



City of Rock Falls Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 01/14/2026

Time Meeting Started: 10:01 am

Time Meeting Ended: 11:17 am

Members		Also Attended	
Chairwoman Vickey Byrd	P	Director Jones	P
Tom Henry	P	Assistant Amber Martinez	P
Christina Wolfe	P	City Administrator Blackert	A
Sam Kersey	A	Director Lenox – Visit NW Illinois	A
Michael Myers	A	Mayor Kleckler	P
Alderman Nathan Stahr	P		

Call to order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting called to order by Chairwoman Byrd at 10:01 am. 	
Audience Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	
Approved Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee reviewed the minutes from Nov. 12, 2025, tourism committee meeting. Tom Henry moved to approve minutes as presented, second by Christina Wolfe, motion carried. 	Minutes Approved
Updates	<p>Visit NW Illinois – Director Melinda reported for Director Lenox</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2026 Visitor Guide will be out by March 16th. Map of attractions has been updated to reflect Art in The Park at RB&W District Park. <p>Director Jones reported on Tourism updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Winter Wonderland” Business Window and House Decorating Contest – 10 Business participated and Sundae Funday won People’s Choice award. 10 houses participated with a winner in three categories Most Extravagant, Best Themed, and Best Use of Lights. Holiday Light Display @ Centennial Park – Due to the weather there were four nights that had no volunteers. Donations totaled \$4,700 for 2025 down from 2024. Hometown Heroes Banner Program – We currently have 20 banners sold. Deadline is March 2nd. Sponsorship Campaign – Letters have been mailed out. Campaign will end March 31st. Flock to the Rock ’26 – Scheduled for February 7th from 10am-2pm. Event will start at the Lower Dam to view eagles. “Hoo” Haven with live eagle and 1 hour presentation, Native American Cultural Presentation 1 hour presentation. Incredible Bats with live Bats, Armadillos, etc. and bringing Rico the Sloth, pictures can be taken for \$10. Paul Gierhart 1 hour photo presentation on eagles and birds along the Rock Falls Birding Trail. Four educational vendors currently. Kids activities: coloring pages, eagle plush toy, and eagle crafts. Sick the Magazine Block Party – Route has changed and Sick will not have Rock Falls as a checkpoint for 2026. Sauk Valley Favorites –Taco Throwdown has been nominated for Best Event. Director Jones encouraged everyone to vote. Independence Day Celebration Tourism will have bands, foot trucks and vendors– Sterling/Rock Falls Jaycee’s will be hosting fireworks on July 2nd. 	<p>No Actions Needed</p> <p>No Actions Needed</p>
Event Sponsorship Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. 	No Actions Needed

Façade Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	No Actions Needed
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Rock Falls website had 4.2K views in the last 30 days. Top 3 sites: Holiday Light Display, Flock to the Rock, and Calander of Events. • Visit Rock Falls Facebook page had 172 new followers in the last 30 days for a total of 10,454 followers. The top post was Rico the Sloth announcement with over 70K views. • Visit Rock Falls Instagram page had 10 new followers in the last 30 days for a total of 965 followers to date. • Visit Rock Falls TikTok has 1 new follower and a total of 1,021 followers. • Tourism Advertising –Radio interviews with Regional Media. Commercials on WQAD & WHBF for Flock to the Rock. Ads in travel publications – North West Quarterly and Mature Focus. Back page ad for VNWIL Visitor Guide for 2026. • Podcast with Radar Free Press for Flock to the Rock and information about Rock Falls Tourism. 	No Action needed
New Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	No action needed
Old Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Façade Grant Map extension for target areas- Extension was made to reflect areas including West 2nd St to 12th St, 12th St to Route 30, Route 30 from 12th to 1st Ave, 1st Avenue to 1st St. After discussion, Alderman Nathan Stahr made a motion to approve, second by Christina Wolfe. Roll call – 4 yeas, 0 nays, motion carried. Will be taken to City Council for final approval. • Façade Grant verbiage changes in Program Objectives – the year (for example 2025-2026) will be removed and replaced with “each Fiscal Year”. A discussion was made. Tom Henry made a motion to approve, second by Chairwoman Vickey Byrd. Roll Call – 4 yeas, 0 nays, motion carried. Will be taken to City Council for final approval. • Revolutionary War Reenactment – Not available this year for America 250th. Looking into a Civil War Reenactment. Waiting on response from organization. • 144th Army Band – Waiting on response for June 14th date. 	<p>Approved – send to city council</p> <p>Approved – send to city council</p> <p>No action needed</p> <p>No action needed</p>
Hotels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Kleckler – Country Inn and Suites is 4 months delinquent on their Hotel/Motel Tax and has fire safety issues. City has given them until 1st of February or they will be facing a shutdown. 	No action needed
Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Kleckler – Will speak with Sterling Mayor for Sterling/Rock Falls partnership for Fireworks. 	No action needed
City Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	No action needed
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairwoman Vickey Byrd made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tom Henry. • The meeting adjourned at 11:17 am. • Next meeting will be February 11, 2026. 	Meeting Adjourned

Committee Chairman