

Regular July Richland Center Tourism Commission Meeting, July 10, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lenny Schaub at 4:05pm.

Members present, Lenny Schaub, Dennis Fry, Karen Tepley, Christy Adsit, and Candace Fagerlind.

The minutes from the March and May Richland Center Tourism Commission were approved with one addition to the May meeting minutes.

Tourism Grant Applications:

There were no Tourism Grant Applications to consider at this meeting.

Semi-Annual Budget Report: Director Richards reviewed the mid-year budget for 2023. This report showed there were no expenditures over the budgeted items and no expectation to exceed any category for the 2023 Annual Budget

Lamar Advertising Digital Billboard Discussion and Possible Action: Director Richards explained that over the past two years, Greater Richland Tourism had allocated over \$22,000 each year towards digital billboard marketing in the Milwaukee, Rockford, and Rochester/Winona MN interstate areas. This year there will be more effort put towards streaming advertising and that advertising has proven to pay dividends. However, the Digital Billboard advertising partners well with the online streaming advertising we have committed to as we also know from past experience these digital billboards are effective as well. Director Richards recommended that we allocate an additional \$4,400 to Digital Billboard Advertising in the Rockford and Milwaukee areas with Lamar Advertising in the amount of \$4,400 for an additional 8-week period that would take us to the end of September.

There was an additional question from member Tepley, "Should the streaming advertising target be broadened, or should new locations be added to the effort? Richards referenced guidance received from the Gray Marketing consultants that the Greater Richland target audience should continue to remain as it is to achieve appropriate value and build the name.

Member Tepley made the motion to approve the additional \$4,400 investment in digital billboard advertising with Lamar Advertising, and member Adsit 2nd that motion. A roll call vote was taken, Schaub-yes, Fry-yes, Tepley-yes, Adsit-yes Fagerlind-yes. The motion unanimously passed.

Director Richards offered updates and reports on several efforts:

1. Director Richards explained we have received the 2022 Economic Impact Report from Wisconsin Tourism and this report showed another strong increase in tourism-related spending in Richland County with an increase over 2021 of 14.5% to \$25.4 Million. This is another new record level of tourism-related spending in Richland County.
2. Director Richards reported the June Dairy Days and Rodeo Parade, as well as the Wisconsin High School Rodeo were held with very positive results. The WSHSR at the Richland County Fairgrounds experienced growth in participants and had the most horses in the parade as anyone in recent memory could recall. The parade went off without incident and had strong participation.

3. Director Richards mentioned that summer staffing for the Visitor's Center has been strong. We recently received a 5-Star review on our Google page which is the first review received in several years.
4. Director Richards presented the website traffic report since we have transitioned to the new website, time period April to July 2023. This report showed an increase of 130% in website visits during that time frame over the same period in 2022. This coupled with the understanding that 2022 was a record year in tourism-related spending in Richland County indicates positive results can be expected when we receive the Economic Impact Report from Wisconsin Tourism in 2024.
5. Director Richards also explained two Richland Center institutional lodging options have been sold to new owners, one will most likely become long-term visiting employee lodging. The city and area business leaders are aware there is a need for new, fresh, short-term lodging in the City.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Adsit, 2nd by Fry. Motion Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:09pm.