



Tourism Commission Meeting Agenda

Monday, August 11, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call to Order

Notice of Open Meeting

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

1. Consider and take action to approve the minutes from June 30, 2025

Public Comment

New Business

2. Consider and take action regarding continuation of creating flyers and distributing them at events
3. Discussion regarding the project to create and distribute a tourism insert for historic tour booklets
4. Consider and take action to make recommendations for the 2026 Tourism budget
5. Consider and take action to continue support of the City's digital signage project

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.



Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 30, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:31pm.

Roll Call

A quorum consisted of Hammer, Walcott, Famularo, and Roelke. Staff Liaison Bennett was present. Walker arrived at 6:33pm.

Notice of Open Meeting

Bennett stated the meeting was properly noticed.

Approval of Agenda

Famularo motioned to approve the agenda with a second by Roelke. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

1. Consider and Take Action to Approve the Minutes from May 5, 2025

Roelke motioned to approve as presented the minutes from May 5, 2025. Second by Famularo. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no one from the public in attendance for comment and no correspondence has been received.

New Business

2. Consider and Take Action Regarding the Applications for the Tourism Reimbursement Grant

The Tourism Commission reviewed each application for its Room Tax Reimbursement Grant.

Roelke motioned, with a second by Famularo to approve \$6,000 to the 4th of July Organization, \$300 to the Columbus Area Historical Society, \$750 to the Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission, \$800 to the City of Columbus Recreation Department, a total of \$750 to the Redbud Players (\$0 for theater camp, \$750 for fall event), and a total of \$1,400 to Wyverns Trove (\$900 for quilt event, \$500 for art event, and \$0 for facility).

Staff will follow up with the applicants as per the grant guidelines.

Unfinished Business

Staff Reports

3. Update Regarding the Tourism Flyer Project

Bennett updated the Tourism Commission regarding the flyers for distribution during the 4th of July parade. Bennett stated the flyers were updated, sent to the Redbud Players, and the invoice has been paid. Bennett noted that the Commission approved the partnership with the Redbud Players at its May

2025 meeting. The June meeting had no quorum; staff updated the flyer using notes from the May meeting and utilized existing purchasing policy due to time sensitivity.

Staff will have Belschner give a report about the flyer distributions at the next Tourism meeting.

4. 2025 Budget Update

Bennett gave a brief overview of the revenues and expenses of the Tourism Fund. No new room tax or kayak rental revenues to report.

\$410.79 for Google Ads were spent in March and April. These ads have generated more consistent traffic to the Tourism web pages. No other expenses were incurred. Staff had anticipated using up the Special Events line item as the Tourism Commission approved and allocated funding for its room tax grant.

Future Agenda Items

5. 2025 Tourism Priority Update

Bennett presented a list of the top secondary projects that could be worked on in 2025 based on the list from previous meetings.

Walcott suggested that the tours and itinerary marketing would be the easiest to tackle. The Tourism Commission would like to work with Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission to utilize the print booklets to send to lodging establishments, stops, shops, and possibly restaurants. Tourism Commission would like to add an insert highlighting various attractions, amenities, etc.

Staff will draft an insert that would be paired with the booklets.

6. Upcoming 2026 Budget

Staff plans to work on the 2026 budget at the next Tourism meeting and will send budgeting work materials prior to the meeting.

The next meeting will take place Monday, August 11, 2025.

Adjourn

Hammer motioned to adjourn the meeting with a second by Roelke. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:51pm.

*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 **



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: August 11, 2025

Item Title: Consider and Take Action Regarding Continuation of Creating Flyers and Distributing at Events

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

Tourism had paid the Redbud Players \$200 to print and distribute flyers for upcoming events at the 4th of July parade. The Redbud Players had printed 4,000 dual-sided flyers with their events on one side and tourism on the other. They had distributed 3,000 during the parade, 100 to cast members, 50 to City facilities/departments, and 800 to be given out at National Night Out. About 50 flyers were unaccounted for.

Staff only noticed marginal changes versus 2024 analytics to the tourism web pages. Staff would be receptive to developing tourism flyers for distribution at the Holiday Train event.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Redbud Players July 4th Flyer Report

Action Requested of the Council:

Take action to continue creating flyers for distribution at large events

Redbud Players of Columbus
August 2025
Flyer report

The Redbud Players had printed 4,000 flyers with Redbud events on one side and City of Columbus events on the other. The Tourism Commission paid \$200 of the printing cost.

About 3,000 flyers were handed out by Redbud Players cast, board members and crew at the Columbus 4th of July parade.

About 100 flyers were handed out by Redbud Players cast, to their home groups.

About 50 flyers were given to the city.

About 800 flyers will be given out at National Night Out, to be held Aug. 5 in Firemen's Park in Columbus.

Thank you to the Tourism Commission for helping make it possible.

Julie Belschner
Vice-President and Marketing
RedbudPlayers.org



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: August 11, 2025

Item Title: Discussion Regarding the Project to Create and Distribute a Tourism Insert for the Historic Tour Booklets

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

At the June 30 Tourism meeting, history/walking tours was discussed as a possible project for the remainder of 2025. Staff entertained the idea of partnering with Columbus Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission (CHLPC) to utilize their already published tour booklets. Discussion involved creating an insert for the booklets and distribution to local lodging establishments, City facilities, and popular destinations in town. The inserts could contain attractions, restaurants, shops, parks, aquatic center, and golf courses among other attractions within 10 miles of Columbus.

Staff have met with CHLPC to gauge interest in the partnership to allow for inserts to be added to the tour guide booklets and for those booklets to be distributed at no charge. Discussion at CHLPC involved Tourism adding the insert at its own cost, while CHLPC covered the cost of the booklets. CHLPC was concerned about not charging for the booklets as the funds raised were to pay back an outstanding loan to publish the booklets. That concern was alleviated by learning that the remaining balance is very small and CHLPC could just pay it off outright. Additional discussion involved using cardboard construction materials and possibly a display for the combined booklets and flyers. CHLPC recommended distributing some of the booklets and flyers at auto dealerships.

The CHLPC voted to go ahead with the partnership opportunity. They have requested drafts of the insert for their next meeting.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Draft Insert Information

Action Requested of the Council:

Discussion, approval, etc.

HLPC Historic Properties Tour Book Inserts

Dimensions (possible options, width x height)

- Booklet is 8" x 8"
- Width options – 4", 6", or up to 7.75"
- Height options – 8" or up to 8.25"

Material

- Cardboard/post board with a gloss finish (like post card or baseball card material)

Content

- Printed on both sides
- Side #1:
 - List of largest recurring events with brief descriptions
 - QR code and link to community calendar
- Side #2:
 - Short list of attractions
 - Short list of parks
 - Short list of event venues
 - QR code and link to tourism website

Graphics

- Side #1 possible options
 - Single image of people having fun
 - Montage of multiple events
- Side #2 possible options
 - Montage of multiple attractions
 - Single image of an individual attraction – i.e. biggest draw
- Content would be located within contrasting text boxes with some opacity



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: August 11, 2025

Item Title: Consider and Take Action to Make Recommendations for the 2026 Tourism Budget

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

Staff have been working on the upcoming 2026 Budget. In the budget worksheet, Staff have input the amounts from 2022 through 2024 along with the current 2025 budget. Projected column indicates what is predicted to be the amount for 2025 using the Current Actual amounts. The Current Actual is what has been generated in 2025. The 2026 Proposed Budget considers the projected amounts in anticipation of potential revenues and expenses in 2026.

If the \$20,000 in carryover from the 2025 budget, staff recommends carrying it over in 2026 for contribution to the digital signage project which would then be taken from the Materials & Services line item.

Staff recommends decreasing the general tourism Marketing/Advertising line item from \$10,000 in 2025 to \$6,000 in 2026. Special Events line item will remain the same from 2025 at \$10,000. Web Media would increase to \$2,000 in 2026 from \$1,600 in 2025.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

2026 Budget Worksheet

Action Requested of the Council:

Make recommendations for the 2026 Tourism budget

Account	Description	2026 Proposed	2025 Projected	2025 Current	2025 Budget	2024	2023	2022
250-414135-000	Cont. from Room Tax Fund	\$33,000	\$33,500	\$715.17	\$31,500	\$34,705.02	\$35,868.97	\$38,995.38
250-424218-000	State Travel Grant	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-484810-000	Misc. Income/Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$350
250-484820-000	Interest Income	\$75	\$95	\$51.74	\$100	\$229.34	\$221.12	\$47.13
250-484830-000	Kayak Rental Income	\$1,000	\$328.2	\$191.45	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-494990-000	Carry Over Funds	\$20,000	\$23,903.92	\$23,903.92	\$23,903.92	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-511000-111	Salary/Wages	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-511000-151	Soc. Sec. / Medicare	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-511000-152	Retirement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-511000-154	Health / Dental / Vision	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-511000-155	Life Insurance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-511000-156	Long Term Disability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
250-511000-249	Materials & Services	\$20,500	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$9,962.50	\$3,193.71	\$248.50
250-511000-310	Web Media	\$2,000	\$2,274	\$1,326.22	\$1,600	\$1,671.21	\$1,469.18	\$860.13
250-511000-313	Marketing / Advertising	\$6,000	\$4,991	\$2,911.19	\$10,000	\$6,937.99	\$12,183.49	\$8,731.78
250-511000-345	Special Events	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$2,800	\$4,750	\$0
250-511000-610	Cont. to General Fund	\$15,750	\$14,172	\$7,676.70	\$15,253.92	\$13,567.16	\$14,042.49	\$11,437.13
REVENUES		\$54,075	\$33,423.20	\$895.86	\$56,853.92	\$34,934.36	\$39,042.51	\$56,853.92
EXPENSES		\$53,750	\$31,437	\$11,914.11	\$56,853.92	\$34,938.86	\$35,638.87	\$21,277.54
TOTAL		\$325	\$1,986.20	-\$11,018.25	\$0	-\$4.50	\$451.22	\$17,764.97



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Tourism Commission

Meeting Date: August 11, 2025

Item Title: Consider and Take Action to Continue Support of the City's Digital Signage Project

Submitted By: David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator

Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

Staff is in process of fleshing out a true "community" digital signage project. After discussion with other City departments via the Community Engagement Team, this project could be a multi-year effort. The digital signage project could be expanded from a series of TV-like display screens to a series of matching digital welcome boards featured at the main entrances to the City. An example of such sign is the community digital sign in Dodgeville, WI. Staff have met with REACH digital media to learn about their capabilities in leveraging software for multiple kinds of digital media signs.

Staff will research other similarly capable digital media services as well. The project expansion is due to creating a plan to put the project onto the City's capital improvement project (CIP) list and tie in Tourism, CDA, Public Spaces Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, and other groups for multiple funding sources. Staff have identified possibly replacing the Library event board with a downtown digital board.

Staff would like to gauge the Tourism Commission's support for an expanded digital signage project.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

Dodgeville, WI Digital Sign

City Sign Near Kwik Trip by the 151 & 16/60 Corridor

Action Requested of the Tourism Commission:

Give staff direction regarding the Tourism Commission's support of the City's updated signage plan

The Dodgeville Community Digital Sign is located north of the Chamber Office on Bequette Street as you head into downtown Dodgeville.

What is the purpose and how does it work?

- It is intended for advertising Dodgeville area community events.
 - Sales, private events, restricted events, business services, denomination services, political events/forums, and events outside the Dodgeville area may not be advertised on the sign.
- Events are posted on a first come, first served basis.
- Events are posted no more than two (2) weeks prior to the event date.
- Websites will not be included since this sign is meant for drive by traffic.

How much does it cost?

- Dodgeville Chamber Members Fee: \$0 this is a benefit of being a Chamber Member
- Non-Dodgeville Chamber Members Fees: \$100 payment included with request form

How do I get my event/information posted on it?

- Please fill out the form below and email it to projects@mhtc.net or feel free to drop it off at the Chamber three weeks before you would like the information posted.
 - [Digital Community Sign - Request form.docx](#)



