

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE
held on MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2024 @ 4:00 P.M.
in the City Hall Council Chambers, 1210 Main Street, Oconto, WI 54153

Meeting Called to Order by Chair Riley Sowle at 4:00 pm

Roll Call: Members Present: Ron Hayes, Lynn Hearley, Riley Sowle, Wendy Spice (@4:02 pm), Jack Karban (alternate member), and Ashley Geller (advisory member)

Members Excused: Magan Holz and Susan Seidl (alternate member)

Others Present: Mayor Martin, Carl Plaster, Cordula VandenHeuvel, Brittney Burruel as recording secretary, and other interested parties

Approval of Agenda: **Motion by Hayes, second by Hearley to approve the agenda as presented for the Tourism meeting on August 12, 2024. 5 ayes M/C**

Approval of Minutes: The Committee questioned the minutes on agenda item 5. It was motioned to change “confronted in front of” to “referring to the front of”. **Motion by Sowle, second by Spice to approve the minutes as amended for the Tourism meeting on July 8, 2024. 5 ayes M/C**

Public Input:

- Fred Adams, 1504 Park Ave, handed out an example of an events calendar that he had printed at Bay Impressions. The Committee discussed possibly adopting the idea. They will discuss it further at their next meeting.
- Carl Plaster, Secretary of the Oconto County Veterans Memorial Corporation

Correspondence: none

Discussion/Recommendation/Updates on the Following:

- a. Bird City: Cordula VandenHeuvel, former director of Bird City, is organizing a Purple Martin Fest to be held at Oconto City Park on Saturday, June 28, 2025 from 10am until 4pm. There will be many educational booths, activities, food, and a silent auction. She asked the Tourism Committee for a \$500 donation to help with the event, specifically advertising. **Motion by Spice, second by Karban to donate \$500 to Bird City for Purple Martin Fest. 5 ayes M/C**
- b. Waterfest 2025: BYPASSED
- c. Copperfest 2025: BYPASSED
- d. City of Oconto Farmers Market 2025 (Rachel Porath): BYPASSED
- e. Main Street Veteran Banners: With Tina Bruckner no longer on the Tourism Committee, there is a need for a new project leader for the Main Street Veteran Banners. We currently have approximately 12 applications waiting to be processed. Mayor Martin volunteered to contact Tina Bruckner and get more information on the process and any contacts that can help.
- f. Memorial Day Veterans Parade 2025: Mayor Martin has volunteered as lead to this project. He met with Carl and John to bring in outside help to organize the parade. They will be having another meeting next month to continue the progress.
- g. “Oconto Tourism” - Ideas for Facebook & Instagram pages: Lynn Hearley, Magan Holz, Wendy Spice, and Ashley Geller have been posting on the “Oconto Tourism” pages. They asked that everyone please share the posts to try to gain more followers.
- h. Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street: Mayor Martin shared the plans for the old laundromat building on Main Street. BYPASSED

- i. Choice of Fundraising Ideas in List Format: BYPASSED
- j. Grants and Grant Writer and Discussion on Kinds of Grants: BYPASSED
- k. Visitor's Center: Jack Karban talked with Mr. Porath at the High School. They are interested in drafting and building the Visitor's Center for the Tourism Committee. The Committee will pay for the materials and concrete. Karban stated he will work with Porath and get him the information he needs to draft the plans.
- l. Ad-Hoc Committee for Main St: BYPASSED
- m. Binder for City Events Contact Coordinator/Tourism Reporter: Rilye Sowle brought a blank binder to start the process. The Committee discussed tab ideas and what needs to be included.
- n. Photo of City Events Contest: The Committee discussed having a photo contest for upcoming City events. There will be a prize for best photo and runners-up. The photos will help the Tourism Committee with advertising and posting on social media, with the ultimate goal being a City of Oconto Tourism calendar. Possible prizes discussed were adding the photos to the Visitor's Center, featured on the City's website, a City coin, pictures posted at City Hall, \$50 Chamber Bucks, and/or City of Oconto swag bag/sweatshirt, with runners-up receiving a City coin.
- o. List of Expenses Anticipated Yearly and Expenditure Guidelines: Spice questioned the vaguely listed "Waterfest 2024" expense. Burrue explained this was a journal entry to pay the Parks Department for bleachers, picnic tables, garbage cans; the Harbor for the pavilion rental and extra porta potties; and the Campground for golf carts.
- p. Other Tourism Activities: Ron Hayes questioned the status and plan for the fish sculptures from Iron Maiden Metal Art. Lynn Hearley explained the reason for the delay and stated she would refund the Tourism Committee the \$1,500 deposit and donate the sculpture once she is able to complete it. Karban asked about the Tourism Commission. Hearley stated Samantha Routheau has asked for a \$1,000 donation from the Tourism Committee for Harvestfest 2024. Burrue stated she would include this as an agenda item for September's meeting. Spice stated she will again be decorating Main Street for Fall this year. She explained a need for funds, as someone damaged and ruined our decorations last year.

Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, September 9, 2024 @ 4:00 pm

Next Meeting Agenda Items:

ADD: +Harvestfest 2024 donation of \$1,000

+Main Street Decorating

+Printed Calendar of Oconto Events

+City of Oconto Tourism Design Apparel

REMOVE: -Bird City, - Waterfest 2025, - Copperfest 2025, -City of Oconto Farmers Market 2025, -Plan for Vacant Buildings on Main Street, -Choice of Fundraising Ideas in List Format, -Ad-Hoc Committee for Main St

Adjournment: **Motion by Hayes, second by Spice to adjourn at 5:50 pm. 5 ayes M/C**

Minutes submitted by Brittney M. Burrue