

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE
on Monday, July 8, 2024 at 4:00 pm 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 July Tourism Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Riley Sowle.

2. Roll Call: Ron Hayes, Lynn Hearley, Magan Holz, Riley Sowle, Wendy Spice (-6:07); Alternates Jack Karban and Susan K. Seidl, and Ashley Geller (advisory) ALSO PRESENT Mayor Cliff Martin, Carl Plaster & Cathy Smith/VA representatives, Pat Trepanier/ELKS-Waterfest, Gary Zahn/Copperfest, David Hipwell/local artist

3. **Holz called motion for approval of Agenda; Hayes motioned second. (5 Ayes)**

4. **Approval of Minutes from 6/10/2024 was moved by Spice with a Hearley second. (5 Ayes)**

5. Public Input: Plaster is trying to place a greater presence on our Veterans. David Hipwell was referring to the front of Boo's bar. He spoke to us of his murals as well as offered us another banner emphasizing that affixed properly, they do not damage a building. Since our businesses control their buildings presently, he offered to donate an Oconto entry banner if we build the structure. Plaster & Sowle added that it would be great to have high school talent on our murals too.

6. Correspondence: None.

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

a. *Waterfest 2024/2025 (Pat Trepanier/Elks)* He reported the cost of \$26,543.50 with one bill from John Bostedt (approx. \$400) in anticipation. Trepanier announced his retirement from the event: Fly In, too. He explained that Waterfest needs \$25-\$26 thousand to run. New production tumbling presented 3 shows and kids rides were \$5 all night. Attendance was well over 2,000. (The river was also packed.) The new coordinator will have to start ASAP: there are multiple clients, manpower, and volunteers that need to be coordinated. He thanked Tourism for their support of the event and was given an appreciation with applause. Trepanier offered to mentor the next director in their 1st year of the event.

b. *Copperfest 2025 (Gary Zahn)* In 2024 the Chamber of Commerce didn't sponsor the coronation. Negatively this year also was a hose break Thursday: Superintendent Wusterbarth came to the rescue in time for all to dry up. Miss WI did come to the grounds. Although it rained during the parade, it had full booking and citizens lined the streets. There were 3 - 4,000 attendees which also kept vendors alley busy. Zahn P.R.ed other communities and had a lot of new sponsors. Of course there was the car show, wrestling, and the church service. He praised an excellent group of volunteers. **Next year** is scheduled for **June 6,7,8**. Sowle and the Committee suggested we splash pictures for P.R. ahead next year. Karban asked if TEDCOR could handle this: Mayor Martin will address that potential with them.

c. *City of Oconto Farmers Market 2025* (Rachel Porath is working on her job conflicts so she can attend.)

d. *Main Street Veteran Banners*— Plaster is still responding to calls, especially those of other communities seeking our procedure for the project.

e. *Memorial Day Veterans Parade 2025* is a work in progress by the veterans and Tourism Committee. It would be ideal to have a band. The picnic works well, reported Plaster. Sowle requested a calendar of events so that Tourism could be more supportive. Among other dates announced was the July 19th Amvets brats, hamburgers, etc. @ Thompson's.

f. "*Oconto Tourism*" - *Ideas for Facebook & Instagram pages*– Photos, promotions, and murals were added.

g. *Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street*– No new updates. However, by August, announced the Mayor, he hopes to have a City Building Inspector.

h. *Choice of Fundraising Ideas in List Format*– It was suggested we utilize TEDCOR more.

i. *Grants and Grant Writer and Discussion on Kinds of Grants*– Sam Boucher, now a grant writer on her own, has remained on the search for the City of Oconto, posthumously. Hearley noted another grant writer (from Peshtigo) available.

j. *Visitor's Center*– We will be required to provide the materials for the H.S. The Chamber supports its erection. The Mayor noted that we need more clarification on our room tax. Members of the Committee felt we also need more electronic P. R., for tourists.

k. *Creation of Tourism Commission* is in the works. A Commission and an Ordinance need to be established by State Statute, stated Mayor Martin. There also needs to be a lot of clarification on the BnB Tax. **Hayes motioned to create a Tourism Commission. Sowle called second. (M/C)**
Holz motioned to place a Tourism presentation on the next Council Agenda, under correspondence. Spice witnessed a second. (M/C)

l. *Ad-Hoc Committee for Main St*– Mayor Martin will check into it. Perhaps the issue belongs under the Planning Commission.

m. *A list of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines* was found in the Tourism Packet. *Committee members felt that there is still some need for clarification.*

n. *Other Tourism Activities*– *Hearley reported that money still remains @ TEDCOR for our murals (approx. \$2,000) and needs to be addressed. Mayor Martin *will* address this with TEDCOR. Hearley also thought the Plaster/VA thinks that they think we will orchestrate their parade: other Committee members had this feeling too: However, a Committee needs to be established... including the VA. This, once again, needs to be clarified. *Holz suggested that we establish a City Events Coordinator: the Committee agreed.

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

9. Next Meeting Agenda Items: Ad-Hoc Committee for Main St.; Binder for City Events Contact Coordinator/Tourism reporter; Photo of City Events Contest

10. Holz summoned adjournment @ 6:34 p.m. Sowle witnessed the second. (4 Ayes)

Minutes submitted by Susan K. Seidl