



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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March 15, 2011

Comfort Inn

Plainwell, MI

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 Chairperson Stephanie Peterson, on Tuesday, March 15, 2011 at 10:00am at the Comfort Inn in Plainwell, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

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

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, County Development Director
 Ginger Hentz, MSU Extension/ Barry County Tourism Council

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES

A motion was made by Dianna Stampfler, seconded by Betsy Hill to approve the February meeting minutes as presented and emailed. The motion passed.

TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – KEVIN

Kevin shared the tourism contacts information for the month of February. He noted that the office had received a large number of contact requests compared to February of 2010.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is nothing new to report on the financial statements this month. There was much discussion regarding ad sales for the Visitors Guide and it was suggested that 25% of ad sales for businesses represented by the Tourist Council should come back to the Council, since these ads really sell themselves and really don't need any "selling" from TMS. It was proposed that this should be part of the 2012 guide agreement.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

HERITAGE TRAIL WEB SITE DISCUSSION

Kevin noted that this item has been postponed until the April meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

COORDINATION WITH BARRY COUNTY

Kevin introduced Ginger Hentz from the Barry County Tourism Council. Kevin reported that he, Ginger and Valerie Byrnes (also from the Barry County Tourism Council) met at Uccello's in Wayland on March 2nd to discuss ways both Allegan County and Barry County may work together to help market and promote the area. With that, Kevin turned the discussion over to Ginger.

Ginger stated that the Barry County Tourism Council is really in its infancy. It has been part of the County's economic development program, yet they have no funding. At this time they are not formally organized as we are here in Allegan County but they do hold regular meetings. They are very interested in exploring partnerships and feel that Barry County has more in common with Allegan County than some of its other neighbors. This creates some excellent partnership opportunities. One such opportunity that Ginger proposed may be the creation of a trails and tours network. Allegan County has the Heritage Trail, the Blue Coast Artists trail, etc. and Barry County is working on an Arts & Eats backroads tour for October 15 and 16 of this year. Perhaps there would be an opportunity to work together either this year or in future years to expand this opportunity and cross-promote the tours and trails of each county. Ginger also mentioned Barry County's passport program.

Ginger also went on to talk about some educational programs they are sponsoring for 2011. These are as follows:

Trends in Travel and Tourism, March 24th @ 3pm

Culinary Tourism & Placemaking, May 19th @ 3pm

Agritourism, July 21st @ 3pm

Legendary Customer Service for Destinations, September 15th @ 3pm

These sessions are free and open to the public.

There was also some discussion about the possibility of an Allegan County/Barry County CVB. To this point the Allegan County Tourism Council has been researching a CVB for Allegan County, but perhaps there would be a greater benefit to combining with Barry County. The only qualifying property mentioned in Barry County was Bay Pointe Inn, but Ginger stated there are probably a few other, smaller, qualifying properties as well. All thought this was an idea worth exploring further.

Ginger went on to invite representatives of the Allegan County Tourism Council to attend the April 21st meeting of the Barry County Tourism Council to have the same sort of information sharing opportunity. The meeting is at 3pm in Hastings. Kevin stated that he would plan to attend and a few others from the Council may attend as well.

WINTER PHOTO CONTEST PRIZES

Kevin stated that since the judging for the winter photo contest would take place at the April meeting he thought it would be a good idea to establish prizes now so that discussion would not have to take place next month. The prize suggestions are as follows:

Dean's Ice Cream certificates (\$10/ea) – Dianna
US-131 track tickets – Stephanie
Gift cards to Crane's – Lue
Tickets on the Star of Saugatuck – Al
Allegan County Parks season passes and Heritage Trail guidebooks – Parks & Tourism

If all prizes are not awarded to the winners of the winter contest those that are not awarded will be held over for the spring contest winners.

NEXT MEETING – APRIL 19, 2011 @ 10AM IN THE GUN LAKE CASINO (Kevin will contact John Shagonaby to confirm)

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Al Weener reported that the sturgeon rearing facility for New Richmond Bridge Park is scheduled to be delivered on March 28th. He also reported that he attended the Healing Our Waters program in Washington, D.C. and talked with elected officials about our area.

Dianna Stampfler attended the grand opening of Dean's Ice Cream in Plainwell. The event was well covered by the media. She also reported that she would be attending the Pure Michigan Governor's Conference on tourism March 20 – 22 in Kalamazoo.

Kevin Ricco reported that plans are in the works to conduct a triathlon event at Littlejohn Lake Park. The date has been set for July 26th but the remainder of the details are still being worked out. He also reported that the Board of Commissioners approved the installation of an automated fee collection gate at the Gun Lake Park boat launch. This should be in place by the middle of May.

Jan Cushman reported that Ronda had set up a photo contest display at the Otsego museum. It is a beautiful display and you should check it out if you get the chance. (Also, welcome back, Jan!!!!!!)

Terry Bonnell stated that he thought the idea of an Allegan County/Barry County CVB was a good one.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion by Larry Johnson, seconded by Al Weener to adjourn the meeting. Motion was carried and the meeting was adjourned at 11:50am.

Minutes Submitted By: _____
Kevin Ricco, County Development Director