

## City of Rock Falls Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: 10/13/2021**

**Time Meeting Started: 10:00 a.m.**

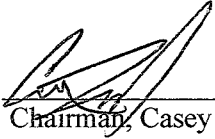
**Time Meeting Ended: 10:50 a.m.**

| Members                         |   | Also Attended                      |  |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Alderman Casey Babel - Chairman | P | Director Melinda Jones             |  |
| Alderman Bill Wangelin          | P | Tracy Finch                        |  |
| Alderman Jessica Devers         | P | City Administrator Robbin Blackert |  |
| Brian Tribley                   | P |                                    |  |
| Emily Roth                      | P |                                    |  |
| 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           | <p>Committee reviewed minutes from the September 8, 2021, Tourism Committee meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casey Babel moved to approve minutes, second by Bill Wangelin, Viva Voce Vote, 8 ayes, motion carried.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Minutes Approved                                                                                      |
| Tourism Committee Updates | <p>a. Blackhawk Waterways – Report from BWCVB was presented (copy attached)</p> <p>b. Bethany Bland stated that the Chamber is working on the Holiday Tailgate Bingo, Uptown Trick or Treat, Hometown Holidays and Grinch Dodgeball</p> <p>c. Tourism Director – Melinda Jones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Catfish Tournament – Went well, there were only 20 boats that entered tournament. With a payout of \$10,000.00 and entry fees just being over \$4,000.00 we need to see if this is something that we would like to continue.</li> <li>After discussion Brian Tribley moved to discontinue the annual Catfish Tournament, second by Bethany Bland. Vote 8 ayes motion carried.</li> <li>ii. Lumberjack Show – Attendance to the event was very good, the event was a success. Matt Selmi would like to do this event again in 2022. Melinda Jones will speak with Matt Selmi about splitting the cost of hiring Lumberjack Enterprises. Committee discussed the possibility of holding a 2-day event in 2022.</li> <li>Casey Babel moved to reserve Lumberjack Enterprises for a 2-day event in October 2022, second by Amy Williamson. Vote 8 ayes, motion carried.</li> <li>iii. Time Capsule – Burial will be held on October 22, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.</li> </ul> | <p>Annual Catfish Tournament will be discontinued.</p> <p>Will hold a 2-day event in October 2022</p> |
| Rock Falls Tourism Grants | <p>Rock Falls Chamber – Event Sponsorship Grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 for Hometown Holiday Events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casey Babel moved to approve the Event Sponsorship Grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 and forward to the Finance Committee for final approval, second by Tom Rynott, Viva Voce Vote, 8</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Event Sponsorship Grant approved and sent to Finance                                                  |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                   |
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|                                          | ayes, motion carried.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Committee for final approval                                                                      |
| Façade Grant                             | <p>Folsom's Bakery – Façade Grant Project is complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casey Babel moved to approve payment in the amount of \$387.10, second by Bill Wangelin, Viva Voce Vote, 8 ayes, motion carried.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Approved payment in the amount of \$387.10                                                        |
| Marketing/<br>Advertising/<br>Promotions | <p>a. Sauk Valley Media for Suburbs</p> <p>b. Northwest Quarterly Magazine – Reporter visited Rock Falls and had a tour of the area.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| New Business                             | <p>a. Rock Falls Chamber – Event Permit – Hometown Holidays – Will be holding the Love Light Ceremony at the RB&amp;W Park among other events. Requesting use of the RB&amp;W Park and waiver of fees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casey Babel moved to approve the Event Permit for the Rock Falls Chamber and waive any fees associated with the event, second by Tom Rynott. Vote 8 ayes, motion carried.</li> </ul> <p>b. Road closures will be discussed with the Rock Falls Police Department and then taken to City Council for approval.</p> <p>c. Wedding Ceremony Event Permit – Reynolds Zehr Wedding October 8, 2022 at the RB&amp;W Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casey Babel moved to approve the Wedding Ceremony Event Permit for October 8, 2022, second by Emily Roth. Viva Voce Vote, 8 ayes, motion carried.</li> <li>❖ Bethany Bland excused herself from the meeting at 10:30 a.m.</li> </ul> <p>d. Ride Illinois Community Bike Ride in Rock Falls – Melinda Jones stated that she will be having an event in Rock Falls in 2022. They are still in the planning stages and will have more information at a later time. Thoughts are to have activities for the kids to teach them bike safety and possibly an adult ride down the canal.</p> <p>e. Chairman Babel informed the Committee that the Finance Committee had approved an increase in the Tourism Budget in the amount of \$25,000.00 and had approved the \$2,500.00 Coloma Township Park District Event Sponsorship Grant for the Holiday Light Display.</p> <p>f. Melinda Jones informed the Committee that she will be having a Christmas Decorating Contest for homes in Rock Falls. This will be a vote on social media and possible a drop box at the Tourism Office. She is looking to have a map with all of the homes that have entered the contest so people know which homes are participating. The contest will run at the same time as the Park District's Holiday Light Display and winners will receive a gift card.</p> | <p>Event Permit for Rock Falls Chamber approved</p> <p>Wedding Ceremony Event Permit Approved</p> |
| Old Business                             | <p>a. Committee discussed placing a plaque at the home of A.P. Smith, founder of Rock Falls. During discussion it was decided that the plaque would be placed flush with the ground for easy maintenance, the cost of these plaques is approximately \$325.00.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tom Rynott moved to approve placement of a plaque at the home of A.P. Smith, founder of Rock Falls, second by Amy Williamson. Vote 7 ayes (Bland absent), motion carried.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                   |
| Committee Member Items                   | <p>a. Chairman Babel informed the committee that the Eagle Trail Committee met and has finalized the trail name, Rock Falls Birding Trail. Administrator Blackert is getting a cost for the signage.</p> <p>b. Brian Tribley stated that there has been good progress on the clean up at the upper dam, it is looking much better.</p> <p>c. Tom Rynott stated that there has been electrical upgrades made at</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                   |

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|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|             | the park for the Holiday Light Display, and they are looking for a few more sponsors.                                              |  |
| Adjournment | Casey Babel moved to adjourn, second by Tom Rynott, Viva Voce Vote, 8 ayes, motion carried.<br><br>Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. |  |



Chairman, Casey Babel

**BWCVB Executive Director, Diane Bausman**  
**Report for Rock Falls Tourism Board**  
**October 13, 2021**

**Meetings Attended:**

- Sept 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> - Upper Midwest CVB Conference in Des Moines
- Sept 28<sup>th</sup> - BWCVB board meeting
- Sept 29<sup>th</sup> - NWIED Annual Dinner at Eagle Ridge Inn/Galena Territories - I served on the regional leader panel
- Oct 7<sup>th</sup> - Blackhawk Hills Regional Council Greenways & Trails Zoom meeting
- Oct 12<sup>th</sup> - Carroll County Hotel/Motel Brd meeting
- Oct 13-14<sup>th</sup> - Illinois Council of Convention & Visitor Bureaus quarterly meetings in Skokie

**Web Site Update:**

**Visitnorthwestillinois.com** - For the last month we've had 10,436 unique visits to our website and they viewed 1.73 pages per session. 17% came as direct traffic (typed in our URL); 68% came as organic traffic (searched using keywords that lead them to our site) and 15% were referrals and of those referrals 85% came from our Facebook posts. The top landing pages were (1) Discover the Great Outdoors (2) Events (3) lodging/cabins (4) what-to-do/history & heritage

**Illinoistrailofterror.com** - We continue to update the Trail of Terror website. In checking the analytics for the TOT site, in the last month we've had 1,543 page views and they viewed 1.91 pages per session and spent 1.7 minutes per page. 38% was organic; 30.34 was direct traffic; 28% were referrals and of those referrals, 27% were from Facebook.

**Advertising, Promotion & Public Relations:**

- **Requests for information:** In the last month we've had 55 requests for VG's from our website.
- **Advertising:** We have an ad promoting the Trail of Terror in the Fall edition of the NW Quarterly (both magazine & online); Silent Sports (both magazine & online) October issue; SVN Neighborhood Tourist magazine and a Windy City Times online banner ad.
- **Online Advertising Campaign:** Our report for August & September showed that the overall performance metrics on the ad side were good with increases in most categories across the board. It was noted that the analytics were mostly flat, which isn't surprising for this time of year since we're coming off the summer travel season.
- **Blog:** Jayne posted a blog on the **Loft on Main Art Gallery** in Morrison on Sept 16<sup>th</sup> and the 3 day/\$10 FB boost had a reach of 2,900 with 66 link clicks & 6 shares. A Blog on the **Fulton Windmill & Cultural Center** went up on Oct 7<sup>th</sup> and the 3 day/\$10 boost had a reach of 2,500 with 228 post clicks and 64 shares
- **Social Media:** In the last month Jayne posted 28 times on FB and 27 times on Instagram. In checking our analytics for the last month, it shows that 87% of the referrals to our website came from our FB posts.
- Here are results from our top FB posts done in the last month:

| <b><u>Post</u></b>                                | <b><u>Total Reach</u></b> | <b><u>Post clicks</u></b> | <b><u>Shares</u></b> |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <b><u>Autumn on Parade in Oregon</u></b>          | 3,900                     | 279                       | 113                  |
| <b><u>Vintage Chicks n Things event</u></b>       | 3,300                     | 78                        | 24                   |
| <b><u>Fulton Fall Fest at Heritage Canyon</u></b> | 1,400                     | 36                        | 35                   |

- **Radio shows:** WRHL 9/22; WLLT weekly; WCCI bi-weekly. *Aroundptown.com* events are submitted weekly for their online newsletter.

**SAVE THE DATE:** It was just announced that the **Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism** will be held December 6-8. No information on the location has been release but as soon as I receive it, I will let you know.

***Blackhawk Waterways CVB Mission Statement***

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