

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2023 @ 5:30 P.M.

City Hall Council Chambers

Mission Statement: The Committee shall foster ideas for improving existing facilities and programs to attract tourists to our community. Our purpose is to promote our various community attractions, encourage all community businesses and community-based organizations to participate, and assist in the sound development of our tourist facilities of our city.

1. The June Tourism Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Riley Sowle.

2. Roll Call: Ron Hayes, Lynn Hearley, Riley Sowle, Wendy Spice; Alternate Susan K. Seidl

Excused: Megan Holz, (non-voting member) Tina Bruckner

Also Present: Mayor J. Panetti, Sam Boucher/OCEDC

3. **Hayes motioned for approval of Agenda; Spice followed-up with a second. (5 Ayes)**

4. **Approval of Minutes from 5/15/2023 was accepted by Spice. Hayes issued second. (5 Ayes)**

5. Public Input/Correspondence: Sowle read an e-mail from Tina Bruckner who still sought the Military flag form which was sent again @ the meeting by Boucher. L. Hearley requested Boucher to double check the dimensions. Holz also e-mailed: Building Inspector Last's past notations and future plans from the Building Inspector were unable to be found. Ideally, we would hire a new City Building Inspector, said Sowle. There are several issues concerning Ordinances: Mayor Panetti stated that *Public Works* is concentrating on those concerning residents. (Yards and structures are resident-ignored.) The committee would like to propose that the *Ordinance Ad Hoc Committee* address City business ordinances. Vacated buildings lack upgrades, are used as storage, and lack residents (who should not be living in the lower part of these buildings). (These are enforcement issues.) Boucher stated that between the OCEDC and City, historical grants could apply. L. Hearley suggested the downtown district owners become involved. Sowle will bring these issues up to the right Committees.

6. Discussion/Recommendation/Updates on the Following:

a. Waterfest 2023– July 3rd It was determined that receipts be kept, establishing a precedent, with excess funds returned to the Tourism Committee.

b. Copperfest 2023– Sowle will invite Copperfest Director G. Zahn to our next meeting for follow-up. Meantime, the Mayor was pleased with the parade/Pulaski band (and with performance on the grounds which was achieved by private citizen support) as were other residents: accordingly the 2nd largest # of entries; combined area H. S. bands were appreciated; the Saturday night band was a hit; the grounds and Historical Society area were busy (although Spice noted poor attendance Friday eve.); WUMPA was successful and noted for their leadership. The Mayor stated that the Sunday services (with 3 pastors) had a Kentucky speaker and were well attended. There were only 2 incidents (alcohol related). He has not caught up to the City overtime costs. Suggestions were made concerning the minimal attendance on the grounds Friday evening: perhaps a children's night with toy competitions... kid music entertainment... events like with pedal tractors....

c. Tunes on Tuesday 2023– Boucher announced that the OCEDC received \$2,800 in support.

d. City Military/Family Sponsored Flags with Veteran Representation– L. Hearley suggests, and will make the request, that we have Bay Impressions scan our photos and distribute forms. Hayes stated that Carl Plaster/Veteran leader wants to come to another meeting: Hayes will inform him of our next date. Sowle mentioned Brian Van Scoter who has military memorabilia, pictures, and leadership which was proved with the memorial could be sounded as well.

e. Tourism Signs & Murals for City Marketing– Boucher informed that all is measured and in process: she is awaiting the quote. Thereafter, auctioning off the original pictures was a suggestion by Spice.

f. City of Oconto Sign Ordinance Updates– Presently Boucher/OCEDC is handling new businesses case by case. L. Hearley suggested a local Professor who is an engineer at a G.B. college may be interested in serving as a City part-time Building Inspector. Sowle will address the issue with the Ordinance Ad Hoc Committee. Sowle also suggested, as L. Hearley sought a business voice earlier, that business owners should be added to the Ad Hoc Committee. It was agreed that Oconto should wave sign fees but require the permit which contains expectations. Sowle will address the issue with Council. L. Hearley and Boucher plan to go to the Ordinance Ad Hoc Committee meetings.

g. City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024 remains a concept. The 1st and 3rd monthly Saturday behind St. Peter's church, a vendor's market, is being held presently, as noted in the *Oconto County Reporter*.

h. "Oconto Tourism" Facebook & Instagram pages– L. Hearley will check with the present programmer as to intent. A young webpage designer stopped by her shop: she will pass on the information to Boucher.

i. Grants– Boucher spoke of the Fishing Tournament (\$500); AARP grant (\$1,000) for Marsh sign; DNR Lumberjack (\$1000) for possible replacement of ID signs that disappeared @ Copper Culture Park. The Mayor mentioned the needed sign on Harbor Rd. Boucher will look into funding as there is a grant that addresses life quality, and women. She too is applying for display voice overs @ the Historical Society.

j. Flowerpots on Main Street are on display and seen in a positive light. Hayes states that there have been a lot of compliments.

k. Review the former Building Inspector's plan for vacant buildings on Main Street– Since it cannot be found, the future will depend on how we reconstruct our Ordinances.

l. Harbor Camera Promotions (\$375/year) (Apr 10-May 9 21,294 views) A request from the Harbor Commission led to awareness, knowledge, and now promotion of this committee. L. Hearley will see that Gracie gets this on our websites.

m. The List of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines were seen as acceptable.

n. Other Tourism Activities– L. Hearley was asked about her research into the 8% tax which she clarified. She learned how it is collected with the paperwork and when the City Council passes it, the City of Oconto will get some returns which the Mayor expressed as 30%... with 70% toward Tourism marketing. At Spice's request, the Mayor informed on the potential Research Center location. It will not be here but perhaps we will be the location of a Tourism Center.

7. Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, July 10 @ 5:30 p.m.

8. Next Meeting Agenda Items: G. Zahn/Copperfest Director
Veterans Representative/Carl Plaster

9. **Hayes submitted adjournment @ 8:05 p.m. Spice called second for closure. (M/C)**

Minutes submitted by Susan K. Seidl