

Watertown Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes February 8, 2024

The following Tourism Commission members were present via Zoom Meeting or in person at Watertown City Hall: Aaron David, Kristine Butteris, Cheryl Mitchell, Conrad Talaga, and Peter Wright
Also, present; Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bonnie Hertel, City Council Member Steven Board, Tourism Manager Robin Kaufmann, and Programming Event Coordinator Stephanie Juhl

1. The meeting was called to order by Aaron David at 8:02 am.
2. Review & Approve January minutes. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Peter Wright and Conrad Talaga with the following changes: Under Old Business>Marketing Plan, change 2023 visitor guides to 2024 visitor guides. Under Marketing plan>Hotel stay updates, change comparable years to 2022. The Commission voted to approve the minutes.
3. Old Business:
 - a. Approve Financial Report: Motion to approve the January financials was made by Kristine Butteris and seconded by Conrad Talaga. The Commission moved to approve the financials.
 - b. Marketing Plan – review and act on marketing plan.
 1. More ads were sold than expected and the guide will be 20 pages. The guide is ready to be proofed and printing and distribution will be done in March.
The cost of the Dodge County guide will be the same as last year. Solicitations are not out to advertisers yet.
 2. Ad opportunities – Nothing new to present
 3. Video production – The video is released on social media and on the Watertown Tourism home page. Towne Cinema is showing the video before the movies.
 - c. Review and act on Mural Restoration projects: Due to ongoing repairs to the bridge, the Willkommen mural will not be repaired in 2024.
 - d. Discuss and act on Watertown Riverfest objectives – 13 acts have been approved and negotiations are underway.
 - e. Discuss Hotel stay updates – Final December occupancy was Nationally 52.6%, Wisconsin \$40.3%, Wisconsin South 36.9%, and local market 31.6%. Not final but estimated January occupancy nationally is 54%, Local Market approximately 35% despite favorable weather. Forecast for March and April is expected to be lower occupancy than 2023. Forecast for May – October weekends is forecasted to be higher than 2023. Overnight stays from the RNC in July have not impacted the local market currently.
4. New Business
 - a. Discuss and act on Bentzin Family Town Square grant request. The town square will be busy next year with events nearly every weekend from June through October and more events are being added to weekdays. Events include concerts, movie nights, art events, private bookings, YMCA and Senior Center classes, food trucks, artisan markets and more. Overnight stays projections are uncertain at this time. As 2024 is the first full year with events, funding the square is vital to growing the quality and reach of the events.
A motion to approve \$5000 in funds for the Bentzin Family Town Square’s Summer Concert Series was made by Cheryl Mitchell and seconded by Conrad Talaga. Kristine Butteris abstained.
 - b. Review Manager’s report of previous month’s tasks: Attached

c. Commission members' report.

1. Discuss upcoming and past events: January 26 dance competition. January 25-27 had 260 visitors to Maranatha, and some resulted in overnight stays. Candlelight hike February 10. Luther Prep basketball tournament March 8. Leader to Leader conference at Maranatha March 7-8.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 am was made by Conrad Talaga and seconded by Peter Wright.

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 8:00 am March 14, 2024, 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

Manager's Report – January

Social Media Report

Facebook: 67 new followers (Post reach 84,912)

Visitwatertownwi.com: 1168 Users - 5168 views

Instagram: 1103 followers

- Regularly posted to social media (Watertown, Jefferson County)
- Represented Tourism at Wake up Watertown
- Prepared marketing piece for Chamber's Annual Report
- Awarded Watertown Window Wonderland participants
- Met with Mayor McFarland to provide a Tourism update
- Updated event dates on visitwatertownwi.com
- Attended Bentzin Family Town Square Committee meeting
- Attended AI lunch and learn
- Continued planning Watertown Riverfest 2024
- Provided content for Watertown Tourism 2024 Guide
- Attended Dodge County JEM Grant workshop
 - Visited businesses/events to take photos for future promos:
 - Rampage
 - Kiss My Axe
 - The 3D Print Store
 - Watertown Player's Theatre