

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 10, 2023 @ 5:30 P.M. in the 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 July Tourism meeting was called to order by Chairman R. Sowle.

2. Roll Call: Ron Hayes, Lynn Hearley, Megan Holz, Riley Sowle, Wendy Spice; Alternative Susan K. Seidl; and (non-voting member) Tina Bruckner

Absent: Alternative Bryce Hearley

Also Present: Mayor John Panetti; Sam Boucher/OCEDC; Carl Plaster, Veterans Representative; Copperfest Director Gary Zahn; Council President LeBreck; and observer Ash Deller

3. **Hayes motioned approval of Agenda; Holz called a motion of follow-up. (5 Ayes)**

4. **Approval of Minutes from 6/12/2023 were accepted by Hayes. Holz issued a second. (5 Ayes)**

5. Public Input/Correspondence: None.

6. **Discussion/Recommendation/Updates on the Following:**

a. *City Military/Family Sponsored Flags with Veteran Representation* - Carl Plaster, Veterans Representative, was pleased to give his input and approval of the Committee's intent. Bruckner's update on the banners, which is now called the **Oconto Military Banner Program**, included that the 1st sample was too tight, so a 2nd sample was needed, and now a 3rd... for which we continue waiting. She thought that the cost should be increased for several reasons including it being a 1st time venture. Excess monies will go to Plaster who will see that Veterans in need be represented/helped. **Sowle motioned to raise the Oconto Military Banner Program cost to \$100 with excess proceeds going to Veteran's needs. Holtz called second. (M/C)**

Also established were the following:

- Representation would be for a 2-year interval: thereafter the family will own the banner and can apply for a renewed City displayed banner.
- P.R. will go out NOW. A few of the Committee members bought into a banner @ the meeting. Anyone could sponsor an Oconto County veteran.
- The sample reproduced, at the work of Bruckner, will be hoisted for the public to see near City Hall asap (giving an example to the public).
- Bruckner and Plaster will fine-tune the application form. The banner deadline was determined as September 1, 2023. Boucher will distribute P.R.
- Banners will be flown a minimum of 30 days: August will determine time length by the Committee.

b. *Copperfest 2023* (41st year) - G. Zahn, Copperfest Director, spoke of the weather being the crowd factor. (In this year's event Saturday evening) Noted were 4 bands, Sunday's church service (60+ people attending), the parade including a combined Oconto/Lena band and thereafter great attendance. Readapting to the wrist band was slow to catch on. Miss WI discussed the fun had @ Copperfest and the organization intends to return in 2024. Zahn thanked us for the Tourism sponsorship. Sowle noted there were less vendors, but attendance @ the car show was up stated Zahn. The breakfast with the Grand Marshals ran well. Sowle also asked if the Committee can do more. Zahn stated that the OCEDC/Boucher does a fantastic job of P.R. Copperfest 2024 is calendared for June 7, 8, and 9th @ which time Zahn hopes to invite Miss America 2023 and a country singer from Coleman to attend. Seidl referred to the Committee's June meeting when a WUMPA/weather crowd proved low: suggestion was a kid's review including entertainment and competition (pedal tractor racing, etc.) which would gather the "other" public.

c. *Waterfest 2023*— The City sponsored ELKS-run event was seen as successful with music and fireworks lasting 17 minutes and under budget. Mayor Panetti noted it is a lot of work for an event lasting from 4:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Trepanier left word that sadly, a kid's vendor had to cancel at the last minute: He will

have the budget amount concluded by the August budget report. Sowle will discover the ELKS intentions next year. Sowle will invite Pat Trepanier/ELKS representative to our August meeting. Spice thought we should look into more future sponsorship, however Hayes thought we did well this year.

e. *Tourism Signs & Murals for City Marketing*– OCEDC’s Boucher is @ the helm: she distributed a view of the Owl banner on the Main St. hardware store. She was pleased to state that a WPS. Grant exists for another downtown banner.

f. *City of Oconto Sign Ordinance Updates*– After extended discussion, **Sowle recommended the Council consider an amendment to the Sign Ordinance waving the permit fee schedule to a \$0 sign permit fee. Holz issued a second. (5 Ayes)** This is a step forward toward new businesses in our community.

g. *City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024*– TABLED. Zahn opened the Copperfest grounds as an option to the event place... and other events too.

h. *“Oconto Tourism” Facebook & Instagram pages* will possibly have new leadership in the future: Boucher will be on the lookout for the upcoming graduates.

i. *Grants*– No new potential.

j. *Flowerpots on Main Street* are placed and thriving. DROP FROM AGENDA.

k. *A review of the former Building Inspector’s Plan for vacant buildings on Main Street* has not been found in the files. CHANGE AGENDA ITEM TO HIGHLIGHT. Boucher found an Article 68 review on the issue and requested that the Committee read/comment on it for their August meeting.

l. *Harbor Camera Promotions* (\$375/year) (Apr 10-May 9 21,294 views) **A request from the Harbor Commission was made by Hayes and followed by Holz to -in the future- place City Events on the Camera without fee. (5 Ayes)**

m. *Oconto Elks Fly-In 2023 Sponsorship Request* led to the amount of \$1,000 motioned by Hayes and followed by Hearley. (M/C)

n. *Oconto March Interpretive Signage* was addressed by Samantha Boucher who has cut back on 2023 Main Street murals so this can be achieved.

o. *A List of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines* has been provided and seen as acceptable by motions of Hayes and Holz. (M/C)

p. *Other Tourism Activities*– Boucher noted the “Escape Reality Tournament” is this Fri/Sat. Boats launch @ 7 a.m.

7. Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, August 14 @ 5:30 p.m.

8. Next Meeting Agenda Items:

- Oconto Military Banner Program flying length
- Pat Trepanier/ELKS-run Waterfest 2023
- City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024
- Plan for vacant buildings on Main Street Article 68
- Ideas for Oconto Tourism on Facebook/Instagram

9. **Hayes summoned adjournment @ 7:58 p.m. The second was called by Holz. (M/C)**

Minutes submitted by
Susan K. Seidl