

TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, August 12, 2020 – 4:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

Meeting was called to order by Chair Waspi at 4:05 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Waspi, Vice Chair Trilla, Alderman Fesenmaier, Alderman Hedlund, Zakia Pirzada.

Absent: Linda Moritz

Comments from the Public limited to 5 minutes, limited to items on the agenda:

Jim Strauss, Geneva Shore Report, commented on the Lake Geneva Regional News grant proposal for a digital marketing effort explaining that their website is mostly dead with little activity. Strauss did not believe the Commission should approve the grant.

Approval of Tourism Commission minutes from July 8, 2020

Ald. Hedlund moved to approve the July 8, 2020 minutes, second by Trilla. Unanimously carried.

Update from Stephanie Copsey (Independent Contractor for Tourism Commission) Meet at the Lake

Copsey was absent, Chair Waspi pointed out that our agreement with her expires in October. Copsey has a dual role to manage Riviera wedding bookings and corporate events.

Update from Tourism Entity – Visit Lake Geneva

Deanna Goodwin, Visit Lake Geneva Director, announced that promotion of the Electric Christmas Parade and Winterfest will start in September. Goodwin reported that Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter show increased likes/followers/users in July. Visitor Center activity has also shown an increase, and 2019 data was added for comparison. Visit Lake Geneva hosted several travel bloggers and authors this summer for added visibility.

Goodwin gave a brief history: In 1944 the Lake Geneva Chamber of Commerce was formed. In 1980, the Convention and Visitors Bureau was created. And, since 2016, the organization has been known as the single entity, Visit Lake Geneva. They are a 501c6 with nearly 400 members/partners operating from lodging taxes and membership dues. VLG is a Destination Marketing Organization using a website with 2.2 million page views per year and printing nearly 100,000 copies of the “Lake Geneva Area Visitors Guide” with distribution to Milwaukee and down into Chicago. More recently, Visit Lake Geneva offers an app-guided tour of the Geneva Shore Path.

Update from Lake Geneva Business Improvement District (BID)

Kevin Fleming presented a map of the BID area explaining that governmental entities and churches are excluded from the BID tax. Their \$230,000 budget is based on assessed values of the businesses in BID. Property owners can petition the group to join or be removed. BID began in 1991 and is controlled by State Statute. They pay for adornments such as holiday lights, seasonal banners, flower pots and daily watering, decorative downtown light poles, and benches. Sponsored events include the Streets of Lake Geneva at the museum, Maxwell Street Days at the end of August, Oktoberfest (cancelled), and Santa Visit (cancelled this year). BID was set to

purchase a \$25,000 electronic sign for Flat Iron Park from Tourism grant money but was delayed due to the pandemic. Fleming will contact the Communications Ad Hoc Committee for possible coordination of City messages/events.

Written Financial Update provided by Comptroller

Written report submitted as part of the meeting packet. Chair Waspi clarified the amount unencumbered for additional grants. At the next meeting, we will review state statute and discuss further along with checking the status of the Fire Department Event Trailer outstanding in the amount of \$13,000.

Discussion/Action on Tourism Promotional Grant Program and Requests:

Lake Geneva Regional News – Digital Marketing Effort

Rob Ireland and Craig Grove via GoToMeeting presented their grant proposal. Discussion and concern was expressed about the cost, number of potential hotel bookings, the event/effort turnaround time, and potential conflict with the editorial/reporting side of the newspaper (i.e. recent headline “Masks Could Deter Tourists”).

Motion by Alderman Hedlund, second by Pirzada, to continue the item until September.

Unanimously carried.

Date of future RFP presentations in September for Tourism Entities - To be determined

Future meeting agenda items and next meeting date – tentative September 21 at 4:00 PM

Motion by Ald. Hedlund, second by Trilla, to adjourn at 5:53 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier, Secretary