



Tourism Commission Meeting Agenda

Monday, March 03, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call to Order

Roll Call

Notice of Open Meeting

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

1. Review and Approve Minutes from February 3, 2025

Public Comment

Unfinished Business

2. Digital Signage Discussion

New Business

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

Staff Reports

4. Tourism Budget Update
5. Community Calendar Update

Future Agenda Items

Adjourn

*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.



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: March 3, 2025

Item Title: Review and Approve Minutes from February 3, 2025

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

The Tourism Commission met on February 3, 2025. Staff will present the minutes from that meeting to be reviewed, corrected if necessary, and approved by the commission.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Meeting Minutes from February 3, 2025

Action Requested of Tourism Commission:

Review, make any corrections, and approve the Tourism Commission minutes from February 3, 2025



Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 03, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call to Order

Walcott called the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

Roll Call

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

Notice of Open Meeting

Bennett confirmed the meeting was properly noticed.

Approval of Agenda

Hammer motions to approve the agenda for the Tourism Commission meeting of Monday, February 3, 2025. Belschner seconds. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes

1. Review and Approve Minutes from January 6, 2025

Walker motions to approve the minutes from the Tourism Commission meeting of Monday, January 6, 2025. Belschner 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. Approved Columbus Chamber of Commerce 2024 Wine Walk Room Tax Funding Final Report

Bennett presented the materials from the approved 2024 Wine Walk final report. At the previous meeting, Bennett was authorized to review the final report from the Chamber of Commerce if it arrived by January 27, 2025. Bennett confirmed it arrived by the deadline and after reviewing the final report, concluded it met the guidelines and was in line with previously approved reports. Bennett has received the expense line-item approval from the City Administrator and has submitted the Chamber's invoice to Finance in order to keep the reimbursement on the 2024 budget.

The Tourism Commission expressed satisfaction with Bennett's review and the submitted materials.

3. New Room Tax Funding Guidelines Implementation

Bennett informed the Tourism Commission that the new guidelines have been implemented. An online form has been created and is live, while both the form and guidelines have been promoted on Facebook. Bennett said the Facebook post has generated over 13,000 views and had 11 shares. Belschner shared a concern about a potential lack of verification thinking that an individual

could apply on behalf of an organization, without that organization's approval. Bennett thinks that any verification could be handled during the application meeting with any potential applicant. Walcott would like to see some form of verification on the initial application.

Roelke motioned to continue implementation of the new guidelines with added verification for individuals and organizations. Hammer seconds. During discussion, Hammer asked about the logistics of a group like the 4th of July Organization keeping track of analytics. Everyone knows the festival is a draw, but dedicating volunteers to counting them would be very hard. Bennett suggested they could talk to local lodging, restaurant, and shop owners to gauge impact as that would be more efficient. Walker added that there could be a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to reach out to its members. Motion carries by unanimous vote. Bennett will add an organization verification part to the application.

New Business

4. Discuss and Take Possible Action on Setting 2025 Priorities

Bennett introduced an outline for potential 2025 Tourism priorities which highlighted the new guidelines, digital signage, increased digital marketing, and prioritizing "heads in beds".

When going over the digital signage topic, Belschner asked about billboards and digital welcome signs coming into town. The welcome signs would have a host of issues to work through, such as DOT. Bennett stated the Commission worked with Lamar on holiday train billboards on the 151 corridor and could be an option again. Hammer will be meeting with Amtrak and will bring up the possibility of tourism's digital signage on or in the train station. Hammer noted that Amtrak normally does not allow for non-Amtrak signage. Walcott would like to see a QR code to the Tourism website and community calendar in conjunction with the digital signage.

No additional comments or suggestions were made to the staff list of priorities. Bennett also highlighted some possible secondary priorities as discussed in previous meetings. These include an event centered around the movie, Public Enemies, historic walking tours, print marketing distributed at events, itinerary marketing, and a marketing study and survey. The Tourism Commission would like to add these to the overall priority list and agree to keep them secondary. The consensus is that these could be worked on incrementally when time allows to build up towards implementation or increased priority. Belschner asked about itinerary marketing and Walcott explained it as list of things to do for a weekend and gave an example. The study and survey may require cost, but staff is confident that there's possibility of working on parts in-house. Belschner would like to see flyers for distributing during the 4th of July parade on the next agenda.

5. Discuss and Take Possible Action on Purchasing 2025 County Guide Ads

Bennett presented the 2025 Columbia and Dodge County guide ads from Madison Media Partners (MMP). The Tourism Commission had purchase quarter page ads in 2024. The new highlights include added value of email marketing in the Columbia guide. The Dodge County guide, however, will be transitioning toward promoting for the 65+ age demographic in the coming years. The combined total for a quarter-page ad in both publications would be \$1,300.

Belschner asked about analytics. Bennett said they have never really had any, but the added email marketing should provide some. Hammer would like physical copies to distribute at events and around local attractions and businesses.

Hammer motions to approve \$1,300 for the quarter-page ads in both Columbia and Dodge County guides. Roelke seconds. Roll call vote: Belschner - abstain, Hammer - aye, Roelke - aye, Walcott - aye, and Walker - aye. Motion carries with 4 ayes, 0 nays, and 1 abstention.

Staff Reports

6. Tourism Budget Update

Bennett provided a brief recap of Tourism finances from January. No new revenues have been reported. The new kayak rental has been implemented as a new revenue line item. The notable expenditure was for \$372.44 from the web/media line item for Tourism's contribution to the City's website by CivicPlus.

Bennett gave an update that both Columbus Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission (CHLPC) and the Chamber of Commerce invoices from approved final reports for room tax funding reimbursements will be part of the 2024 budget. Bennett noted having to contact CHLPC multiple times to receive an invoice.

No additional discussion or actions were taken.

Future Agenda Items

The next meeting will take place on Monday, March 3, 2025.

Bennett will be using the discussed priorities to set future agendas - noting that flyers for the 4th of July parade will be on the next one.

No additional items were given for future agendas.

Adjourn

Roelke motions to adjourn the meeting. Walker seconds. Motion carries by unanimous vote. Walcott adjourns the meeting at 7:36pm.

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.

*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.



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: March 3, 2025

Item Title: Digital Signage Discussion

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

Previous research was conducted to assess the possibility of acquiring a digital kiosk for Davies Park. Two companies were identified – Redyref and Advanced Kiosks. Once pricing was made available, the Tourism Commission wanted to take a look at other options for digital signage in order to get the most value out of the budget.

City staff have experience utilizing the REACH platform. Additionally, staff will inquire with Cablecast regarding their Carousel solution offerings, Yodeck, and other digital signage companies.

List of all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Action Requested of Tourism Commission:

Discussion with no additional action requested



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: March 3, 2025

Item Title: Discussion and Possible Action for the Creation of Event Flyers and Distribution during the 4th of July Parade

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

There had been previous efforts in 2024 to seek pricing and come up with a flyer to be distributed at large events that feature a list of upcoming events and a QR code to the Tourism website and community calendar. At the February Tourism Commission meeting, this project was listed as one of the secondary priorities. During the meeting, it was asked if this item could be added to the agenda for the March meeting.

List of all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Event Flyer Handout Example – Port Washington

Action Requested of Tourism Commission:

Discussion and take possible action to create event flyers for distribution during the 4th of July Parade

Flyer – Front



DOWNTOWN PORT EVENTS

Saturdays

FARMERS MARKET
8:30 TO 12:30 *through October*

OCT 5 FALL STREET FESTIVAL
11 TO 5

OCT 17 DOGGY COSTUME PARADE
5 TO 7 **THIRD THURSDAY**

and Costume Contest

OCT 17 WITCHES NIGHT OUT
5 TO 8

OCT 26 DOWNTOWN TRICK OR TREAT
12 TO 3

Get tickets!



NOV 1 MURDER MYSTERY
6 PM *at Mercantile Plaza*

FIND FULL EVENT CALENDAR: DOWNTOWNPORT.COM/EVENTS

WANT TO GET INVOLVED? [CLICK HERE](#)



Flyer – Back

FALL STREET FESTIVALS

Jackson Street

Pier Street

Washington Street

Main Street

Grand Avenue

Wisconsin Street

Franklin Street

FAMILY ZONE

- Fall Photo Op
- Pumpkin Decorating
- Bounce house
- Infant Care Station
- LARRS Animal Rescue
- Facepainting
- Tail waggers Dog Rescue
- Golf with Tami
- Wisconsin Herd

WIN \$25 FIVE WINNERS WILL BE DRAWN!

TAKE OUR SURVEY



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: March 3, 2025

Item Title: Tourism Budget Update

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

No new room tax revenues to report. The kayak rental revenue will begin to be reported in the Spring.
No new expenditures to report. 2025 Google Ads for January and February have not been reported yet.

List of all Supporting Documentation Attached:

January 2025 Tourism Budget Statement

Action Requested of Tourism Commission:

Discussion with no additional action requested

CITY OF COLUMBUS
REVENUES WITH COMPARISON TO BUDGET
FOR THE 1 MONTHS ENDING JANUARY 31, 2025

TOURISM COMMISSION

		PERIOD ACTUAL	YTD ACTUAL	BUDGET AMOUNT	VARIANCE	% OF BUDGET
<u>ROOM TAX FUNDING</u>						
250-414135-000	CONTRIBUTION FROM ROOM TAX FND	.00	.00	31,500.00	(31,500.00)	.00
	TOTAL ROOM TAX FUNDING	.00	.00	31,500.00	(31,500.00)	.00
<u>MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES</u>						
250-484810-000	TOURISM; MISC. INCOME/REVENUES	.00	.00	350.00	(350.00)	.00
250-484820-000	TOURISM; INTERST INCOME	11.95	11.95	100.00	(88.05)	11.95
250-484830-000	TOURISM,; KAYAK RENTAL REV	.00	.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)	.00
	TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES	11.95	11.95	1,450.00	(1,438.05)	.82
<u>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES</u>						
250-494990-000	TOURISM; CARRY OVER PY FUNDS	.00	.00	23,903.92	(23,903.92)	.00
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	.00	.00	23,903.92	(23,903.92)	.00
	TOTAL FUND REVENUE	11.95	11.95	56,853.92	(56,841.97)	.02

CITY OF COLUMBUS
EXPENDITURES WITH COMPARISON TO BUDGET
FOR THE 1 MONTHS ENDING JANUARY 31, 2025

TOURISM COMMISSION

	PERIOD ACTUAL	YTD ACTUAL	BUDGET AMOUNT	VARIANCE	% OF BUDGET	
<u>TOURISM; PERSONNEL</u>						
250-511000-249	TOURISM; MATERIALS & SERVICES	.00	.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	.00
250-511000-310	TOURISM; WEB MEDIA	372.44	372.44	1,600.00	1,227.56	23.28
250-511000-313	TOURISM; MARKETING/ADVERTISING	.00	.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	.00
250-511000-345	TOURISM; SPECIAL EVENTS	.00	.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	.00
	TOTAL TOURISM; PERSONNEL	372.44	372.44	41,600.00	41,227.56	.90
<u>TOURISM; CONTRIBUTION TO GF</u>						
250-568000-610	TOURISM; CONTR TO GEN FUND	.00	.00	15,253.92	15,253.92	.00
	TOTAL TOURISM; CONTRIBUTION TO GF	.00	.00	15,253.92	15,253.92	.00
	TOTAL FUND EXPENDITURES	372.44	372.44	56,853.92	56,481.48	.66
	NET REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	(360.49)	(360.49)	.00	(113,323.45)	(.32)



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: March 3, 2025

Item Title: Community Calendar Update

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

Management of the community calendar has been transferred to the Columbus, WI Area Chamber of Commerce. In an effort to address continuity issues, the City has allowed the Chamber to use the same calendar that was created on behalf of Tourism but has been rebranded and the embedded code links to the Chamber's events page as the primary calendar. Event hosts can add to the calendar from either the Tourism pages or Chamber pages. Both Tourism and Chamber feature a full calendar page in addition to a smaller calendar on their landing pages.

Both the City and the Chamber have the log in credentials to this calendar.

List of all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Action Requested of Tourism Commission:

Discussion with no additional action requested