

Regular March Richland Center Tourism Commission Meeting, March, 7, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lenny Schaub at 4:05pm.

Members present, Lenny Schaub, Dennis Fry, Susan Fruit, and Christy Adsit. Bob Hirschy, was absent.

Tourism Grant Applications: The Friends of the Pine/Southwest Partners filed a grant application to help fund the regular clean-up of the Pine River and to keep it navigable for regular kayak use throughout the summer. The grant application stated the Friends of the Pine have been maintaining the Pine River for 10 years and have also been improving the kayak landings during that time. Previous maintenance and spring/flood cleaning was done on a volunteer basis. On average each year there are approximately 120 man-hours put towards the effort, sometimes multiple times through the year due to repeat flooding. Members of the Tourism Commission agreed the Pine River is an important tourist attraction in our area to visitors. Member Christy Adsit asked if there would be a tracking mechanism for the time spent cleaning the Pine. Director Richards mentioned that is part of the “after-event” report. Photos, accounting of the time, and recap of the effort. Chair Lenny Schaub mentioned how important the Pine River has become to our tourism efforts and several other members mentioned they agree with that sentiment.

Member Dennis Fry made a motion to approve the grant request of \$2,000 for the 2023 Kayak season to keep the Pine River safe and navigable for visitors, Member Christy Adsit seconded the motion. A roll call vote unanimously passed the motion.

Lamar Advertising Digital Billboard Discussion and Action: Director Richards explained the past two years Greater Richland Tourism had allocated over \$22,000 each year towards digital billboard marketing in the Milwaukee, Rockford, and Rochester/Winona MN interstate areas. This year there will be more effort put towards streaming advertising, but digital billboards are still an effort we will want to utilize in concert with the streaming efforts. Director Richards asked the commission to approve a \$4,400 expenditure towards Lamar Advertising over an 8-week period in the Riverwest and Walker’s Point areas of Milwaukee which fit strongly with our potential visitor demographics and have proved to be successful in the past.

Member Sue Fruit made a motion to approve an expenditure of \$4,400 to Lamar Advertising for digital billboard advertising over an 8-week period starting in April. Member Dennis Fry 2nd the motion. After a voice roll-call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Director Richards offered updates and reports on several efforts:

1. He explained that all of the website conversion, logo development, and re-branding work has been completed and had on hand new giveaway items for the upcoming year.
2. Gray Media Streaming- Director Richards had previously shared the 30-second ad spot that was developed for the purpose of streaming advertising and that ad is now running in the Milwaukee media areas within a designated area strong with the demographics we wish to attract. That streaming option started on 03/05 and he will have a 30-day meeting with Gray Media to check on the effectiveness of the target area and demographic.
3. Richards mentioned preparation is underway for the 2023 Dairy Days and Rodeo Parade. He has a conflict of schedule as one of his former exchange students is getting married in Spain on that weekend. He stated that the preparation and work is mostly in advance of the event

but there would need to be some help from a few people to get the parade started that morning. Such as putting up the location numbers for lineup, and making sure everyone starts in order as they should. Tourism Commission Chair Lenny Schaub made mention that commented there should be enough people to help make that happen without Director Richards. The rest of the Commission confirmed that was their feeling as well.

4. Director Richards mentioned he will be attending Canoecopia Paddle Sports Convention from Friday, March 10 to Sunday, March 12. He will then be attending the Governor's Conference on Tourism from Sunday, March 12 to Tuesday, March 13 in Green Bay.
5. Director Richards also explained there are two Richland County Townships that have been investigating the adoption of the room tax ordinance and are getting close to adopting that ordinance. He mentioned one township has asked him to be in attendance for their vote in March and it is possible a second Township will take on the approval discussion this month or next.
6. Director Richards also made mention that he is working closely with Richland County Fairgrounds and Recycling Director Carla Doudna to move forward with improvements to the park areas, help with developing new options of the use of the county recreational options, and any other resource he can provide as the county moves forward with changes to her department and the county parks system.
7. Director Richards also explained he had recently attended the Ithaca/Richland Center Work Engagement Fair at the UW-Richland Campus. This was a convention event to connect with high school Sophomores thru Seniors, and the opportunities that exist for students to volunteer at the Visitor's Center this summer. Several great connections were made and we hope to increase the number of volunteers at the Visitor's Center thru this effort.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Dennis Fry, 2nd by Christy Adsit. Motion Carried. Meeting was adjourned at 4:50pm.