



City of Rock Falls Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

Date:03/10/2021

Time Meeting Started: 10:00 a.m.

Time Meeting Ended: 10:35 a.m.

Members		Also Attended	
Chairman Jim Schuneman	P	Interim Director Melinda Jones	P
Brian Tribley	P	Diane Bausman	A
Emily Roth	P	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	Meeting was called to Order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Schuneman	
Audience Requests	None	
Approve Minutes	A. Committee reviewed minutes from the February 10, 2021 Tourism Committee meeting. Casey Babel moved to approve minutes as presented, second by Amy Williamson, motion carried.	Minutes Approved
Tourism Committee Updates	A. Blackhawk Waterways, Diane Bausman (was not present) i. Report from BWCVB was presented (copy attached)	No Action
	B. Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce i. Chamber helped provide donated items to the residents affected by the Civic Plaza 1 fire. ii. Candidates Night will be March 11, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. iii. The annual Spring Bingo will be held this year but it will be Tailgate Bingo, they will play from their vehicles and will be either over the radio or with a P.A. system iv. Summer Splash will be held in June, taking the planning slow due to COVID	No Action
	C. Tourism Director i. The March 6, 2021 Bald Eagle presentation at the RB&W Park went well ii. Working with Chaz Slater to do a video to market events and also marketing Rock Falls as a destination	No Action
	D. Rock Falls Tourism Grants i. Event Sponsorship Grant – Sauk Valley Apple Cider Run to be held on October 9, 2021. Requesting \$250.00 to help with the hydration stations, snacks, drinks awards and advertising. Brian Tribley moved to approve the grant in the amount of \$250.00, second by Bethany Bland, motion carried.	Grant Approved
	ii. Event Sponsorship Grant – Bo's Bait & Tackle Youth Fishing Extravaganza to be held on August 7, 2021. Requesting \$1,000.00 to help with signage, t-shirts and prizes. Casey Babel moved to approve the grant in the amount of \$1,000.00, second by Bethany Bland, 7 ayes, motion carried.	Grant Approved
	E. Hotels	

	i. Amy Williamson – Holiday Inn – Have approximately 30 rooms that are being occupied by residents of Civic Plaza 1 ii. New law in Illinois that requires all staff to have panic buttons by March 1, 2021, Holiday Inn is in compliance	
New Business	A. Event Permit Application i. Taste of Fiesta – September 11, 2021 – Brian Tribley moved to approve the Taste of Fiesta Event Permit Application, second by Casey Babel, motion carried. ii. Wedding Ceremony Event Permit Application – Jones – VanDrew Wedding - August 12, 2021 Rehearsal and August 14, 2021 Wedding. Emily Roth moved to approve the Wedding Ceremony Event Permit Application for Toni Jones and Nicholas VanDrew, second by Tom Rynott, motion carried. B. Financial Commitment to Blackhawk Waterways Convention & Visitors Bureau – Support in the past has been from \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00 per year, Rock Falls has been very well marketed by the BWCVB in the past year or two. Bethany Bland moved to approve a letter of support and Financial Commitment in the amount of \$5,000.00 to the Blackhawk Waterways Convention and Visitor's Bureau, second by Amy Williamson, 7 ayes, motion carried.	Permit Approved Permit Approved Approve letter of support and financial commitment in the amount of \$5,000.00
Committee Member Items	Tom Rynott stated that he has been working with Keith Zoller from the Rotary Club of Rock Falls regarding sunflower beds at the Rotary Park in Rock Falls. There will be 3 beds of different types of sunflowers planted.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.	

Chairman Schuneman



BWCVB Executive Director, Diane Bausman
Report for Rock Falls Tourism Board
March 10th, 2021

Meetings Attended:

- February 12th - Great Rivers Country board meeting via Zoom
- February 17th - Webinar - "What We Learned & How it Will Affect 2021 Travel"
- February 22nd - ICCVB meeting via Zoom
- February 23rd - BWCVB Board meeting
- March 3rd - Savanna Hotel-Motel Board meeting via Zoom

Web Site Update:

Visitnorthwestillinois.com - In the past month we've had 5,537 unique visits to our website. Those visiting the site viewed an average of 1.71 pages while on the site & 98% of the traffic to the site came from Facebook. The top landing pages in order were (1) Lodging/vacation rentals (2) Get our Visitor Guide (3) Travel Blog

Advertising, Promotion & Public Relations:

- **Requests for information:** In the last month we've had 85 requests for VG's from our website and many of those came after we published a FB post on Feb.16th promoting the new 2021 Visitor Guide.
- **Good news for our region:** I participated in a nationwide webinar where it was emphasized that all indicators for the next year show that travelers will continue to avoid larger cities and seek remote destinations that offer safe social distancing. It was also stated that in the last year close-to-home travel of zero to 100 miles had its highest year-over-year growth across all regions in the United States. This is very positive news for us because we have always promoted our region as a leisure tourism destination offering wide open spaces and a variety of lodging options for travelers wanting an easy 2-3-day getaway. Additionally, they stated that the importance of an effective social media campaign is more important than ever because statistics show that travelers continue to book last minute and as the vaccines become more available, they predict this will continue throughout the rest of 2021.
- **Blog:** A blog on Pinehill Inn B&B was published on February 22nd and we did a 3-day FB boost which had a reach of 2,811 with 407 link clicks and 9 shares.
- **BWCVB Social Media:** Since Feb 10th we posted 25 times on FB and 23 times on Instagram. In checking our analytics for the last month, it shows that 98% of the referrals to our website came from our FB posts.

- Here are the top results from the FB posts we did in the last month:

Post	Total Reach	Shares	Post Clicks
<u>Visitor Guide Promo</u>	3,380	29	196
<u>White Pines Ranch Camp</u>	2,200	18	37
<u>Bald Eagle Program in RF</u>	1,800	10	33

- **Radio shows;** WRHL 2.25; WLLT weekly & WCCI bi-weekly.

Other Updates:

- **2021 Visitor Guide** - The new 2021 Visitor Guides were delivered on Feb. 19th. Copies have been sent to our legislators, our funding sources and to those who bought paid advertising. Thank you again for your purchase of a 2-page spread.
- During the Great Rivers Country Board meeting they announced that the Great River Road was one of 15 Nationwide Scenic Byways (there are 46) to receive the **All-American Road Designation**. I also contributed information for an article that will be coming out in USA Today later this spring.

Blackhawk Waterways CVB Mission Statement

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