

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD (OB)
TOURISM COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 6, 2006
Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Spicer

Present: Alan Carlson, Connie Filley, Jolene Garberich, Dick Larson, Dave Pederson and Ed Walhof

Excused Absent: Mona Nelson and Janet Olney

Unexcused Absent: Betty Bollig, Trudie Guptill, Marilyn Johnson, Tim Johnson, Mark Johnson and Dean Shuck

Staff: Kathy Schwantes, Assistant Director

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

Chairperson Alan Carlson called the meeting to order at approximately 11:50 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Dick Larson, SECONDED BY Connie Filley, to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2006 meeting as mailed and e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS—

Trails Subcommittee. Kathy Schwantes distributed a summary of the October 17, 2006 Bike Trails/E-Trail Map Meeting (see copy attached to original minutes). Schwantes stated a meeting with Bonnema Survey has not yet taken place and Dick Larson stated he has not had a chance to speak with Bonnema Survey on behalf of the county. Connie Filley reported a draft contract will be prepared and the project is moving forward. Schwantes stated \$2,500 is budgeted for this project from this committee in 2006. Approval of an expenditure will be placed on next month's agenda. Jolene Garberich reported the snowmobile association discussed contributing \$3,000. Garberich stated December 2 is the snowmobile association's next meeting and they would appreciate seeing a demonstration of the mapping system. Carlson suggested a lead entity needs to step forward relating to expansion of the county trail system so the momentum continues forward. Rep. Al Juhnke and Senator Dean Johnson have stated that if a comprehensive plan is shown to the state, the likelihood of receiving funding is greater. It takes approximately one year to come up with a comprehensive plan. Filley mentioned the trails being looked at for the comprehensive plan. Filley stated the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) cannot get involved in spearheading the expanded trail. Helen Heinen and Larson stated a trail from this county to Alexandria was approved many years ago. Larson believes the state has allocated money from the Luce Line to Lake Lillian, Atwater and Blomkest areas. Heinen stated there are plans to connect Sibley State Park through Monson State Park in the Starbuck area. Committee members felt the expanded trail system ties in with the trend for individuals to stay physically fit.

Visitors' Guide. Carlson reported the guide is going along well and on schedule. Larson showed three draft covers. Schwantes reported the final edit of the book was completed last week and thanked LAA for also proofing the entire guide.

Advertising Tracking. Carlson reported Shari Courtney resigned from the Willmar Lakes Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) so there is no report available as to tracking advertising. Schwantes stated the **EDC** will followup with the CVB on its advertising reporting. Schwantes reported the web site statistics for kandiyohi.com are not accurate and Bennett Office Technologies is looking into the problem.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

County Billboard. Larson reported he and Dean Shuck have not been able to check on the county's tourism funds that may be available for new billboards. Schwantes reported the billboard on north Highway 71 was moved by Quick Signs. Schwantes reported Courtney asked if the Community Marketing Coalition (CMC) would fund one billboard, but no formal action was taken. Schwantes stated the CMC has strict regulations that the "See You in Willmar" logo must be on all materials it funds. Additional discussion on a wider scope for marketing will be held at the CMC's November 15 meeting. Filley believes the CMC was looking to do more countywide marketing. Schwantes stated the CMC is looking at its focus. Schwantes reported she ordered all five billboards be done starting with the north Highway 71 billboard. The billboards will feature three different tourism-related photos on each billboard (see copies attached to the original minutes).

"Fishing the Midwest with Bob Jensen." Dave Pederson stated the film crew was at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) for one hour. Schwantes stated other areas filmed included Sibley State Park, the Mikkelson Collection and West Central Bait. Schwantes thanked those who attended the evening dinner; there were 22 who attended. Schwantes recognized the CVB and Melvin's on the Lake for paying for the evening dinner and Bob Dickerson for driving the film crew around. Pederson believes Bob Jensen was very pleased with the fishing (Green Lake) and liked the area despite the inclement weather. Schwantes reported the show will be aired in January (the exact date and time are unknown) and the tape will be available for use at sport shows. Schwantes stated an ad will be in the *Midwest Fishing* magazine and the 800 phone number with a specific extension number will be included for tracking purposes.

County Parks Brochure. Schwantes reported Courtney was working with the county on redoing its county parks brochure and the proof was sent to the printer. Heinen asked if the kandiyohi.com web site will be on the new brochure and it is unknown.

NEW BUSINESS—

EDC Strategic Planning Session. Schwantes reported the EDC boards held a strategic planning session in October, which included a review of all committees. Staff was directed to review the EDC committees and make a recommendation to the EDCOB at its December 8 meeting. **Schwantes** will keep this committee informed of the progress on this.

MONTHLY REPORTS—

New London to New Brighton Antique Car Run. Walhof reported plans are underway for the 2007 car run.

PWELC. Pederson thanked everyone for the PWELC being a part of the filming for "Fishing the Midwest with Bob Jensen." Pederson reported the wind turbine should be erected today; a proposal will be sent to the Greater Minnesota Get Together to showcase the PWELC for its renewable energy efforts in south central Minnesota. The PWELC's goal is to be a zero net energy facility run 100% on renewable energy. Pederson reported he spoke with Forrest Peterson about

holding a one-day ski event at three locations: Sibley State Park, the PWELC and the groomed trails in Willmar, ending with a potluck at PWELC. Pederson recommended the local trails be on local web sites and the area be marketed as a skiing destination. The event will be marketed on www.skinnyski.com. The event would be more of a folk ski open house and not a timed race. Schwantes stated the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* has been a good place to market events such as this. The PWELC may hold a Victory Run in the spring with a couple of open houses throughout the year, which are good exposures but not income generating.

Spicer. Filley stated plans are underway for WinterFest started and a tentative schedule was created, including the Frozen 5K, opening night fireworks (January 20), Lions fishing derby, Polar Plunge, ice sculpture and ending with a banquet hosted by the Spicer Commercial Club and Spicer Economic Development Authority with awards given out. Melvin's on the Lake will be open during WinterFest.

West Central Snow Drifters/Atwater. Garberich reported the club meets the second Thursday each month; the trail is being extended from Lake Lillian into Cosmos and possibly into the Luce Line; another warming house is going up south of Atwater; trails may also go to Olivia, but the Renville County Trail Association is not very active so they are not sure if that will happen.

Willmar Arts Council. Carlson will followup with Janet Olney on Celebrate Art! Celebrate Coffee!

MainStreet Willmar/Willmar Design Center. Larson reported they are planning the November 18 Holiday parade and festivities and contact has been made with Bad Boyz, Inc. to move its annual hot rod and classic car show from St. Cloud to Willmar.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:40 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular meeting is **11:30 a.m., Monday, December 4, 2006** at **Green Lake Inn, Spicer.**