

**MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023 @ 5:00 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 in our city.

1. The final 2023 Tourism meeting was called to order by Chairman Riley Sowle.
2. Roll Call: Ron Hayes, Megan Holz, Riley Sowle, Wendy Spice; Tina Bruckner (non-voting); and Alternatives Ashley Geller (+5:25), and Susan K. Seidl  
Excused: Lynn Hearley  
Also Present: Mayor John Panetti, Steve Peterson/Tunes on Tuesday, Todd Hearley
3. **Hayes called motion for approval of Agenda; Holz witnessed second. (5 Ayes)**
4. **Approval of Minutes from 11/13/2023 were placed on the table by Spice with the second of Holz. (5 Ayes)**
5. Public Input/Correspondence: None.
6. **Discussion/Recommendation/Updates on the Following:**
  - a.) **Update on Veteran Flag #s** - Bruckner (again given credit for her grasp of this task) asked if Carl Plaster/VA Rep. would have anything else to add. Brittney can be called for added questions/information. It was suggested we promote again.
  - b.) **Tunes on Tuesday 2024** - Steve Peterson spoke reviewing the 2023 and future activity, answering appropriate insight into the well-organized summer event. Hayes stated that he has a few people who are discussing another donation. Peterson stated that for 8 events/season 1, Tourism sponsored \$1,500. Presently the event holds 10 events with Tourism contributing \$5,500. Bookings are as far out as 6 months. The Committee wanted to know how much of the activity their donation covers: just over 1/2 of costs. Peterson stated that his donation process works according to the giver. Tax forms are available upon request. He and the community are enjoying the fun. Peterson gets the entertainment often @ discount prices. Tips last year were \$440 whereas this year \$260 approximately: musicians appreciate the tip jar. Mayor Panetti asked if there needed to be gazebo preparation in the name of the Beyer Home Historical Society. The Committee thanked Peterson.
  - c.) **Waterfest 2024 donation – (2024 budget = \$33,500)** Chairman Sowle, L. Hearley, and Holz attended the Nov. Harbor Commission meeting to request Waterfest support as the activity takes place on Harbor grounds. Chairman Jim Viestenz and Harbor Commission understood the need. The Harbor Commission motioned to contribute from their slip and transient rental up to \$10,000 to match Tourism donations to the event. Were we to accumulate this sponsorship amount we could hold a working budget up to \$53,000. Boucher/OCEDC and Holz applied to Festival support of Waterfest fireworks, and Cruisers. T. Hearley noted that Neroco has been a fireworks supporter in the past and we should sound them.
  - d.) **City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024 – Rachel Porath** Although Porath has been requested to attend Tourism, Sowle will invite her back in all eventuality by March.
  - e.) **“Oconto Tourism”** - Ideas for Facebook & Instagram pages have been discontinued on-line at present. Holz seeks to update the material and obtain an eventual paid student monitor in the future. This item can be an every other meeting issue. Sowle supported the continued P.R.

f.) ***Tourism Signs & Murals for City Marketing*** - Two (metal) smelt pictures will be completed next week. Bryce Hearley has affixed all these outdoor signs in various locations throughout the City of Oconto: we thank him for donating his time and energies to the City.

g.) ***Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street*** - This major City issue has again been tackled by Holz who found, e-mailed, and distributed the City of Milwaukee's Vacant Building Code. This is solid material that we can convert to The City of Oconto. Holz will, on paper, make it applicable. The Fire Dept. thereafter can perform inspections since our 10-year lapsed code. T. Hearley emphasized we need to preserve some of our historic buildings: Oconto HISTORIC City on the Bay. It was decided that an independent council will be formed, with independent legal representation and Police & Oconto Fire dept. Representatives. Tourism will request it be on the City Council agenda for approval. Sowle will sponsor the Vacant Building Registration Ordinance, drafted by an independent council. (NOTE: Handout contains all the expectations. Once adapted, all could be placed on our City website for building owners.) **Holz called motion that she and any Tourism representation attend and be on the agenda of the Police and Fire Commission meeting, Mon. Dec 18 @ 3:30 p.m., in regard to the Vacant Building Legislation program. Spice called second to the motion. (5 Ayes)**

h.) ***Fundraising Ideas in List Format*** - This will be completed by Holz for the January meeting. T. Hearley noted there were several dunk tanks available for purchase.

i.) ***Grants and Grant Writer*** Holz also will attend Grant education.

j.) *The list of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines* were TABLED due to the Agenda mail being received the day of the meeting.

k.) ***Other Tourism Activities*** included Spice's report of vandalism and theft to harvest decor on Main St. Police are seeing that appropriate action is taken: restitution needs to be made as there is a cost factor to consider. Winter Wonderland is awesome though it has also been vandalized. New Alternate, Geller, was welcomed: members introduced themselves.

**7. Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, Jan. 8, 2024 @ 5 p.m.**

**8. Next Meeting Agenda Items: The list of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines**

**9. Holz summoned adjournment @ 6:55 p.m. Hayes witnessed a second. (M/C)**

Minutes submitted by Susan K. Seidl