronda reported 159 contacts were received in September with a total of 583 itemized inquiries, which is down from August's total but over the amount received last year. There were 40 tourist packets mailed; 16 were from Michigan but outside the County, and 24 were from out-of-state. Heritage Trail sales were at a total of 11 books and 2 CDs. She remarked although the season is winding down, there have still been a lot of calls regarding Silver Creek Campground and the equestrian trails.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CVB DISCUSSION CONTINUED

A meeting has been arranged with the owner of the Comfort Inn in Plainwell to discuss the possibility of forming a county-wide Convention & Visitor's Bureau; Kevin, Larry and Stephanie will meet with him at 8:30am on November 3, 2010. Kevin stated this is the hotel that has the most eligible rooms and hopefully the meeting will go well. Once they are in agreement, a meeting with the Budget Host Motel in Allegan will be arranged; if they also concur, the CVB would be a done deal. The group will report back to the Council at next month's meeting

Next, Kevin mentioned the Wayland Casino would be exempt from having to join although he is quite sure they would opt in once the CVB is created; the casino is scheduled to open in February of 2011. He also informed the group of a bill that is currently in the State Senate and was introduced by Senator Patty Birkholz. If passed, the bill would raise the 2% room assessment rate to 5% for CVBs.

2011 VISITORS GUIDE – UPDATE

Kevin stated draft copies of the guide cover have been emailed to everyone and he has received some good comments. The winter photo of the bridge will be swapped out with a more colorful one, and there are still a couple of minor corrections to be made before the cover can be finalized. Now feedback is requested on the content of the articles; specifically are there any attractions and/or areas of the County that should be included, or is there anything in the articles that should be omitted. Kevin emphasized we will be able to proofread them later for spelling and grammatical errors; at this time the only concern should be the content of the articles. He asked everyone to please email their comments to him as soon as possible.

NEW BUSINESS

GUN LAKE TRIBE CASINO MEETING REPORT

A couple of weeks ago several TC members attended the Gun Lake Casino chamber luncheon where one topic of discussion was a casino kiosk that will contain travel information. Kevin got the impression the kiosk will most likely be a large screen monitor that will be interactive with links to other web sites to obtain more information. Suggestions from the Council included posting five to ten pictures and highlighting different attractions throughout the County. Kevin stated we should wait to see what the tribe wants on the kiosk before deciding what would be the best way to promote the County. The casino is supposed to open sometime in February and they want to have another chamber luncheon before the opening.

NOVEMBER MEETING WITH PARKS COMMISSION

Next month's meeting will be a joint meeting with the Parks Commission at 10:00am on November 9, 2010 in the Spartan Conference Room. Kevin asked if there was anything specific this group would like to add for discussion to the agenda. With no response at this time, everyone was asked to give it some thought and to email either Kevin or Ronda if they come up with any suggestions.

FALL PHOTO CONTEST PRIZES

As everyone probably remembers the fall contest deadline was changed to December 1st and the entrants will be judged during that month's scheduled meeting. Kevin wants to get into the habit of determining the prizes before the end of the contests and asked for suggestions for the fall prizes. In the past, the youth winner was given a gift certificate for two to go tubing at Timber Ridge in Gobles, which is just south of the Allegan County border. Ronda stated Bittersweet Ski & Snowboarding is located within the county in Otsego. She was asked to contact them and see if they would be willing to donate a gift certificate for two; if they do not want to provide the entire prize, maybe they would be willing to split the cost with the Tourist Council. For the adult prize, Kevin stated he has been working on the revitalization of Wayland's downtown area with Alicia Verardi, Wayland Main Street Director, and she may know of a business that would be willing to donate the prize. If he has no success with Alicia, he will contact RJ for a gift certificate to the Elbo Room in Saugatuck.

NEXT MEETING – NOVEMBER 9, 2010 @ 10:00AM IN THE SPARTAN CONFERENCE ROOM (WITH PARKS COMMISSION)

ROUND TABLE

Kevin Ricco had a couple more items to mention. First, the location for the off-site meeting in December was supposed to be at the Wayland Casino and since they will not be opened yet, does anyone have any other suggestions. Salt of the Earth or Su Casa restaurants, both in Fennville, were mentioned. Lue stated she could check with Salt of the Earth to see if they could accommodate the Council; she will let Kevin know either way in the next couple of days. The meeting is currently scheduled for December 3rd; Larry asked if the meeting could be moved to the 10th of December.

A motion was made by Betsy Hill, seconded by Larry Johnson to move the Friday, December 3, 2010 Tourist Council meeting to 11:00am on Friday, December 10, 2010 at Salt of the Earth. The motion carried.

Next, as part of the Economic Development strategic plan, as a subcommittee of the Allegan County Planning Commission, an Economic Development Advisory Committee is being formed that will put together a recommendation of the makeup of an Economic Development Commission that will go to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Kevin stated he anticipates the advisory committee would only have to meet a couple of times before coming up with a recommendation. The first meeting would be in the beginning of December and the second meeting would be sometime after the new year. He would like to have a representative from the Tourist Council on the subcommittee and asked if anyone would be interested. Larry stated he could attend the December meeting but would not be able to attend the second one. Kevin stated he needed someone who could commit to all of the meetings. Al stated he might be able to do it and will let Kevin know.

Lastly, Kevin is working with a group who wants to put on a triathlon next July and stage the event at Littlejohn Lake Park. Although everything is still in the works, he is notifying the Council because there may be other opportunities we could pursue to go along with the event.

RJ Peterson informed the Tourist Council he is unsure how many meetings he will be able to attend going forward because he has a lot going on; he is still enthralled in saving the harbor in Saugatuck.

Al Weener stated Sturgeon for Tomorrow is coming right along.

Larry Johnson informed the Council of two upcoming events at Camp Kidwell; the Halloween Festival will be on the weekend of Halloween, and the Festival of Trees is scheduled for the first weekend in December.

Betsy Hill recently went up north to Mackinaw City and then on to Traverse City; they could not find a place to stay on a Saturday night because of all the tourists.

Jan Cushman stated she and Betsy have been busy for two days traveling the Heritage Trail. They have cleaned all of the interpretive signs and made note of every restaurant, hotel, or attraction they found along the route. The information will be added to the Heritage Trail website and once complete, Travel Michigan will add our link to their website.

Ronda Foreman is putting together a live wreath fundraiser through Ponderosa Nursery in Hamilton. Once the order form is complete, she will email it to everyone. The proceeds from the fundraiser will benefit the Tourist Council's 2011 account.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

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