

**CITY OF COLUMBUS  
COLUMBUS TOURISM COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**DATE: January 8, 2018**

**LOCATION: CITY HALL, 105 N. DICKASON BLVD.**

**1.) CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Andrew Traxler.

**2.) ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

The roll was taken. Present: JD Milburn, Robert O’Brion, Michael Thom, Andrew Traxler. Absent: Kal Patel. City Staff present: JT Cestkowski and Matt Schreiber.

**3.) NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

**4.) APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Milburn to approve the 1-8-2017 Tourism Commission Agenda, seconded by O’Brion. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 4-0-0.

**5.) APPROVE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 11, 2017 MEETING**

After review, motion by O’Brion to approve the 1-8-2017 Tourism Commission Agenda, seconded by Milburn. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 4-0-0.

**6.) OLD BUSINESS:**

**1.) Continue work on the Tourism website/web page – discuss and consider the design and content of the page(s).**

Cestkowski provided an overview of the website updates from the December Tourism Commission meeting. He reviewed a mock website for the City of Columbus Tourism website. Traxler commented that he did not like the navigation bar along the left hand column for the mock website. He also wanted to link videos of local events (i.e. Holiday Train) on the website.

Milburn requested to view the website using the mobile device view. He suggested making the menu for the website thumb ready. Milburn added that he likes the site in general and suggested adding a link to maps for visitors to locate sites and attractions. Thom agreed that the tourism website must functional on mobile devices.

Thom noted that he thought the website would have a different look at feel from the cities website. Milburn noted that Pensacola, FL uses CivicPlus for their tourism site. He likes the using the subdomain on the City’s website due the traffic that is already generated by the City of Columbus website.

O’Brion commented that he did not like the side navigation bar. Cestkowski noted that it is one of the constraints of using CivicPlus is that it is difficult to customize a specific webpage. O’Brion also noted that he preferred the brief paragraph on the mock tourism home page because it is

easier to quickly read the information on the page. Milburn noted that having the correct words on the webpage will enhance the website with search engines.

Thom asked Cestkowski if we could change the mock website and use generic photos for each tourism attraction category or have it rotate through the photos. He also noted that the next event in the City should have the best visibility on the website. The commission decided that no business will be listed on the main page of the tourism website. However a list of businesses would be considered under a variety of categories, including but not limited to: Recreation, Restaurants, Accommodations, and Transportation.

Cestkowski indicated there would be a cost to remove navigation bars on the Tourism website to customize the site. He also suggested reducing the white space and place larger photos for each category on the tourism website. The commission agreed and instructed Cestkowski to proceed with redesigning the tourism website and explore costs to customizing the city of Columbus tourism website with CivicPlus.

**2.) Consider contribution towards the portable restrooms used at the Holiday Train Event.**

Thom stated that Tourism Commission should consider funding this agenda item because the city is marketing the holiday train and there are no public facilities on site. He did note that in the future the portable restrooms should be placed on public right of way to avoid conflicts with private property owners in the area. Milburn stated that other entities that benefit from the holiday train should be asked to contribute towards the expenses incurred by hosting holiday train in future years.

Motion by O’Brion to pay Country Plumber the invoiced total of \$440 for portable restrooms at the Holiday Train Event, seconded by Milburn. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 4-0-0.

**7.) New BUSINESS:**

**1.) Consider contribution towards Candy Canes and Adult Crafts used at the Holiday Train Event.**

Columbus Parks and Recreation submitted receipts that were used at the Holiday Train warm-up event. Traxler requested the attendance of the warm up event. Milburn stated that the Tourism Commission should only fund events that bring people in from out of town. The Adult Crafts was a local event hosted at the senior center and had limited availability to visitors from outside of Columbus. Therefore the Commission did not want to reimburse the costs from the Adult Crafts.

Motion by O’Brion to reimburse the Columbus Parks and Recreation \$63.30 for candy canes used at the Holiday Train, seconded by Milburn. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 4-0-0.

**2.) Consider the establishment of a Tourism Commission Facebook page.**

Cestkowski provided the background regarding a Tourism Facebook page. He stated that no formal motion was made previously. Milburn suggested the Facebook page should be a push only system. In addition, the city social media policy would not permit another City of Columbus Facebook page.

Motion by Thom to recommend City of Columbus Common Council approval of a City of Columbus Facebook page, seconded by Traxler. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 4-0-0.

**3.) Consider the purchase of advertisements in the 2018 Columbia and Dodge County Tourism Guides.**

Cestkowski presented the costs for to purchase advertisements in the 2018 Columbia and Dodge County Tourism Guides. The Columbia County guide costs are \$1925 and they would print 50,000 copies. The Dodge County guide costs are \$1480 and they would print 35,000 copies. O’Brion commented that these guides get distributed throughout the state.

Motion by O’Brion purchase advertisements in the 2018 Columbia and Dodge County Tourism Guides not to exceed the total of \$3,405, seconded by Thom. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 4-0-0.

**4.) Discussion on next meeting date – consensus was Monday February 12, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.**

**8.) ADJOURN.**

Motion to adjourn by O’Brion, seconded by Traxler. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 4-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Matt Schreiber, Director of Planning and Development