

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes September 11 2025 8am

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Courtney Krause, Cheryl Mitchell, Melissa Lampe, Ken Berg and Steven Board

Also present; Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Linden Peacy, Tourism Director Robin Kaufmann, Main Street Program Executive Director Stefanie Broere, Andrea Draeger from Park & Rec and Airbnb owner Margaret Jaberg

1. The meeting was called to order by Courtney Krause at 8:00 a.m.
2. Introduce the new Main Street Program Executive Director Stefanie Broere. Stefanie began her tenure in April during the week of the Main Street bridge re-opening. Stefanie recently moved back to the Watertown area and is excited to partner with Watertown businesses. The Main Street Program will celebrate their 25th anniversary at the end of September and there will be many more events ahead this fall.
3. Review & Approve July Minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Ken Berg. Steven Board was not in attendance at the July Meeting and abstained. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
4. Old Business:
 - A. Approve Financial Report: Motion to approve the financials was made by Steven Board and seconded by Melissa Lampe. The Commission voted to approve the financials.
 - B. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. Visitor Guides – Robin will get a proposal for the 2026 visitor guide from Jennifer Creative and will bring it to the October meeting.
 2. Ad opportunities – Nothing new to present to the Commission
 3. Update on billboard commitment: Ads are being purchased by area business and organizations. Slots are committed through the middle of January.
 - C. Review and take action on mural restoration projects.

The new owner of the building with the Willkommen mural is interested in moving forward with the repairs to the mural. The funds for this project are still part of the Tourism budget.
 - D. Discuss Hotel stay updates: Summer weekends have been at high occupancy and above 2024 numbers. Sunday -Thursday weekday occupancy is down from 2024. The 4-city market of Watertown, Johnson Creek, Jefferson and Fort Atkinson is down in occupancy as a whole from 2024 and below Wisconsin and National occupancy numbers.
 - E. Discuss updates on Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall: No updates from the group as of the last meeting. The group is fundraising to reach their target goal. The group will be meeting to discuss their progress on the planning of the project and the Tourism Commission will decide how best to support the process.
5. New Business
 - A. Review and take possible action on Trunk-or-Treat participation. On October 11th, Ad-Tech will open their parking lot to Watertown businesses for participation in Trick or Treat for area families. Participants will decorate their vehicles and hand out treats to kids. The main event will start at 7:00 pm and ends at 8:00 pm. Food will be collected for area food pantries. Steven Board made a motion to set aside \$200 for the Tourism Commission to create a display and purchase treats for the event. Melissa Lampe seconded and the motion was passed by the commission.

- B. Review and discussion of recent Placer AI demonstration. PlacerAI gathers data from mobile devices that helps provide detailed information about visitor demographics and behavior. This data helps clients better understand visitor/consumer behavior, better plan marketing campaigns and events analyze competitors and provide comparisons to other communities. The cost of the service is \$19,000 per year. The information is valuable for strategic planning and the cost could be mitigated if the Tourism Commission could share the cost with the City of Watertown or other entities.
- C. Review Manager's report of previous month's tasks. Attached.
- D. Commission Members' report. Jefferson Fair Grounds events include the Sheep & Wool Festival September 5-7th and the Car Show September 25-27. Many Maranatha families stayed overnight to drop off students starting school on Labor Day. October 6th is the Maranatha Golf Classic. Brat Fry at the Senior Center and the Grand Opening of their outdoor patio. Bentzien Family Town Square events include 9/25 Night Market, 10/4 Saturday Market, 10/25 Boo Bash. 9/21 Ice Cream Social at Octagon House, 9/15 Jill Fuller presents a history of the Louisa May Alcott family at the Octagon House History Center. The Octagon House Christmas Play will take place during Thanksgiving Weekend.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 am was made by Melissa Lampe and seconded by Ken Berg.

Agenda items:

A reminder from Robin to have all requests for additions to the next meeting's agenda to her by Tuesday, the week before the meeting.

The next meeting will be at 8 am on October 9th 2025, via Zoom or you may attend in person at Watertown City Hall

NOTE: These minutes are uncorrected, and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.

Submitted by,
Cheryl Mitchell, Secretary

August

Facebook: 101 new followers (Post reach 321,311 - Post Views 569,276)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 2398 Users – 6986 views

Instagram: 1194 followers

- ☐ Regularly posted to social media
- ☐ Updated event dates on visitwatertownwi.com
- ☐ Continued work on Leadership Watertown alleyway beautification project
- ☐ Worked on billboard commitments
- ☐ Attended Watertown Main Street board meeting
- ☐ Attended WEDA Economic Development 101 seminar (two sessions)
- ☐ Created a proposal to recruit an art museum extension to the community
- ☐ Represented Tourism at Wake-up Watertown
- ☐ Attended Travel Wisconsin Fall Preview webinar
- ☐ Volunteered for Watertown Chamber golf outing
- ☐ Attended Chamber marketing meeting
- ☐ Met with Watertown Country Club relationship group

- ☐ Coordinated final distribution of Tourism guides
- ☐ Continued work on “Locals” exploration game
- ☐ Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - o 4th of July Parade
 - o Latinos Supermarket
 - o Watertown Riverfest
 - o Watertown Country Club
 - o Fly-in Food Fest – Airport
 - o Wings Over Watertown – Airport
 - o Music at the Museum – Octagon House
 - o Multiple concerts at Bentzin Family Town Square
 - o First Kindergarten Interactive Classroom ribbon cutting
 - o Madison Crafts & Fabric
 - o Christmas in July Sidewalk Sales
 - o Rock River Disc Golf Course