



Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 06, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call to Order

Walcott called the meeting to order at 6:34pm. A quorum present consisted of Hammer, Roelke, Famularo, and Walcott. Staff liaison Bennett was present.

Walker arrived at 6:36pm and Belschner arrived at 6:37pm.

Notice of Open Meeting

The meeting was properly noticed.

Approval of Agenda

Hammer motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Roelke seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

1. Consider and take action to approve the Tourism Commission meeting minutes from August 11, 2025

Roelke motioned to approve the meeting minutes as presented from August 11, 2025. Hammer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public in attendance for public comment. Bennett acknowledged that there was no correspondence either.

Both Walker and Belschner arrived.

New Business

2. Consider and take action to finalize insert for distribution with tour booklets

Bennett presented a mock-up, and a graphic copy of the proposed tourism insert for the Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission's (HLPC) historic architecture tour booklets. The Tourism Commission was receptive to the design. The QR code addition is functional on the dark background. In response to how the inserts will be printed, Bennett stated that since printing will be done in small batches initially, the City could print the inserts. Staff would monitor how many booklets and inserts get taken and depending on demand, may source printing services if needed.

Hammer motioned to approve the design of the inserts as presented. Famularo seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. Bennett will update the logo pending the results of item #5 in this meeting's agenda.

3. Consider and take action to approve print ads from The Greater Valley Guide

Bennett presented an ad solicitation from The Greater Valley Guide (TGVG) highlighting the previous utilization of the publisher and focusing on leveraging digital marketing if going forward.

Bennett showed little desire to just purchase print ads as was done in the past, citing leftover publications left in towns in the TGVG distribution market. Bennett's preference if going forward was purchasing the Community Connector ad package as it's similar price to the previous ads purchases and focuses more on digital. Belschner asked if the article and ads get proofed prior to publishing. Bennett admitted to the oversight of not asking about proofing but will if going forward. Bennett stated TGVG does allow staff to proof ads before going out and trusts they would do the same with articles too. Bennett confirmed there is funding for the ad package. Belschner suggested the Neighborhood Builder ad package be purchased as it includes a larger ad and more social media posts.

Roelke motioned to approve up to \$1,750 to purchase ads in the TGVG's Neighborhood Builder ad package. Belschner seconded the motion. No additional discussion was made. The motion was carried unanimously by roll call vote: Walcott - aye, Roelke - aye, Famularo - aye, Belschner - aye, Walker - aye, and Hammer - aye.

4. Discuss secondary projects to begin working on in 2025

Bennett wanted to have a discussion regarding pursuing additional topics as the signage project is slated for the City's 2027 and 2028 capital improvements plan (CIP) and the tour booklet inserts project is about to go forward with implementation.

The Tourism Commission discussed pursuing itinerary marketing with Walcott providing a simple example from his lodging website. Belschner would like the itineraries to vary and focus on niche topics citing dog ownership as an example. The Commission would like to tie-in local businesses, events, history, etc. There was discussion about adding itinerary marketing to agendas to be brainstormed and then implemented along with looking ahead for seasonal topics. Bennett will add this topic to future agendas.

Other topics brought up for discussion for possible consideration included educating / highlighting the community's industries, history, etc. Bennett stated that staff would be looking at bringing a possible economic development marketing proposal to the Plan Commission that may contain similar information. Topics of the railroad - especially its history and other things that the city could be known for was discussed. The Holiday Train was brought up, but the date has not been made public yet.

There was discussion regarding a possible event focusing on John Dillinger / Public Enemies movie but would be potentially competing with the 4th of July Celebration. There could be possibility of the event focusing on prohibition era in general and/or the brewing industry that existed in Columbus.

5. Discuss tourism branding

Bennett presented a draft logo for the City's tourism efforts that incorporates the City's branding along with the currently used name of Visit Columbus Wisconsin. Bennett was looking for constructive feedback of the proposed logo. The Commission really liked the logo as presented. Belschner asked about the ability to swap colors for different backgrounds and Bennett stated that the logo is broken up into several elements and that each element has the option of being a different color. Bennett gave examples of turning the entire logo white, black, or coloring clocktower, etc. The template would allow for various applications across backgrounds. The Tourism Commission would like to use the new logo going forward.

6. Discuss clearing up the Rotary Park mill pond to make it easier and nicer for kayaking and other recreational uses

Bennett highlighted a previous effort of the Columbus/Fall River Rotary Club to purchase an aerator for the Rotary Park mill pond's kayak/canoe launch. Bennett cited the algae bloom as a barrier to effectively promote the kayak rentals and would like to explore the possibility of purchasing an aerator to mount to the kayak launch to clear the area. Discussion included researching the impact of the aerator on possible additional algae blooms, pricing, and working with Henry St. Maurice. Discussion led to a focus on solar powered aerators to be installed and

removed seasonally and can be attached to the kayak launch. Bennett will get some pricing and additional information for next meeting.

Adjourn

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission will tentatively be Monday, November 3, 2025, unless there's any elections. In that case it would be moved to the 10th. Bennett will update the Commission if it needs to be moved from the 4th.

Roelke motioned to adjourn the meeting. Belschner seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:32pm.

*A quorum of city committees and/or commissions may be present at this meeting. No action will be taken or considered by those committees and/or commissions.

** These minutes will be approved at a future meeting and may be amended. These minutes are respectfully submitted by David Bennett, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator **