

Regular June Richland Center Tourism Commission Meeting, June 10, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Tourism Director Marty Richards at 4:07 pm.

Members present, Ron Fruit, Jayme Walsh, and Karen Tepley, Candace Fagerlind joined at 4:35 pm.

Approval of previous meeting minutes. The minutes from the March Richland Center Tourism Commission were approved, motion made by K Tepley, second by J Walsh, motion carried on a voice vote.

Election of Chairperson

Due to the vacancy of the Chairperson position Director Richards, upon advice from City Attorney Michael Windle, facilitated the election of the new Chairperson. Jayme Walsh nominated Ron Fruit, K Tepley 2nd. Nominations were closed without any other nominations. K Tepley made a motion, J Walsh 2nd, to cast a unanimous ballot for Ron Fruit as Chairperson. Motion passed.

Election of Co-Chairperson

Chairperson Ron Fruit opened nominations for the Vice-Chairperson position. Walsh nominated Karen Tepley as Vice-Chair, and Chairperson Fruit seconded that nomination. Nominations were closed without any other nominations. Member Walsh made the motion to cast a unanimous ballot for Karen Tepley as Vice-Chairperson, seconded by R Fruit. The motion carried unanimously.

Election of Secretary

Chairperson Fruit opened nominations for the Secretary position. There were no nominations offered, Chair Fruit closed nominations and offered to bring this back at the next meeting with full attendance.

Tourism Grant Applications:

Director Richards presented an application for a grant for the 2024 Wisconsin State High School Rodeo Finals, and the Richland Center Rodeo Committee. Richards stated the Rodeo is a multi-day event that brings people to the area from all over the state and from Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota annually. Local lodging options are highly occupied during this week and local tourism-related businesses benefit greatly from the event. Member Tepley made the motion to approve the WSHRF Grant Application in the amount of \$2,000, Member Walsh seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held, Fruit-yes, Tepley-yes, Walsh-yes. Motion carried.

Director Richards also presented an application for a grant from The Friends of the Pine LLC to assist in cleaning up the Pine River and maintaining the ability to navigate the river during the kayak/canoe season in 2024 in the amount of \$2,000. This is the second year Friends of the Pine have requested this grant, it was approved last year in the amount of \$2,000. The Pine River has become one of the top 5 activities that attract visitors to the area and is regularly utilized by overnight guests. Member Tepley questioned if the City of Richland Center, Parks and Recreation should be contributing to this effort and was encouraged to bring that discussion to the city. Part of the river is in the city while a large majority is actually in the county. Member Walsh made the motion to approve the grant application, K Tepley seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held, Fruit-yes, Tepley-yes, Walsh-yes. Motion carried.

Gray Media Discussion and Possible Action

Director Richards offered positive results on increased website activity in 2024 over record website activity in 2023, also we have heard anecdotal evidence of strong tourism-related spending early in 2024. Our new streaming effort in the northern Chicago suburbs is showing strong signs of positive results in website activity. Richards explained we have an agreement to run streaming advertising with Gray Media to approximately the end of the 2nd quarter and it is time to make a decision on continuing that activity in the 3rd quarter. K Tepley made the motion that we extend our advertising agreement with Gray Media through the 3rd quarter at the same levels as quarters 1 & 2, J Walsh seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held: Fagerlind-yes, Fruit-yes, Tepley-yes, Walsh-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Destination Wisconsin Membership

Previously Member Tepley brought forward the opportunity to join Destination Wisconsin. DW is a Destination Marketing Organization association group that offers support, education, and discussion for Destination Marketing Organizations in Wisconsin. Director Richards mentioned that we have relied on DW's services in the past, specifically as we expanded and changed the name to Greater Richland Tourism. The membership is \$1250 plus a one-time initial fee of \$250 for a total of \$1,500. Greater Richland Tourism would benefit from the membership in tourism advocacy, support for some of our questions our city attorney is not comfortable with, and other marketing opportunities. K Tepley made the motion to spend \$1,500 to join Destination Wisconsin, C Fagerlind second the motion. A roll call vote was held, Fruit-yes, Tepley-yes, Fagerlind-yes, Walsh-yes. Motion passed.

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