

**CITY OF COLUMBUS
MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBUS TOURISM COMMISSION**

DATE: June 27, 2018
TIME: 6:00 p.m.
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 – The roll was taken. Present: JD Milburn, Becky LaPlante, Stacy Nehmer, Robert O’Brion, Michael Thom, Andrew Traxler. Absent: Kal Patel. City Staff present: Matt Schreiber and JT Cestkowski. Also Present: Heather Kuenzi from the Columbus Carriage Festival.
- 3.) NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING – Meeting was noticed in accordance with
- 4.) APPROVE AGENDA - Motion by Milburn to approve the 6-27-2018 Tourism Commission Agenda, seconded by Thom. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 6-0.
- 5.) APPROVE MINUTES - Motion by Milburn to approve the 5-21-2018 Tourism Commission Minutes with one modification to reword the City Tourism Facebook Page to Visit Columbus Wisconsin Facebook Page , seconded by O’brion. Motion carried on a unanimous vote of 6-0.
- 6.) CITIZEN COMMENTS – None
- 7.) **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 1.) Report out from the Columbus Carriage Festival regarding the impact of the 2018 event

Heather Kuenzi from the Columbus Carriage Festival was in attendance to update the Commission on the results of their event. Kuenzi indicated that the event was well attended despite the fact that it was an unseasonably warm weekend. She added that next year they are looking to add antique cars to the event and utilize the green space in the park for the antique cars.

Kuenzi shared that the Firemans Park was not set up like previous years. Next year staff will work with Columbus Carriage Festival to get a DPW work order completed to set up the facility as needed. Also in the future the city will share the event on the City of Columbus and Visit Columbus Wisconsin Facebook pages. The event will also be posted on the Visit Columbus Wisconsin website.

Heather also presented the results of the Facebook Snapshot report. This report detailed the impact of their Facebook marketing campaign. The report provided data about several items, including: total audience, reach, geographical impact, top posts and the effectiveness of the advertising budget. Traxler commented that the Facebook Snapshot Report provides great feedback and would like see the reports for any events that utilize Facebook marketing in the future.

2.) Update on the City of Columbus Tourism website

Nehmer asked if this could be a tab on the city Website. Cestkowski said there would be a tab on the city website for things to do. He added it could be built in Civics Plus or he could build it in word press. If it were in word press the tab would link to the word press site.

Milburn stated visitors often search for things to do and that Facebook, Trip Advisor and Travel Wisconsin were the top results for the search. Milburn suggested partnering with Travel Wisconsin to update the Columbus page.

Cestkowski requested the Commission to approve funding for the website and to develop the site in wordpress. Cestkowski said, compared to Civics Plus, wordpress allows him more flexibility to customize the website. Traxler added that as long as a link is provided to the tab on the city of Columbus homepage that he preferred word press to build the site.

Consensus from the Commission was for JT to move forward with development of the website in word press and to develop a budget for the July meeting.

8. New BUSINESS:

1.) Consider Contributing to Computer Costs for Marketing

Cestkowski requested that the Tourism Commission consider contributing towards the cost for his upgraded computer. He stated the computer came in over budget because they purchased an upgraded computer to accommodate duties for the channel 980 news, tourism and website maintenance. Traxler had concerns because Tourism Commission funds a 25% percent of Cestkowski position and the request was for 50% of the upgraded costs. He added that 30% of the room tax is shared with the general fund for administrative costs, he suggested considering those funds to help offset the upgraded computer costs. Thom agreed saying he had similar concerns. The Item was tabled until the next meeting.

2.) Discuss participation in City of Columbus Downtown Beautification Task Force

Schreiber reviewed the purpose of the downtown beautification task force. The task force will address trash cans, benches, flowering baskets or planters, wayfinding signage, banners and a variety of other issues. The task force will develop a budget and recommendation to council. O'Brion suggested looking at state grants to assist with the beautification effort. Thom suggested looking into the Mae Ward funds to see if they could be utilized for the beautification efforts.

3.) Discuss partnership with the Columbus Fall Festival

Milburn said this used to be a big event and the senior center needs to be involved with this event. He added the fall events have many different concepts from arts and ales to the pet parade. The Tourism Commission recommended that staff look at various grants to assist with the festival.

4.) Consider contribution towards marketing in the Visit Madison Guide

Milburn reviewed the benefits of advertising in the Visit Madison Guide. He strongly suggested that the Tourism Commission advertise in the print version and online. Traxler would support marketing in the Visit Madison Guide if they partnered with the Columbus Chamber of Commerce to split the costs. Milburn suggested that follow up at the August or September Tourism Commission meeting and contact the chamber to gauge their interest in supporting this effort.

9. ADJOURN – The meeting adjourned on a motion by Milburn and a second on O’Brion at 8:05 PM.

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