



City of Rock Falls

Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 03-09-2022

Time Meeting Started: 10:00 a.m.

Time Meeting Ended: 10:58 a.m.

Members		Also Attended	
Alderman Casey Babel - Chairman	P	Director Melinda Jones	
Alderman Bill Wangelin	A	City Administrator Robbin Blackert	
Alderman Jessica Devers	P	Deputy City Clerk Michelle Conklin	
Brian Tribley	A		
Amy Williamson	P		
Bethany Bland	P		
Tom Rynott	P		

Ordinance/Topic	Discussion	Plan of Action
Call to Order	Meeting was called to Order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Casey Babel	
Approve Minutes	Committee reviewed minutes from the February 9, 2022, Tourism Committee meeting. Casey Babel moved to approve minutes, second by Jessica Devers, Viva Voce Vote, 5 ayes, 0 nays, motion carried.	Minutes Approved
Tourism Committee Updates	a. Blackhawk Waterways report was reviewed. Melinda Jones stated that Diane Bausman could not be in attendance but she thanked the Committee and the City for the Letter of Funding. Robbin Blackert stated that the State matched our funds. b. Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce – Bethany Bland updated the Committee on the upcoming Business Boot Camp and the new De-Stress to Refresh launch. The Community Garage Sales and Tailgate Bingo Party are scheduled and Summer Splash, Fall Community Garage Sales, Community Trick or Treat and Hometown Holidays are being planned. There is also an Open House at that Chamber scheduled for March 22, 2022, more information will be coming. c. Tourism Director – Melinda Jones i. Bellson Music Festival – The name and likeness agreement has been signed by Francine Bellson so we can now use the Bellson name. Advertising has been started and the response has been very good. Advertising of the 4 bands that will be performing will be spread out over the next few months. ii. The contract for the Vietnam Wall has been signed so planning will proceed. It will be a lot of work but will be a good event. Robbin Blackert stated that an engineer will be shooting the grade so that the platform will be built level. It will need to look like it is a permanent wall with walkways and plantings.	No action on any items
Façade Grants	a. Blackhawk Hills Regional Council Façade Grant request of \$5,000.00 to help with costs of replacing existing alley-side parking lot. After discussion the Committee denied the application as it was the alley-side of the building and no funds left in the FY 2022 budget.	Sponsorship Grant in the amount of \$5,000.00 denied

New Business	a. RB&W District Wedding Ceremony Event Permits i. Wedding Ceremony Event Permit for the Poitras Wedding to be held on July 29 and July 30, 2022. ii. Wedding Ceremony Event Permit for the Rushing Wedding to be held on October 1, 2022. iii. Wedding Ceremony Event Permit for the Cantu Wedding to be held on May 19 and May 20, 2023. Bethany Bland moved to approve all 3 Wedding Event Permits, second by Tom Rynott, Viva Voce Vote, 5 ayes, 0 nays, motion carried. b.	All RB&W District Wedding Ceremony Event Permits approved.
Tourism Budget Review	Melinda Jones reviewed the FY 2023 Tourism Budget.	No Action
Committee Member Items	Amy Williamson asked about the picnic tables that are going to be placed in the RB&W Park. Robbin Blackert stated that the engineering will start working on the placement of approximately 38-50 tables and we should have an estimate sometime around June 2022. Robbin stated that once we have the estimate we should ask the ARPA Committee to help with the cost of the improvement. Also discussed was the water feature and bathrooms, Robbin stated that the bathrooms should be more of a priority than the water feature as the bathrooms should go in first as it will be cheaper to add the control room for the water feature after the bathrooms are complete.	No action
Adjournment	Casey Babel moved to adjourn, second by Jessica Devers, Viva Voce Vote, 5 ayes, 0 nays, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.	



 Chairman, Casey Babel

Report for Rock Falls Tourism Board
by BWCVB Executive Director, Diane Bausman
March 9, 2022

Meetings Attended:

- Feb 9th - Destinations International Town Hall meeting via Zoom
- Feb 15th - meeting with Fulton Tourism Director Lesley Webster
- Feb 22nd - BWCVB Board meeting via Zoom
- Mar 2nd - Savanna Hotel/Motel meeting
- Mar 8th - Carroll County Hotel/Motel meeting

Web Site Update:

Visitnorthwestillinois.com - In the last month we've had 6,450 unique visits to our website (up 41% over last month) and they viewed 1.49 pages per session. 13.41% came as direct traffic (typed in our URL); 53.63% came as organic traffic (searched using keywords that lead them to our site) and 25% were referrals and of those referrals 98.44% came from our Facebook posts. Referrals are up 152% over last month!
The top landing pages were (1) Travel blog on Basil Tree Ristorante (2) Discover the Great Outdoors (3) BWCVB home page (4) What to do/eat & drink/Sophie's Café

Advertising, Promotion & Public Relations:

- Our **Spring online advertising campaign** went live on March 1st and features outdoor biking, hiking, tubing and kayaking.
- We have **print ads** coming out in the next month in the Spring-Summer Illinois Travel Guide, Northwest Quarterly Business Edition, Silent Sports Magazine and the Rock River Getaway Guide
- **Requests for information:** In the last month we had 96 requests for VG's from our website.
- **Social Media/blog report:** In the last month Jayne posted 21 times on all our social media channels. In checking our analytics for the last month, it shows that referrals from our Facebook posts to our website were up 152% over last month.
- **Results from our top FB posts in the last month:**

	Total Reach	Post clicks	Shares
Basil Tree Ristorante blog post	4,684	273	21
White Pines Lodge reopening	4,003	112	4
Mad Hatter Antiques blog post	3,867	232	31
Chickweed Cottage post	1,251	24	10

- **Radio shows:** WRHL 2/23; WLLT weekly; WCCI bi-weekly. *Aroundptown.com* events are submitted weekly for their online newsletter.

SAVE THE DATE: August 25th - BWCVB Annual Dinner in Rochelle at the Chicagoland Skydiving Center located at the Rochelle Airport.

Blackhawk Waterways CVB Mission Statement

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