



## City of Rock Falls Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: 2/12/2025      Time Meeting Started: 10:00 am      Time Meeting Ended: 10:50 am**

| Members                   |   | Also Attended                      |   |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Chairman Tribley          | P | Director Jones                     | P |
| Alderman William Wangelin | A | Assistant Erica Friesen            | P |
| Tom Henry                 | P | City Administrator Blackert        | P |
| Betsy Bunning             | P | Director Lenox – Visit NW Illinois | A |
| Christina Wolfe           | P | Mayor Kleckler                     | P |
| Sam Smith                 | A |                                    |   |
| Michael Myers             | A |                                    |   |
| Alderman Vickey Byrd      | P |                                    |   |
| Alderman Nathan Stahr     | P |                                    |   |

|                  |   |                            |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Call to order    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting called to order by Chairman Tribley at 10:00 am.</li> </ul>  |                            |
| Audience Request | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mike Balsley spoke on how he would like to donate approximately \$30,000 in memory of his parents to the RB&amp;W District for a digital sign that would be placed along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue in the RB&amp;W District area. He believes a digital sign should be placed there so people driving by would know what is going on at the park that given day or what is coming up. He would like it strictly for RB&amp;W District events. If the digital sign will not work, he is open to other ideas that the RB&amp;W District may be in need of. With whatever is decided, he would like a plaque placed stating his parents' name.</li> </ul>   |                            |
| Approved Minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee reviewed the minutes from January 8, 2025, tourism committee meeting. Christina Wolfe moved to approve minutes as presented, second by Tom Henry, motion carried.</li> </ul>   | Minutes Approved           |
| Updates          | Director Jones reported on Tourism updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of new Tourism Assistant – Erica Friesen</li> <li>Sponsorship Campaign is ongoing. Deadline is 3/31/2025</li> <li>Rock Falls Area Visitor Guide 2025/2026. Received first proof. Ad sales increased from 31 ads in 2023 to 38 ads this year. These ads help defray the cost of the guide. Guides should be ready for distribution April 2025.</li> <li>Flock to the Rock '25 was Saturday, February 8, 2025. Event was held at the Rock Falls American Legion. Speakers were Northern IL Raptor and Rehab Education, Chief White Winnebago (Gerald Savage), and Gary Metivier. Robert Storm carved 3 ice sculptures of which were placed at the RB&amp;W District after the event. We had nature-related, educational vendors.</li> </ul> | No Actions Needed          |
| Event Grant      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rock Falls High School – Percussion Palooza (February 23, 2025) requesting \$300. Chairman Tribley made a motion to grant the \$300 to Percussion Palooza, second by Betsy Bunning, motion carried.</li> </ul>   | Request of \$300 approved. |
| Façade Grants    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>   |                            |
| Marketing        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director Jones spoke at the Rock River Marketing and Rock Falls Rotary.</li> <li>Radar Free Press had Director Jones come in for a podcast about 2025 Tourism events.</li> <li>Promoted Flock to the Rock event on River Country and WNIU (Dekalb). Sauk Valley Media interviewed Director</li> </ul>  | No Action needed           |

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|------------------------|--|--|
|                        | <p>Jones for an upcoming article in the Living Sterling/Rock Falls publication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Jones did a TV appearance on KWQC – Quad Cities Live to promote Flock to the Rock event.</li> <li>• Paid TV commercial for Flock to the Rock event on WQAD.</li> <li>• Paid radio commercials for River Country/Shaw Media for voting for favorite park (RB&amp;W District) and favorite event (Taco Throwdown Festival) contest and commercial on Regional Media for Flock to the Rock event.</li> <li>• Print advertising – Northwest Quarterly did an article called “Your Getaway to Winter Adventure – Rock Falls”.</li> <li>• Visit Rock Falls website had 4.7K views which is up 445 from 30 days ago. Top 3 sites: Flock to the Rock, calendar of events, and Emerson’s Pub.</li> <li>• Visit Rock Falls Facebook page has 9.230K followers which is up 15.3% in the last 30 days. Views are down by 13% in the last 30 days and engagement down 29% in the last 30 days.</li> <li>• Visit Rock Falls Instagram page had 9 new followers in the last 30 days for a total of 921 followers to date.</li> <li>• Visit Rock Falls TikTok had 45 new followers in the last 30 days for a total of 534 followers.</li> </ul>  |  |
| New Business           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RB&amp;W District Park Permit – Event for Quinceanera ceremony on August 2, 2025. Tom Henry made a motion to approve use of the RB&amp;W District for the Quinceanera ceremony, second by Christina Wolfe, motion carried.</li> <li>• RB&amp;W District Park monetary donation from Mike Balsley discussion. Ideas were a digital sign on East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street instead of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, mobile digital sign, and picnic area. Chairman Tribley and Director Jones will schedule a meeting with Mike Balsley in the near future to discuss ideas and bring back to committee.</li> <li>• Handicap parking spaces. Due to food trucks/trailers being too large for the pads at the RB&amp;W District, we have now had to put them on the road thus having to close East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in front of the park. Two parking spaces are designated for handicap parking in front of the park are available but with road closed this makes it difficult for people to utilize. Director Jones said Mark Searing thought we could make two additional handicap spaces along Avenue A in the diagonal parking section. Director Jones will have Mark Searing take to the ordinance committee for approval.</li> <li>• Tom Riefe contacted Director Jones about either donating his sculpture (Portal) or Tourism purchasing it for a small stipend amount and the sculpture would remain at the RB&amp;W District permanently. After discussion, Tom Henry made a motion that Tourism purchase the sculpture for the stipend amount of \$1,250, second by Vickey Byrd. Roll call – 6 yeas, 0 nays, motion carried.</li> </ul> | <p>RB&amp;W District Event Permit approved for Quinceanera ceremony</p> <p>No action</p> <p>No action, Mark Searing to take to Ordinance Committee</p> <p>Approve purchasing Portal sculpture at \$1,250.00.</p> |
| Hotels                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>   | No action needed   |
| Committee Member Items | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vickey Byrd commented on how well the Flock to the Rock event was and has heard great comments about the event.</li> </ul>  | No action needed   |
| Adjournment            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tom Henry made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Chairman Tribley.</li> <li>• The meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.</li> <li>• Next meeting will be March 12, 2025.</li> </ul>  | Meeting Adjourned  |