

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE

MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2024 @ 4:00 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 of our city.

1. The June Tourism meeting was called to order by Chairman Riley Sowle.

2. Roll Call: Lynn Hearley, Megan Holz, Ron Hayes, Riley Sowle, Wendy Spice; Alternatives Jack Karban and Susan K. Seidl; ALSO PRESENT Mayor Cliff Martin, Ashley Geller, VA representative Carl Plaster and John Nowak

3. & 4. Riley Sowle announced Nominations for Chairman 3 times. With the nomination of Sowle as Chairman and acceptance of the Tourism Committee Chairman, Holz closed nominations/election with a second of Spice. (5 Ayes)

5. Nominations for Vice Chair were announced 3 times. Spice motioned to close with a second of Holz. (5 Ayes)

6. Megan Holz accepted the election position of Tourism Vice Chairman with a motion to close by Spice and Hearley second. (5 Ayes)

7. Hayes called for approval of Agenda; Holz motioned second. (M/C)

8. Approval of Minutes from 5/13/2024; were placed in motion with the dropping of the last sentence in 6. a. by Hayes with a Holz second. (5 Ayes)

9. Public Input: Seidl made a suggestion to keep up the Main St. military flags until they fade. VA representative Carl Plaster stated they should be up for 2 years and then returned to the family.

10. Correspondence: e-mail from Bruce Mommaerts regarding billboards and grants was available in Committee packets. The Committee stated that the mid one was the only grant applying to the City of Oconto.

11. Discussion/Recommendation/Updates on the Following:

a. *Waterfest 2024*– Dee Donlevy investigated expenses/donations list as presented @ City Hall.

b. *Main Street Veteran Banners*– Non-military photos may be used.

c. *Memorial Day Veterans Parade 2025*– This year's honorarium was in the H. S. gym due to impending weather. It was as dignified as always, noted Mayor Martin. Suggested, were it to happen again, more types of media should inform the public. Since Nowak handled the details, the Committee continued to suggest he form a committee. He would like to see "Oconto to bring people in". We need YOU to be a part of it. Nowak stated that Veterans don't want to honor themselves. The Mayor with Plaster and Nowak will meet so he can be aware of expenses and who to involve from the City. The Mayor can also contact other area communities to gain from their experience. On behalf of the Veterans, Plaster thanked the City of Oconto for any support they have given in the past.

For Tourism/the City to be involved, we need the following, stated Holz and Karban:

- Define Tourism/City entities.
- Present these to the Mayor and City Council: include needed City work staff; expenses; Mayor contact other cities to see what plan they have in place.
- Sowle stated that we have a good start of names with the families our Main Street flags represent.

d. *City of Oconto Farmers Market 2025*– It was determined that we need to invite Rachel Porath so that the Committee can understand its involvement.

e. “Oconto Tourism” - Ideas for Facebook & Instagram pages– The City promotion of the Memorial Day Veterans Parade 2025 should be added. Karban suggested a speaker who could help with promotions.

f. *Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street*– Mayor Martin stated that without a Building Inspector we are handicapped: we agreed. Our present hire is on a per diem basis. At present, the only inspection is safety through the Fire Dept. Martin stated that an ordinance change is difficult. Holz has done hunting and gathering on the ordinance issues and will see that the Mayor receives it. Hearley emphasized the present existing problems. Where the buildings are connected they affect one another, especially with disrepair.

g. *Choice of Fundraising Ideas in List Format*– Holz is expecting Committee e-mails with our TOP 5 choices, which she will compile.

h. *Grants and Grant Writer*– We need to start our approach with Grants that address our needs. To do so the Committee will *state the issue* and then *create a visible plan* to present: an Ad Hoc Committee? (Are we looking for Main St., and river development... specifically) In the end, only someone who works for the City can submit our results. Other communities could be our sounding board. Karban asked if TEDCOR should not be a part of this. The Mayor will contact them on these 2 issues.

i. *Visitor’s Center*– Karban approached Shawn Porath, Tech Ed teacher @ O.H.S. Porath is eager for the project if... the H.S. has the class. He stated that they also have the ability to design it (CAD) *with our suggestive list*. This is a useful project that will carry a Tech identity sign and will be cost saving to the City. It will be a project they *could assemble on site*. Karban will update.

j. Holz motioned the Sponsorship Request for 16th Annual Oconto Elks Fly-In 2024 in the amount of \$1,000 with a Hearley second. (Hearley-AYE, Holz-AYE, Hayes-AYE, Sowle-AYE, and Spice-AYE)

k. Approval of invoice from TEDCOR for the 2024 Oconto County Discovery Guide in the amount of \$1,270.00 was called. (Hearley-AYE, Holz-AYE, Hayes-AYE, Sowle-AYE, and Spice-AYE) Discussion preceded this vote, including the TEDCOR mission. We learned that TEDCOR received \$151 thousand to work on Oconto County in 2024. Again, there was no representation of TEDCOR at our meeting. The Mayor noted that the entity has a Grant Writer trained in marketing for which we should make a request list. (Also, he stated, we have other City writers with Tabby -who according to Donlevy is presently overbooked- with dredging Grants.) Donlevy suggested the Committees receive a flow chart of how Council to Committees operate: what they should do/when, and who to contact for action.

l. *List of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines*– These give the Committee a good idea of what goes out and what comes in with the minimal balance, however it has been noted that the numbers still are not accurate in Potential Future Expenses. Once again, we make a request of Administrator Burruel to view and present us with our accurate account. Sowle will approach the issue @ the Finance Committee. We also need to know the BnB Room Tax figures and their allocation.

m. *Other Tourism Activities*– Holz spoke of using contracted services which would address the City of Oconto alone vs. TEDCOR. She also suggested we consider the Tourism Committee become a Commission. These issues expanded in discussion.

12. Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, July 8 @ 4 p.m.

13. Next Meeting Agenda Items: Invite: Rachel Porath/Oconto 2025 Farmers Market AND Copperfest/Gary Zahn AND Pat Trepanier - Elks/Waterfest (R. Sowle will do so); Discuss kind of Grants; Commission establishment; Ad Hoc Committee for Main St.

14. Holz summoned adjournment @ 6:36 p.m. Spice witnessed second. (M/C)

Minutes submitted by
Susan K. Seidl