

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes July 14

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Conrad Talaga, Cheryl Mitchell, Aaron David, Peter Wright
Also present; Robin Kaufmann Tourism Manager, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel, Melissa Lampe Main Street Program, Andrea Draeger Park and Rec Department, Dana Davis City representing the City Council, Karen Pugh area business owner

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am. Peter Wright made a motion to address the agenda items out of order and Conrad Talaga seconded the motion. The commission passed the motion.
2. Review & Approve June Minutes – Peter Wright made a motion to approve the minutes with the following change; Under ‘Upcoming Events’ change GOLD tournament to GOLF tournament. Conrad Talaga seconded the motion and the Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Financial Report: Robin Kaufmann reported Month to Date information as of 6/30/22

Motion to approve the financials was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Peter Wright. The Commission voted to approve the financials.

- b. Marketing Plan – review and take possible action on marketing plan
 1. 2022 Visitor Guides – Guides will be distributed at Jefferson County Fair and the Wisconsin State Fair.
 2. Ad Opportunities: None as of now.
 - c. Updates/Discussion on mural restoration;

The 1st Brigade Band mural project will start soon. Designs for the Draeger Floral mural are being submitted.
 - d. Hotel Stay updates: Hotel occupancy nationwide was 69%. Domestic leisure travel is still leading the recovery. Corporate travel is still down 20% from 2019 and is projected to finish approximately 20% down through the end of the year. International travel should recover quickly with covid testing requirements being relaxed.

Locally, traffic from the EAA event is lower than expected. Hopefully, EAA visitors will book within the next week.

The Solar Project in Jefferson is affecting local occupancy some of which is long term.

4. New Business

- a. Guest – Karen Pugh; Discussion on obstacles in obtaining permits for outdoor events.

Outdoor dining is in demand and Watertown businesses find it difficult to offer this valuable feature with or without alcohol due to antiquated city ordinances and the long approval processes. City of Watertown won't allow a business to have outdoor seating if a residence is within 300 feet of the business. The approval process for an outdoor patio space to a bar/restaurant can take months to years to be approved, and can be an expensive process, requiring exorbitant surveying costs, application costs, and more. Other cities surrounding Watertown offer this feature and it results in Watertown residents spending their dollars in another city to enjoy outdoor services.

Businesses also face obstacles when wanting to provide alcohol outside of an establishment. City code requires fencing and or other barricades be placed to enforce the area being served. If an area does not provide fencing, police services/auxiliary/private security are required to enforce the borders of the area where alcohol will be permitted. It is against city code for two or more businesses holding liquor licenses to hold a shared event which helps make the event more attractive to visitors while lessening the cost burden.

- b. Discuss and take possible action on ARPA funds request: This agenda item will be moved to the August meeting. The city would like to have more details on how the funds will be spent. A strategic discussion needs to take place as part of the August meeting.
- c. Discuss and take possible action on Tourism Manager hours. Peter Wright made a motion to approve up to 40 hours/week for the Tourism Manager during special events that require additional hours. Cheryl Mitchell seconded the motion and the Commission voted to approve the additional hours.
- d. Discuss and take possible action on mapme.com opportunity. This website offers many options for creating a user friendly and adaptable online map for a downtown area. Administrators can imbed photos, videos, QR codes and links back to area businesses. Users can apply filters to highlight specific segments and the maps are also printable. The cost of the site is \$950/year. The site would require an administrator to create and monitor the content. The Tourism Commission will continue the conversation about the site with other area entities to split the costs and maximize the value to Watertown's organizations.
- e. Discuss and take possible action on Riverfest grant application. Riverfest will take place from August 11th through August 14th. This event will bring in visitors, vendors and music acts that will stay overnight. The organizers are requesting a grant of \$1000 to help cover the costs of publicizing the event. Conrad Talaga made a motion to provide a \$1000 grant and Cheryl Mitchell seconded the motion. The Commission voted to approve the motion.
- f. Review Manager's report of previous month's tasks: Attached
- g. Commission members report on upcoming events: The Town Square project continues and is Expected to open in the fall. The Chamber of Commerce golf event will be 7/28. The Wels Women's Ministry Conference is coming to town on July 20th and will bring many women to the area. The New Teacher Breakfast will be August 17. EAA guests will start arriving on 7/22 and continue for the next 10 days. Another Music at the Museum event is scheduled for July 18 and on August 22nd. The Ice Cream Social will be 9/18. The Octagon House will host a wedding reception on September 24th.
Kart Park is a mobile trailer full of games and activities for kids that moves throughout the community. The Kart holds regular programming in underserved areas, and has participated in several community events. Kart Park is facilitated by Watertown Park & Rec.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting made at 9:16 by Peter Wright and seconded by Cheryl Mitchell

Agenda items:

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

The next meeting will be at 8:00 am August 11, 2022, 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