Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 03, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call to Order

Walcott called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

Roll Call

A quorum of the Tourism Commission present included Hammer, Famularo, Roelke, Walcott, and Walker. Staff liaison Bennett was also present.

Notice of Open Meeting

Bennett confirmed the meeting was properly noticed.

Approval of Agenda

Famularo motions to approve the agenda for the Tourism Commission meeting of Monday, March 3, 2025. Roelke seconds. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes

1.   Review and Approve Minutes from February 3, 2025

     Hammer motions to approve the minutes from the Tourism Commission meeting of Monday, February 3, 2025. Famularo seconds. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

Public Comment

There was no one from the public in attendance for public comment. There was no correspondence.

Unfinished Business

2.   Digital Signage Discussion

     Bennett recapped previous efforts for a digital kiosk and noted that due to pricing, the Tourism Commission wanted to take a look at digital signage. Bennett mentioned that staff has experience with the REACH platform and will be looking into other options such as Carousel and Yodeck. The plan would be to install smart screen monitors or TVs in strategic locations around the city and use cloud software to run a slide show highlighting amenities and events and include QR codes to the tourism website.

     The Commission created a list of possible locations which primarily included major parks, City Hall, the Aquatic Center, and Library. Bennett was asked to get permission for possible locations to mount the TVs for digital signage. Walker recommended looking into Brightsign which is used by Prairie Ridge Health and costs $3,000 - $4,000 annually for 12 players, easy to use, and allows for different content streams. Walker noted that TVs for the players were purchased separately. Famularo gave a quick description of Yodeck as it is used in Watertown. Yodeck costs $150 per unit annually and operates using a Raspberry Pi unit attached to TVs. All cloud-based digital signage will need to operate on either Wi-Fi or cellular signal.

     Bennett was directed to get confirmation and pricing for TVs, weather protection, and digital signage options.

New Business

3. Discussion and Possible Action for the Creation of Event Flyers and Distribution during the 4th of July Parade

Bennett recapped previous efforts in 2024 regarding possible flyers / handout print marketing materials to be distributed at large events. The recap highlighted features the Tourism Commission wanted such as list of upcoming events, map, and QR code to the tourism website and community calendar.

Bennett presented an example of a handout from an event in Port Washington, WI. Bennett noted that the design itself wasn't great but praised the content of the flyer as it included a list of upcoming events, QR codes for ticket info, QR code and link to website, map of downtown, and a QR code for a survey and contest entry. The Tourism Commission shared similar sentiment as they liked the content, but thought the design was too busy. The upcoming events would be seasonal or include major events. Smaller events would be accessible through the QR code to the community calendar.

Additional discussion involved distribution of the flyer and the incentive for the survey / contest. Consensus involved distribution at 4th of July and various locations in the city. Roelke suggested to create one flyer to try out in order to gauge return on investment. Walker suggested the survey contest prize could be for something in town. Walcott added it could be something like "Cardinal Bucks", a redeemable coupon to be used at a participating business which that business would be reimbursed by Tourism. Roelke suggested offering a 10-punch Aquatic Center pass as a prize. The Commission liked the idea of the Aquatic Center pass.

Famularo volunteered to assist with the designing of the flyer and send a draft to Bennett for insertion into the Tourism packet. Bennett will get Famularo needed information including an event list.

Staff Reports

4. Tourism Budget Update

Bennett gave a brief update on the 2025 Tourism financials.

Bennett had no new revenues to report and noted that the kayak rental revenue should start to be reported in Spring.

Bennett noted no new reported expenditures. However, 2025 Google Ads for January and February are in process of being reported.

Bennett reported that $56,481.48 is remaining in the 2025 Tourism budget.

5. Community Calendar Update

Bennett presented an update to the progress of the change in community calendar management. Citing an issue reviving the Chamber's Events.com calendar, the Chamber agreed to reuse the former Tourism calendar which included both the City and Chamber having log in access and a neutral rebranding as a failsafe for undesirable events being added. Walcott asked if there were checks in place for less desirable events, and Bennett confirmed that Events.com has checks and there is a manual removal option as well.

Bennett noted that event hosts can add to the calendar in addition to the City and Chamber adding events. Additionally, the calendar can be accessed on the City's tourism pages and the Chamber's website.

Future Agenda Items

No new items were added for future agendas.

Items for the next agenda include update and progress on the events flyer and information for digital signage.

The next meeting will take place on April 7, 2025, at 6:30pm in the City Hall Council Chamber.

Adjourn

Roelke motions to adjourn the meeting. Famularo seconds. Motion carries by unanimously. Walcott adjourns the meeting at 7:12pm.

*A quorum of city committees and/or commissions may be present at this meeting. No action will be taken or considered by those committees and/or commissions.

** These minutes will be approved at a future meeting and may be amended. These minutes are respectfully submitted by David Bennett, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator **