

City of Rock Falls

Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 09/08/2021

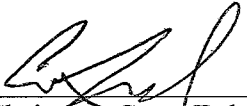
Time Meeting Started: 10:00 a.m.

Time Meeting Ended: 10:29 a.m.

Members		Also Attended	
Alderman Casey Babel - Chairman	P	Director Melinda Jones	P
Alderman Bill Wangelin	P	Tracy Finch	P
Alderman Jessica Devers	A	City Administrator Robbin Blackert	P
Brian Tribley	P		
Emily Roth	P		
Amy Williamson	A		
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 August 11, 2021 Tourism Committee meeting. Casey Babel moved to approve minutes, second by Bill Wangelin, motion carried.	Minutes Approved
Tourism Committee Updates	a. Blackhawk Waterways – Report from BWCVB was presented (copy attached) b. Bethany Bland stated that the Chamber is working on the Community Garage Sales, Uptown Trick or Treat, Hometown Holidays and Fall Community Garage Sales c. Tourism Director – Melinda Jones i. Art in the Park – The sculptures were installed on September 3, 2021 and the Art in the Park Sculpture Walk on September 4, 2021 from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. had a good turn out. ii. Catfish Tournament – There have been 12 boats registered so far and most of the boats register the night before the tournament. Signage is going up for the event. iii. Lumberjack Show – Tourism is helping Selmi's with this event, admission will be \$5.00 per person but they will get to participate in everything at Selmi's. iv. Beard Contest – There have been 7 or 8 entries for the contest so far v. Time Capsule – Burial will be held on October 22, 2021, we have reached out to anyone that would like to include items in the time capsule.	
Rock Falls Tourism Grants	a. Coloma Township Park District – Event Sponsorship Grant in the amount of \$2,500.00 to help with electric upgrades and staffing for the Holiday Light Display. This will be held for only 4 weeks this year and will be Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights in the month of December. Emily Roth moved to approve the Event Sponsorship Grant in the amount of \$2,500.00 and forward to the Finance Committee for final approval, second by Brian Tribley, motion carried.	Event Sponsorship Grant approved and sent to Finance Committee for final approval

Façade Grant	b. Sammy's Slots Downtown – Project has been completed and all paperwork has been turned in. Casey Babel moved to approve payment in the amount of \$5,000.00	Approved payment in the amount of \$5,000.00
Marketing/ Advertising/ Promotions	a. Advertising will be in the Northwest Quarterly Magazine for Fall in Rock Falls, this advertising is distributed in the suburbs b. Advertising in the Neighborhood Tourist Magazine will focus on Fall in Rock Falls and the Lumberjack show. c. Sauk Valley Media will do a 3 month advertising campaign focusing on Fall in Rock Falls, the Catfish Tournament, Lumberjack Show and the Eagle Trail. d. Melinda Jones will be on Paula Sands Live on September 22, 2021 promoting the Catfish Tournament and the Lumberjack Show	
New Business	a. The City has been approached about putting a plaque at the home of the founder of Rock Falls on 2 nd Street.	Will be placed on the October 2021 agenda for further discussion
Committee Member Items	a. Robbin Blackert asked that Tom Rynott and Bethany Bland let her know at budget time what their estimated annual requests are going to be this will help the Committee with the budget for grants. b. Robbin Blackert is going to turn in under the ARP grant to try and recoup Tourism's lost revenue of approximately \$100,000.00. c. Emily Roth questioned if we had any information regarding the Canal cleanup. Tom Rynott stated that there was a meeting at the Coloma Township Office with IDNR. There is approximately 100 miles of canal and only two DNR employees to take care of it. If there are going to be any people or groups who wish to volunteer their time to clean up the DNR will need to be notified and an employee will need to be with them.	
Adjournment	Casey Babel moved to adjourn, second by Bill Wangelin, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.	



Chairman, Casey Babel

Meetings Attended:

- Aug 19th - DCEO 'Back to Business' grant webinar
- Aug 19th - Oregon Chamber of Commerce annual dinner
- Aug 23rd - ICCVB meeting via Zoom
- Aug 24th - BWCVB Board meeting
- Aug 31st - Induction ceremony for the 1st group of inductees for the Illinois Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Museum in Joliet

Web Site Update:

Visitnorthwestillinois.com - In the past month we've had 12,408 unique visits to our website. Of those unique visits 10,297 were new to the site. Our page views averaged 1.71 per session and the top landing pages were (1) Discover the Great Outdoors (2) Events (3) lodging/cabins.

Illinoistrailofterror.com - Patha is busy updating the Trail of Terror website and we started promoting it Sept 1st. She is still working on updating the orchards, pumpkin patches, haunted houses, etc, but we still need your updates on Fall events and festivals so please send those to one of us ASAP!

Advertising, Promotion & Public Relations:

- **Requests for information:** In the last month we've had 65 requests for VG's from our website.
- **Advertising:** We now have ads running in NW Quarterly (both magazine & online); Silent Sports (both magazine & online); SVN Neighborhood Tourist magazine and a Windy City Times online banner ad.
- **Summer Online Advertising Campaign July-August report:**
 - **Total conversions** (visitor guide requests or contact form submissions) increased by 7.41% from the previous period.
 - **Google Network Ads**
 - * Total impressions on the Google Ad Network for Search, Display and YouTube were over 490,000 Impressions which generated 6,775 clicks, 3,926 video engagements and 3,154 video views.
 - * Impressions, clicks and conversions all saw an increase but video views, engagements and click-thru rate fell off slightly as compared to the last report. It's common to see these ebs and flows and overall, performance was very strong.
 - **Results of Visitor Guide Value-Ad-On**
 - * Impressions are up quite a bit as a result of the sub-campaigns TDG ran for visitor guide advertisers this past month. Each advertiser who ran a half page or larger got a display ad on the Google Network. **These ads served nearly 200,000 impressions and resulted in nearly 1,200 clicks to partner websites. WOW!**
- **Blog:** A blog on the new **Rivers Edge Farmers Market in Oregon** went up Aug 24th and the 3 day/\$10 FB boost had a reach of 2,950 with 251 engagements and 238 link clicks. A blog on the **White Pelican** canoe & kayaking business in Oregon went up 2 weeks ago and the 3 day/\$10 boost resulted in a reach of 2,328 with 245 engagements and 203 post clicks.
- **BWCVB Social Media:** In the last month we posted 25 times on FB and 24 times on Instagram. In checking our analytics for the last month, it shows that 88.4% of the referrals to our website came from our FB posts.

Our top Facebook posts in the last month were as follows:

 1. Mt Morris Straw Sculpting Competition with a reach of 3,329; 136 click thru's & 28 shares
 2. Rock Falls Art in the Park with a reach of 2,667; 195 click thru's & 17 shares
 3. Amboy Depot Days with a reach of 2,656; 79 click thru's and 18 shares.
- **Radio shows:** WRHL 7/25; WIXN 9/9; WLLT weekly; WCCI bi-weekly. ***Aroundptown.com*** events are submitted weekly for their online newsletter.

Blackhawk Waterways CVB Mission Statement

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