

**MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024 @ 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 1st Tourism Committee meeting of 2024 was called to order by Chairman Riley Sowle.
2. Roll Call: Ashley Geller, Ron Hayes, Lynn Hearley, Megan Holz, Riley Sowle; and Alternate Susan K. Seidl EXCUSED: Wendy Spice and Tina Bruckner (non-voting member)  
Also Present: Mayor J. Panetti; Dee Donlevy, and Casey Sowle
3. **Holz called motion for approval of Agenda; Hayes witnessed second. (5 Ayes) NOTE: Ashley Geller is a member of Tourism. ALSO NOTE: Remove from the Agenda City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024 – Rachel Porath until MARCH.**
4. **Approval of Minutes from 12/11/2023 was placed on the table by Hayes with a second of Holz. (5 Ayes)**
5. Public Input/Correspondence: None.
6. **Discussion/Recommendation/Updates on the Following:**
  - a. *Update on Veteran Flag #* is presently in question.
  - b. *Tunes on Tuesday 2024:* Steve Peterson discussed his costs, needs and intents to keep the event in process with City support. Sowle stated that we should look to recoup the \$5,000 lost out of donations. Discussion of which events should seek their own sustaining donations although Tourism will serve as support to new and existing events. It was suggested we write a policy stating initial event support amount, and extent of continuing support amount. Also suggested was to state the # the events Tourism could support yearly.
  - c. *Waterfest 2024 donation* – after Budget (2024 budget = \$33,500): Holz sought Oconto Festival’s sponsorship of the fireworks event: they said “No”. Thereafter she will continue seeking donations from other organizations. Mayor Panetti suggested we seek support from Park and Rec. who meets 1/24/24: Representatives will attend that meeting.
  - d. *City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024* – Rachel Porath: THIS WILL BE ADDRESSED IN MARCH.
  - e. *“Oconto Tourism”: Ideas for Facebook & Instagram pages* is still a work in progress. Herein the Mayor revealed that the Rooming Tax will not go to Tourism: he will follow up with OCEDC/Boucher as to where it is destined.
  - f. *Tourism Signs & Murals for City Marketing*– Boucher sent an e-mail containing her update including that two more historic smelting signs are in process. The 2024 Oconto County Discovery Guide is in with copies around the City. Shipments have been sent to Wisconsin, Minnesota, Milwaukee, Chicago/IL and Ohio.
  - g. *Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street* has been added to the Police and Fire Commission meeting agenda: the Milwaukee code will serve as a model. Holz will see that Adm. Burruehl adds the Milwaukee code information to their packets.
  - h. *Fundraising “Ideas” in List Format* was processed by Holz who incorporated additional suggestions. These were studied by the Committee who will again address them in February. “Calendars”

could be dispensed, suggested Hearley, by local businesses which could use them as cost return, gifts for employees, etc. A “pumpkin weight contest” and “Frog Fest” were added to the list.

i. *Grants and Grant Writer*— Holz is becoming a Grant Writer @ Tech School for a cost of \$355 for 3 distinct sessions. Boucher/OCEDC had sent her the necessary information and thought it wise to have a Committee member attend. Although she said she can pay for the schooling, **Hayes called motion that Tourism pay Holz to become a grant writer. Hearley supported with a second. (M/C)**

j. *Copperfest 2024 Donation Request*— Moving toward Tourism’s new to-be-written policy, **Holz motioned to donate \$1,000 to Copperfest 2024. Hayes motioned second. (M/C)**

k. *List of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines*— This viewed, Tourism thought Harbor could split the Tower Optical Co. lease on 2 non-coin op. binocular viewing stands. One is located in the Marsh and the other @ the Harbor. It has been revealed that the Co. no longer performs upkeep on the viewer: it has been left to Park and Rec. Director Bostedt. Maybe we could relocate the lens in the Marsh wherein an eagle is hiding.... We have looked into the expense of purchasing. Why are we maintaining them? Holz will be looking to the Chamber for help: perhaps other businesses would like to buy them.

l. *Other Tourism Activities*— At Hearley’s request, we are seriously revisiting an open-concept Visitor’s Center to be located near KwikTrip or the Koehne/Buick parking lot. Perhaps the H.S. or Eagle Scouts could raise it: Hearley already has someone who is willing to create the plans. It too was noted by Hearley that the equestrian trail needs upkeep.

**7. Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, February 12, 2024 @ 5 p.m.**

**8. Next Meeting Agenda Items: DROP City of Oconto Farmers Market 2024 – Rachel Porath until MARCH. ADD Visitor’s Center**

**9. Holz summoned adjournment @ 6:44 p.m. Geller witnessed second. (M/C)**

Minutes submitted by Susan K. Seidl