

**CITY OF OCONTO**  
**MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING**  
City Hall – Council Chambers  
1210 Main St, Oconto, WI 54153  
**MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2022 - 5:30 PM**

**Meeting of the Tourism Committee called to order at 5:30 pm by Chairperson Riley Sowle**

**Roll Call –**

Members Present: Ron Hayes, Riley Sowle, Wendy Spice, Lynn Hearley, and Magan Holz (left @ 6:50 pm)  
Also present: Mayor Panetti, City Administrator Brittney Burruel and as recording secretary, Todd Hearley, and Ashley Geller  
Members Excused: Susan Seidl - alternate member and Tina Bruckner - advisory member/non-voting  
Members Absent: Bryce Hearley - alternate member

**Approval of Agenda –**

**MOTION: Spice / Holz**

*Motion to approve the agenda as presented for the Tourism meeting on August 14, 2023.*

**Voice Vote: 5 ayes - MOTION CARRIED**

**Approval of Minutes –**

**MOTION: Hayes / Holz**

*Motion to approve the minutes as presented for the Tourism meeting on July 10, 2023.*

**Voice Vote: 5 ayes - MOTION CARRIED**

**Public Input/Correspondence –**

- Ron Hayes stated there will be an extension to the Tunes on Tuesday. Tomorrow will now be the last day.

**Discussion/Recommendation on –**

- a. Oconto Military Banner Program - flying length -- Administrator Burruel stated the City currently has received 3 applications. Sowle asked if there were any issues with the application. Burruel responded “no”, everything seems to be going smoothly. The applications can be completed and turned in at the front office of City Hall. Hearley stated that there are also applications available at The Shop on Main. Sowle suggested we put advertising on Facebook and the City’s website. Holz stated we can push off the discussion of flying time until we receive enough applications for it to be an issue. It was asked how do the people get their photos back, Burruel stated the consensus amongst the Committee was that the photos would be mailed back, if they did not feel comfortable having their photo mailed, they could go directly to Sammy and she would scan them immediately at Bay Impressions and hand the photo back right away. Hayes stated an excellent resource for help on Veteran details is Ron Christianson at the Oconto County Courthouse.
- b. Waterfest 2023 - Pat Trepanier/Elks -- Ended up \$704.75 under the allowed \$16,500 budget. The Committee asked if the Elks planned on doing Waterfest organizing again next year, and if Burruel had any updates to share. Burruel stated when she met with Pat Trepanier last month, the conversation led her to believe they planned again on organizing Waterfest next year. Sowle will reach out to Pat Trepanier to ask him to attend the next month meeting.
- c. Tourism Signs & Murals for City Marketing -- the Snowy Owl mural has been ordered.
- d. City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024 -- Hearley spoke with Rachel Porath from Oconto Falls to have a successful farmers market. They suggest that we work together and combine the markets. Location was discussed. A different location from the current one behind St. Pete’s on Brazeau Ave was suggested. Possibly a centralized location like Main Street. Sowle suggested Hearley invite Rachel Porath to the next meeting. Lack of parking space is an issue.

How to better advertise was discussed. Hayes stated he would allow the use of his property.

- e. "Oconto Tourism" Ideas for Facebook & Instagram Pages -- The Committee needs to find someone to take over when Gracie Campshure is done. In the future, the Committee agreed that the new social media poster should attend the meetings. A list of expectations should be created. Hearley will reach out to Gracie Campshure and she if she will be able to attend the next Tourism meeting.
- f. Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street Article 68 -- Burruel stated she and Attorney Calvert are looking into the recommended ordinance and the effects on the City's levy limit, and if it does not affect the City levy limit, will refer it to the appropriate Committee to recommend to Council. The Committee discussed vacant buildings on Main Street as well as some that may have renters or an Airbnb downstairs which is against City ordinance. Hearley stated her and Samantha Boucher have been going around knocking on doors and calling building owners on Main Street to see what plans are and how they can fix up their buildings to make them more appealing or open a business. The Committee agreed something should be done to clean up downtown Main Street. An Ordinance that the Police could enforce needs to be put into place. Todd Hearley stated that to grow Oconto, there needs to be foot traffic. Hearley stated this has been discussed for 10+ years, there needs to be a solution, something needs to be done on a higher level, something that allows us to enforce. Todd Hearley stated that these are Commercial buildings and therefore need to be inspected by the Fire Department. If they are vacant, are there inspections being done? This would be a good starting point. Hayes asked Burruel if there is a plan to replace the old in-house building inspector. Burruel replied, absolutely, that is the plan. When we advertised, we did not receive any applications, we had one option to contract through our current Inspector, he did not want to take us because he is already too busy but agreed to. We reached out to every contractor in the area, and no one could take on another client. We are going to try again to advertise for an in-house employee. The loss of our previous Building Inspector was a huge loss to the City.
- g. 2024 Discovery Guide -- The Committee discussed doing a one-page ad vs a two-page ad. Administrator Burruel grabbed some 2023 Discovery Guides from the front hallway for the Committee to compare ad sizes and see what the current City of Oconto ad looks like.

**MOTION: Hayes / Holz**

*Motion to approve a one-page ad for 2024.*

**Voice Vote: 5 ayes - MOTION CARRIED**

- h. List of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines -- The Committee discussed a possible rebranding on Waterfest in 2024 and ways to generate revenue, such as, hats, t-shirts, can koozies, etc. Spice questioned if they were going to recoup the \$195 expense for the sample flags from the remainder of the \$100 application fee that is being donated towards the sponsorship of Veteran flags for those that cannot afford the \$100 fee, since the Committee is currently over their budget. The Committee agreed "no".
- i. Other Tourism Activities -- Spice stated that in recent years they have been decorating Main Street for the Fall. Last year they received a grant from OCEDC, but that was a one-time only grant. Pat Heier and Wendy Spice took charge last year and would need around a \$500 budget again this year. They will be decorating on Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Pumpkins, hay bales, and cornstalks were discussed. Sowle's giant pumpkin could be brought to Freedom Park and a weight guessing contest could raise money.

**Next Regular Meeting Date** – Monday, September 11, 2023 @ 4:00 pm

**Agenda Items** – + Fundraising Ideas

**Adjournment** –

**MOTION: Spice / Hearley**

*Motion to adjourn at 7:15 pm.*

**Voice Vote: 5 ayes - MOTION CARRIED**

Minutes submitted by City Administrator Brittney M. Burruel