

**TOURISM COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2023 @ 5:00 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 October 9th Tourism meeting was called to order by Chairman Riley Sowle.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor J. Panetti, Sam Boucher/OCEDC, Veterans Representative Carl Plaster, and ELKS Waterfest Chairman 2023/Pat Trepanier

ABSENT: Alternate member Bryce Hearley

3. **Hayes motioned for approval of Agenda; Spice witnessed second. (5 Ayes)**

4. **Approval of Minutes from 9/11/2023 were accepted by Spice with a Hayes second. (M/C)**

5. **Public Input/Correspondence:** Boucher and Burrueel wrote to match the \$10,000 Grant. Mayor Panetti mentioned attendees were complimentary of Harvest Fest: he thanked the Chamber, and all involved. Next year's date will match that of Peshtigo Historical Days. Next year designated handicap parking will be made available AND more garbage cans. Kids loved the corn pit. It was nice to have the car show simultaneously as it reflected more family involvement.

Here too *Winter Wonderland* was discussed by Holz with 2 posters distributed. 1.) The **Lighting Ceremony** will be Nov. 24th @ 5 p.m. wherein hot drinks, food, music, wagon rides, caroling, photo shots, goody bags for the kids, etc., will be present. A **donation jar** will be available. 2.) Decoration of trees will compete for the **"Battle of the Baubles Contest"**, with decorating between Nov. 4th and Nov. 22nd: individual-family-community-businesses. Judging will occur Nov. 24th during the Lighting Day Event. Applications are available @ The Shop on Main; Candy Shop; and the Winter Wonderland Facebook page. A lot of volunteers will be those from Harvest Fest. Local businesses will donate prizes. Winter Wonderland will be from Nov. 24th - Jan. 14th: 5 - 11 p.m. *What about Santa?* He will be available for kids Dec. 16th @ The Shop on Main. NOTE: No Christmas parade-

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

a. *Tunes on Tuesday 2024* - Steve Peterson: Tabled.

b. *Oconto Military Banner Program* - flying length - Carl Plaster- Discussion volleyed between Plaster and Bruckner who verbally cleaned up the necessities so that when completed banners come in, they can be displayed on Main St. light poles. We have 25 veterans represented who will be displayed throughout Nov. They will be raised again in spring.

c. *Waterfest 2023* - Pat Trepanier/Elks sought to answer any questions. He expressed that funding is important as the event is a year-round setup: the City has donated 2/3rds of its Tourism budget: \$16,500. The Chamber paid for the bands. The Elks did the planning, footwork, and controlling of the event. Trepanier also sought out additional sponsors. At one point posters were considered an issue: Trepanier would like the Committee to view them and see that all are receiving worthy credit. From the 2023 event, Trepanier/Elks returned \$784 to the City Budget. The City of Oconto Administrator/Burrueel and OCEDC/Boucher are key to the event, he said. It is important that Tourism keep the issue forward as *after the Budget is accepted*, the Committee will need to

determine the Waterfest 2024 donation. Trepanier begins the next year's work right after the last event.

**Hayes called the motion that Tourism felt that in addition to Harvest Fest, Main St. decor remain up throughout Thanksgiving. Seidl called second. (5 Ayes)**

Spice will contact Tyler as to his job responsibilities. She will also contact those private individuals claiming the decor thereafter as to this concept.

d. *City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024* ; Rachel Porath: Tabled.

e. *"Oconto Tourism" - Ideas for Facebook & Instagram pages* has lost its high school student worker. Boucher had a host of suggestions, and one was chosen.

f. *Tourism Signs & Murals for City Marketing*– We have noted the huge Snowy Owl on the side of Roberts Hardware: phase 1. Boucher relayed a brief discussion of what is completed... and what is ahead... photography, including a black and white located on Hearley's building.

g. *Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street Article 68*: Tabled. Discussion ensued. The City Council will be looking into this tomorrow night, stated the Mayor.

h. *Fundraising Ideas: Ducks in the river which belong to Hayes (Hearley); Concessions (Holz); Sell Venison stew donation or have a Farmers Market activity (Spice); Photo booth dress up (Seidl); Dunk tank (Sowle)...* these could **accompany any City event**.

Hearley announced 4 stores with a Main St. Grand Opening, Thursday - Saturday, Oct. 19 -22.

i. *List of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines* were viewed. Here it was suggested that the hanging flowers remain up on Main St. until after Harvest Fest. **Hearley suggested to the Park and Rec. and Tourism Committees that Main St. hanging flowers stay up until after Harvest Fest. Hayes called second. (M/C)**

Hearley noted that Stephenson National has its original decor which may be useful to our City. She also stated that Airbnb and Room Tax monies will be coming from Tourism and should return to Tourism. **Holz motioned to increase the Tourism Budget 2024 up to a total of \$52,500 based on the anticipated Airbnb and Room Tax revenue. Hayes called second to that motion. (5 Ayes)**

j. *Other Tourism Activities*: Someone needs to write Grants that will enhance the City of Oconto. Holz will presently take it in hand, research, and share her findings @ the Nov. meeting. Spice announced that next year's Harvest Fest street decor may-or -may-not need money: that budget has \$167 left although more bench wreaths will be bought now as they are on closeout. Hearley noted Main St. Grand Openings will be Oct. 19 -22nd.

7. Next Regular Meeting Date: **Monday, November 13 @ 5 p.m.**

8. Next Meeting **Agenda Items**: Tunes on Tuesday 2024 - Steve Peterson; Waterfest poster inspection; after Budget/Waterfest donation; City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024; Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street Article 68; Fundraising Ideas; Grants and Grant writer

9. **Spice summoned adjournment @ 7:04 p.m. Holz called motion to close the session. (4 Ayes)**

Minutes Submitted by Susan K. Seidl