

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

January 8, 2007

Sperry House, Kandiyohi County Historical Society, Willmar

Present: Betty Bollig, Alan Carlson, Bob Dickerson, Connie Filley, Beth Fischer, Jolene Garberich, Trudie Guptill, Marilyn Johnson, Richard Larson, Mona Nelson, Dave Pederson, Dean Shuck and Ed Walhof

Excused: Deb Geister, Tim Johnson and Janet Olney

Guest: Ken Warner

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Alan Carlson called the meeting to order at approximately 11:40 a.m. Mona Nelson, Executive Director of the Kandiyohi County Historical Society, welcomed everyone, gave a brief history of the Sperry House and reported Andria Olson of the Granite Falls area was recently hired as the museum's new curator.

[Marilyn Johnson and Betty Bollig joined the meeting.]

Ken Warner introduced Beth Fischer, the new Executive Director for the Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB).

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Bob Dickerson, SECONDED BY Trudie Guptill, to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2006 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

Trails Subcommittee. Connie Filley stated the subcommittee has not met. Bonnema Surveys will make a presentation to the West Central Snow Drifters Club this Thursday and then to the trail subcommittee at its next meeting, which may be January 16. Once the e-map is online, this committee will need to decide the next step before dissolving the subcommittee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Merger with CVB. Carlson reported a merger with the CVB will not happen and the committee will continue under the EDC with no staff representation. Carlson distributed a proposal of organizational changes to this committee (see copy attached to original minutes), which was discussed and clarified. The way advertising has been done in the past will continue with LAA and Carlson taking over the duties Kathy Schwantes handled.

Fishing the Midwest with Bob Jensen. Beth Fischer believes the show will air January 27 on cable channel 17 at noon and channel 28 at 12:30 p.m. The dates of area fishing contests will be a special button on willmar.com. Carlson reported the magazine has not yet been received. Nancy Birkeland reported the fishing contests known to date are listed on kandiyohi.com under Calendar of Events. Warner asked for followup on when the information will be provided to willmar.com. Warner stated the lake maps from the new visitors guide will be placed on area web sites.

Sport Shows. Carlson requested volunteers for the Northwest Sport Show and passed around a sign up sheet. Carlson reported the Little Crow Tourism Association has volunteers to staff the Omaha and Sioux Falls shows.

2006 Visitor Guides. Richard Larson reported the remaining 2006 visitor guides were brought to the recycling center. Carlson stated the visitor guide committee will look at enhancing distribution of the 2007 guide.

Billboards. Committee members who have seen the new billboard on north Highway 71 are pleased with its appearance. Larson recommended different colored flags (possibly even fluorescent) be used on the other billboards as the billboard is very light in color and difficult to see with blue flags against a blue sky. Carlson reported the Community Marketing Coalition paid \$1,300; the county paid \$4,300 and the remainder was paid by this committee. Carlson stated the County Board of Commissioners requested a billboard be placed on west Highway 12.

IT WAS MOVED BY Bob Dickerson, SECONDED BY Richard Larson, to install a county billboard on west Highway 12 near the county line. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

Advertising. Advertising in the *Minnesota Explorer* was discussed as it has not shown good response numbers—possibly only advertise in the spring/summer issue. Carlson stated it was determined to reconsider advertising in 2008 since 2007 ads were already budgeted. Discussion of the 2008 budget will need to start in May 2007.

Tourist Information Signs. Larson reported the county sign department agreed to make the county's 11 tourist information signs larger. **Larson** will followup on this. The signs are placed near each business that has a tourist information rack.

Other. Bob Dickerson reported the *Explore Southern Minnesota* has been printed. Carlson reported receiving the formal resignation of Helen Heinen from this committee. **Dean Shuck** will followup with Larry Kleindl on a replacement representative for the county parks.

Budgets. Carlson reported the 2006 budget that was distributed (see copy on file) does not include the billboard expenditure or the e-map expenditure of \$2,500, which will be paid from the 2006 budget. A copy of the 2007 budget was also distributed (see copy on file).

MONTHLY REPORTS

Glacial Ridge Trail. Shuck reported Douglas County completed the Internet grant project, which is a virtual tour of the trails. Ed Huseby and Shuck will tour the trail for sign placement under the new grant. Warner reported he recently attended a great presentation on the trail given by Randy Nelson of the local RC&D and recommended having him make a presentation to this committee. **Shuck** will contact Nelson.

Kandiyohi County Historical Society. Marilyn Johnson reported the sidewalks and steps to the Sperry House have been improved and they are hoping to install a public bathroom and new lighting was installed in the museum. Johnson showed the Kandiyohi County pictorial book that was a project with the West Central Tribune. The book has shown a good response and copies are available in the museum.

New London. Guptill reported the bike trail to Sibley State Park is still in the planning stages.

New London to New Brighton Antique Car Run. Ed Walhof reported they are always looking for new points of interest.

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC). Dave Pederson reported PWELC is holding an open house February 18 from 1:00-5:00 p.m. If snow is received, the ski event may still be held, but on a less advertised basis. The building project may begin this winter. The new west addition will hold 220 people classroom style or 130 at tables and will be named in honor of Earl B. Olson, who was a major contributor. A tree house addition will be done with a significant donation by the Linder family, who will have naming rights. They are waiting for a new drag for their trail groomer. The wind generator is working well. Carlson informed Pederson this committee has funds available for use in impact marketing that could be used for the ski event.

Spicer. Filley reported WinterFest is going forward, but at this time, there will be no ice structure or snow events. The Spicer Library received its grant to expand. The Design Team is working very hard on the play yard that will be constructed in mid-June and its next project is redoing the Spicer Lions shelter in the downtown park. Filley gave a list of activities for WinterFest, including skating demonstrations at the new ice skating and hockey rink at Prairie Meadows school. Filley asked that everyone pay attention to and recognize the WinterFest sponsors.

West Central Snow Drifters/Atwater. Jolene Garberich reported the club's end of season ball will be held in March and they are looking forward to the e-map demonstration this Thursday. Atwater Chamber of Commerce's annual banquet is January 27 with Tina and Lena as the entertainment. Garberich has tickets available at \$20 each.

Willmar Design Center/Main Street Willmar. Larson stated the Willmar Design Center is working on its 2007 goals and budget.

Other. Dickerson reported a film crew is coming with Ralph Jon Fritz of WCCO to tape a show. The crew is working with the CVB and locations to film include Schwanke's Museum and Mikkelson Boat Museum.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:55 p.m.