



Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 05, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call to Order

Walcott called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call

A quorum consisting of Belschner, Famularo, Hammer, Roelke, Walcott, and Walker were present. Staff liaison Bennett was also present.

Notice of Open Meeting

Bennett stated that the meeting was properly noticed.

Approval of Agenda

Bennett noted a glitch in the agenda software that cause the second item under Unfinished Business to be mislabeled and recommended that the Commission amends the title.

Roelke motioned to approve the agenda and change 2025 Budget Update under Unfinished Business to Discussion Regarding Digital Signage Updates with a second by Hammer. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes

1. Review and Approve Minutes from April 7, 2025

Famularo motioned to approve, as written, the Tourism Commission minutes from April 7, 2025. Belschner seconded. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public present for comments. Bennett confirmed there was no correspondence either.

Unfinished Business

2. Review and Approve Flyer Printing and Distribution

Bennett presented a recap of the effort from last meeting and provided some additional designs and tweaks to the flyer handout. The Tourism Commission discussed printing and distribution options with Belschner providing details about what the Redbud Players can do. Belschner shared that the Players could print 8"x11" flyers with the tourism ad on one side and the Redbud Players ad on the other in full color. This would cost \$200.

Additional graphics were discussed in order to expand the current flyer to meet the new size requirements. The Commission would like to see a collage of multiple events and amenities.

Famularo made a motion to approve \$200 and partner with the Redbud Players to print and distribute the flyers during the 4th of July parade. Hammer seconded. A roll call vote was held with: Walker - aye, Famularo - aye, Hammer - aye, Walcott - aye, Roelke - aye, and Belschner - abstain. Motion was carried with 5 ayes and 1 abstention.

A final version of the flyer will be presented at the next Tourism meeting.

3. Discussion Regarding Digital Signage Updates

Bennett informed the Tourism Commission about the Recreation Department's steps toward getting digital signage for the Aquatic Center. Bennett would like to propose some sort of partnership with the City as a whole or with other departments interested in the same idea in order to better synergize and reduce duplicated efforts. Bennett will address this topic at appropriate staff-level meetings.

Bennett asked the Commission if it would be interested in pursuing the partnership(s) and if it would still be willing to contribute financially to the project. The Commission members agreed that it would be a good idea to entertain possible partnership and would be willing to contribute funds as it had already been budgeted for.

Bennett will update the Tourism Commission of updates and progress.

4. Recommend to Council Changes to the Tourism Committee Ordinance

Bennett brought back the approved ordinance change from the previous meeting. Staff was informed that the version the Tourism Commission approved would unintentionally trigger off a new election of commission officers if the Council approved the changes. It was recommended by the Clerk to remake the motion to recommend to Council the proposed ordinance changes and include an exemption to the election for 2025. The Tourism Commission agreed.

Walker motioned to recommend to the Council to repeal and replace Sec. 2-381 - Terms. of the Columbus Tourism Committee Code with the following changes: "The member of the hotel and motel industry, and the citizen members shall each serve a one-year term, beginning on June 1 of each year," (from The member of the hotel and motel industry, and the citizen members shall each serve a one-year term, beginning on January 1 of each year,); "and at its first meeting after the Council's first meeting in May or as soon thereafter as the Tourism Commission may meet, shall elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary." (from and at its first meeting of each calendar year, shall elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary.), and to exempt election of chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary in 2025, with the next election of Tourism officers to take place as per the updated ordinance in 2026. Roelke seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

New Business

5. 2025 Tourism Priority Update

Bennett informed the Commission that everything was on track regarding progress and presented a rough timeline for the remainder of the year. June would have review of the grant applications, finalize the flyers, and ramp up summer event marketing. July would have digital signage updates and progress, begin budgeting and secondary projects. August would finish budgeting, work on secondary projects, and signage progress. October would see the start of holiday marketing, continue secondary projects, and finish up digital signage if it isn't completed by then. November would feature a ramp up of holiday marketing, setting 2026 priorities, and getting grant applicants to send in final reports. December would have no meeting, but staff would gather final reports for review at the meeting in January 2026.

The Commission asked about the house decorating and Chamber Choir events. Bennett has confirmed that those have been added and will continue to be added to the events calendar and promoted on the Tourism Facebook page.

Staff Reports

6. 2025 Budget Update

Bennett did not have any revenue updates and stated that expenditures haven't been reported yet. Bennett added that staff is currently training with a new process for tracking budgets. The new process would allow staff to see changes in more "real-time". There is \$55,356.35 remaining in the 2025 budget.

Bennett highlighted that staff have met with the Tourism Grant applicants and is collecting information to complete their applications. Review of applications is anticipated for the June meeting and will likely use all of the 2025 budget line for Special Events.

Future Agenda Items

No additional items were brought up for future agendas.

Adjourn

The next meeting will take place Monday, June 2, 2025.

Famularo motioned to adjourn the meeting with a second by Belschner. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm.

*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 **