



City of Rock Falls Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

Date:01/13/2021

Time Meeting Started: 10:00 a.m.

Time Meeting Ended: 10:25 a.m.

Members		Also Attended	
Chairman Jim Schuneman	P	Interim Director Melinda Jones	P
Brian Tribley	P	Diane Bausman	A
Emily Roth	A	Administrator Blackert	P
Amy Williamson	P	Mayor Wescott	P
Bethany Bland	P		
Casey Babel	P		
Tom Rynott	P		

Ordinance/Topic	Discussion	Plan of Action
Call to Order – Via Zoom	Meeting was called to Order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Schuneman	
Audience Requests	None	
Approve Minutes	A. Committee reviewed minutes from the November 18, 2020 Tourism Committee meeting. Casey Babel moved to approve minutes as presented, second by Brian Tribley, motion carried	Minutes Approved
Updates	A. Diane Bausman, Blackhawk Waterways i. Report from BWCVB was presented (Copy Attached) B. Bethany Bland, Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce i. Stated that the Chamber is working on the Annual Dinner that will be held virtually, they are also working on a line up of other events for the year. C. Director's Report – Melinda Jones i. Read a thank you from the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce for Tourism's support their Sights & Sounds Event ii. Sponsorship letters have been sent out and we have received \$4,500.00 in sponsorships already. iii. The bands for Food Truck Fridays have all been scheduled D. Mayor Wescott stated that he has spoken to Sauk Valley Community College about our Art in the Park sculptures. They are redesigning their exterior grounds and will possibly like to do the same type of thing for sculptures at the college. E. Marketing/Advertising/Promotions i. Ads have been sent to Blackhawk Waterways to be included in their 2021 Visitor's Guide, working on the billboard advertising and the Tourism Website is up 154% on unique visits from last year at this time. F. Tom Rynott gave a report on the Holiday Light Display at Centennial Park. Everything went extremely well and there were 9,000 vehicles that drove through the park. All the feedback was positive and they are hoping to make this an annual event. Tom thanked everyone who participated and helped with the event.	No Further Action required on all items
New Business	A. Robbin Blackert gave the committee a proposal for a new color copier in the Tourism Department. The copier that is being used now is 9 years old and is too old to have a maintenance agreement on it, if	No further action on all items

	any maintenance needs to be done it could be very expensive. The proposal is for a 60 month lease and total protection maintenance agreement for \$188.28 per month. This will be figured into the FY 2022 budget and presented to the committee. B. Robbin Blackert informed the committee that the City has received an Economic Support Grant in the amount of \$122,000.00 that will reimburse Tourism for the Emergency Hospitality and Small Business Grants that were given out.	
Committee Member Items	A. Mayor Wescott presented the committee with information on the purchase of a Christmas Tree for the Amphitheater at the RB&W Park. If we order the tree in January or February we will receive a 33% discount on the tree. The cost of the tree will be \$6,193.00, the ornaments will be \$925.00 and the shipping will be \$726.00 – total cost will be \$7,844.48. There was discussion on whether we needed the ornaments or if the garland and lights would be enough. Consensus was that the ornaments would add a lot to the tree. A motion was made by Tom Rynott and second by Casey Babel to purchase the Christmas tree with the ornaments at a cost of \$7,844.48. 5 ayes, 1 Recuse (Bland). Motion carried	Approved purchase of Christmas Tree for the Amphitheater
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m..	

Chairman Schuneman



BWCVB Executive Director, Diane Bausman
Report for Rock Falls Tourism Board
January 13, 2021

Meetings Attended:

- Dec 14 & Jan 11 - Council of Convention & Visitor Bureaus Zoom meetings
- Dec 18 - Illinois Office of Tourism Zoom meeting
- January 7 - Illinois Made presentation at Kennay Farms Distillery, Rochelle
- January 12 - Carroll Co Hotel/Motel meeting via Zoom

Web Site Update:

GREAT NEWS! We are pleased to announce that our application for a Business Interruption Grant (BIG) was successful and we received a \$5,000.00 grant that will be used for website maintenance & technology upgrades to visitnorthwestillinois.com. This is great news because due to the severe cutbacks in our state funding for this fiscal year, this was one area that we had to cut from our budget. We recognize that keeping our website updated and current is very important as we extend our reach and promote our region as a tourism destination. Receiving this grant is a very bright spot in what has been a rather bleak year!

Advertising, Promotion & Public Relations:

- **Blog:** On December 8th our blogger, Brienna, posted an article on Big Miniature Farm (located in Mt Carroll) and on social media it had a reach of 2,656 and 304 engagements. On Jan 5th she posted a blog on Rooted Boutique (located in Fulton) and that blog has a reach of 4,806 and 547 engagements.
- **BWCVB Social Media:** In the last month we posted 20 times on FB and 18 times on Instagram. As of this morning our analytics show our page likes are up 106% over the previous month and our post reach is up 9%.
- On January 8th we posted a 22 second video promoting the Illinois Made presentation to Kennay Farms Distilling. As of today, it's had 665 views.

- Here are the top results from the FB boosts we in the last 2 months

Post	Total Reach	Engagements	Shares
<u>BWCVB Thanksgiving post</u>	1,400	62	3
<u>Rochelle Reverse xmas parade</u>	1,147	52	45
<u>Cure Cabin Fever</u>	1,059	63	54
<u>Lincoln Way Inn</u>	2,141	141	60

- **Radio shows:** WRHL 12/23; WLLT weekly & WCCI bi-weekly.

Other Updates:

- **2021 Visitor Guide** - We are in the process of the final proofing of our 2021 Visitor Guide and hope to have it sent to the printer by next Monday with delivery by the 2nd week of February. We appreciate Rock Falls purchasing a full-page ad in the Guide since due to the state and local cutbacks, the ad revenue has to cover the costs of producing the Visitor Guide. Thank you!
- **Illinois Made recognition** - January 7th we held an in-person but socially distant presentation of the official Illinois Made designation plaque at the Kennay Farms Distillery. This event was attended by the press and various officials from Rochelle. We are scheduled to do a similar presentation at the Village Bakery in Oregon on the 14th. These 2 businesses now join more than 175 small businesses that are part of the Illinois Made Program which started in 2016.

Blackhawk Waterways CVB Mission Statement

*To increase the economic impact to the four counties represented through promotions,
advertising and providing information to potential visitors.*