



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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August 16, 2011
Spartan 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 Chairperson Stephanie Peterson on Tuesday, August 16, 2011 at 10:00am 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:	Larry Johnson	Betsy Hill
	Jan Cushman	Luetta Crane
	Norm Smith	Terry Bonnell
	Stephanie Peterson	Dianna Stampfler

ABSENT: Al Weener

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, Director
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk
Lenore Ryun, Parks Commission Member

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF JUNE MINUTES

A motion was made by Norm Smith, seconded by Jan Cushman to approve the June 21, 2011 meeting minutes as presented and emailed. The motion passed.

TOURISM CONTACTS REPORT – RONDA

Since the July meeting had been cancelled, the tourism contacts reports for both June and July are included in everyone's agenda packet. Ronda stated in June there were 496 inquiries concerning 1699 separate items, which were more than received in July of 314 inquiries concerning 953 separate items. There were also more tourist packets mailed in June, 171 compared to 92 in July.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is nothing new to report on this month's financial statements. The County is currently working to pass a balanced budget for 2012 where \$1,000,000 must be cut. Once again, they are offering the Voluntary Separation Plan to employees approaching retirement and then eliminating the position. They are

also considering other options to cut costs. The County would like to maintain all current services so balancing the budget can be difficult.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Parks Commission member Lenore Ryun is present; Kevin stated during their last meeting, more collaboration between the two groups was discussed. Lenore has no comment at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CVB DISCUSSION CONTINUED

Kevin stated most of the meetings have taken place with the main stakeholders that fall within our footprint but we still haven't figured out whether forming a CVB is a go or not. It is time to put the numbers together and determine whether it's worth doing the referendum. After some discussion more questions were raised regarding which qualifying hotels fall within our boundary; Kevin will contact Dave Lorenz regarding this issue. In addition, someone still needs to talk to Ruth, the owner of Castle in the Country; Stephanie and Betsy will arrange to meet with her.

NEW BUSINESS

WMTA AD OPPORTUNITIES

Kevin reports West Michigan Tourist Association is totally revamping their website and format of the Carefree Travel Guide, along with a new corporate identity. Next month they will launch a whole new marketing campaign and promote a new branding theme "What's your thing?" Some changes to the guide worth noting is the total number of copies printed will be reduced from 250,000 to 200,000, the grids will be eliminated, and the number of pages will be reduced.

Kevin was contacted by our advertising representative, Bruce Barker, regarding next year's ad; he is offering the same cost as this year for a two page banner ad at \$500. He also questioned Kevin about the Lighthouse Map ad which we did not do last year because of budget cuts; the map ad would be an additional \$522. After some discussion the TC concluded the advertising in the guide is beneficial but they are not so sure the Lighthouse Map is worth the cost.

A motion was made by Larry Johnson, seconded by Terry Bonnell to approve the placement of the two page banner ad in the 2012 WMTA Carefree Travel Guide for \$500; the Lighthouse Map ad will not be placed. The motion carried by everyone present.

Kevin next reported the WMTA membership is up for renewal and due on September 1, 2011 in the amount of \$310. He also wanted to mention another offer that the Tourist Council bypassed last year; the distribution of our visitor's guide at eight tradeshows beginning in November of this year through 2012 costing \$800 or \$150 per show. Dianna wonders if WMTA would let us pay for some of the shows this year (\$400) using the remainder of this year's budget, and then pay the balance (\$400) from the 2012 budget; Kevin will ask Bruce if this would be possible.

A motion was made by Dianna Stampfler, seconded by Betsy Hill to approve the WMTA membership renewal of \$310 and commit to having the *Inside Allegan County Visitor's Guide* distributed by West Michigan Tourist Association at eight tradeshows on the condition they agree to allow the Tourist Council pay a portion of the invoice (\$400) in 2011, and pay the remaining balance (\$400) in 2012. The motion carried.

CUMULUS BROADCASTING AD OPPORTUNITIES

Included in everyone's agenda packet is information from Mark Fricke, Cumulus Media Representative, regarding how they can help promote the county with short radio announcements; in Kevin's opinion it would better suit special events like the County Fair instead of ongoing events such as farmers markets. He asked if

the TC would like to invite Mark to the September meeting; after some discussion everyone agreed they would like him to attend the next meeting for more information and to answer questions.

PARKS FUND WITH ACCF

Kevin just wanted to share with this group that the Parks Commission is considering opening an endowment/hybrid fund to benefit the county park system for generations to come. Theresa Bray, the Allegan County Community Foundation Director, has been informing the Commission about the different types of funds and which options would work best for the long-term needs of the parks. If the Parks Commission decides to move forward, holding promotional events at the parks are being discussed to bring folks out and raise awareness about the ACCF fund; Kevin thought the Tourist Council may be interested in participating. Larry stated he had previously been involved with two endowment funds through ACCF that did not work out well and the Parks Commission should be careful of what they are getting into; Kevin replied a hybrid fund is being considered because it can be more flexible than an endowment fund.

NEXT MEETING – SEPTEMBER 20, 2011 @ 10AM AT THE LYNX

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Jan Cushman reminded everyone of the Creative Arts Festival that is coming up in Otsego on September 24th.

Norm Smith is curious of how the ad sales are going for the 2012 visitor's guide. Kevin has not received a recent update from Total Market Strategies however, they are still in the midst of contacting advertisers.

Kevin Ricco informed everyone of a Sturgeon Release Festival at New Richmond Bridge Park from 10am – 2pm on September 24, 2011; the event is being sponsored by DNR Fisheries, Sturgeon for Tomorrow, the Gun Lake Tribe, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. They are looking to make a nice event with interpretive tours of the park and hatchery, a kid's fishing derby, food and drinks, a turning of the bridge, and a sturgeon release ceremony. Volunteers are needed for setup, cleanup, and overseeing the kid's fishing derby; anyone interested can email kazoosturgeon@gmail.com. Dianna suggested calling high school guidance offices for a list of seniors who need to complete community service.

Dianna Stampfler asked if anyone took a count of the fourth graders who may be interested in learning about the Heritage Trail. Once the kids are back in school and before the next meeting, she will put together a plan of ways to distribute the guidebook to the classrooms.

Lue Crane stated Crane Orchards held some free outdoor movie nights this summer where folks brought chairs or blankets and watched on the lawn with their families. There was a pretty good turnout so they may try it again next year and do more advertising.

Stephanie Peterson informed everyone of a couple upcoming events at US 131 Motorsports Park; Funny Car Nationals will be on September 10th, and AMSNOW Super Sled Shootout & Swap Meet on September 23-25.

Larry Johnson informed everyone of a benefit ride out of Otsego to raise funds for the Imagination Library on August 27th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:04pm.

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