

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
March 3, 2008
New Fireside, Willmar

Present: Betty Bollig, Alan Carlson, Laura Clark, Bob Dice, Bob Dickerson, Beth Fischer, Jolene Garberich, Richard Larson, Dave Pederson, Dean Shuck, Ed Walhof and Connie Wanner

Excused: Connie Filley, Deb Geister and Trudie Guptill

Guest: Dave Baker

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director

Unexcused: Marilyn Johnson

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

Chairperson Alan Carlson called the meeting to order at approximately 11:40 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Beth Fischer, SECONDED BY Laura Clark, to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2008 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

Trails Subcommittee. Beth Fischer reported the subcommittee met last week and reviewed the website for changes. Fischer showed a draft of the business card that will be used to promote the website. The March meeting will include Justin Mattern and Matt Runke relative to changes they need to make to the site. Jolene Garberich believes the snowmobilers are using the site.

Advertising Tracking. Fischer distributed the tracking report relative to inquiries from advertising (see copy attached to original minutes). There were 195 requests in February 2008 compared to 80 in February 2007 with 97 of those requests coming from the Explore Minnesota website.

Tourism Information Rack. Connie Wanner reported a tourism rack was put into the Skylark Mall. It was reported Lakeside Press has recommended the word "Free" be included on the tourism information rack sign so it is clear to the public that they may take the materials in the rack.

IT WAS MOVED BY Bob Dickerson, SECONDED BY Connie Wanner, to allow Lakeside Press to redo the tourism information rack signs, at no cost, indicating the information is free, subject to the sign being reviewed and approved by this committee before printing. MOTION CARRIED.

Visitors Guide. Carlson reported there has been a strong favorable response to the new visitors' guide.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bike tour. Fischer reported she attempted to call the individual referred to in previous meetings, but has had no response.

Northwest Sportshow volunteers. Carlson thanked the resorters for staffing the Omaha and Sioux Falls sport shows in addition to the Northwest Sportshow. Carlson also thanked Laura and Terry Clark for covering the entire weekend of the Northwest Sportshow; another volunteer to help Beth Fischer on opening day is still needed.

Advertising opportunities. Fischer reported the subcommittee met and discussed additional advertising opportunities and researched where other communities advertise. The subcommittee recommends this committee advertise in *Best of the Midwest* produced by Midwest Living, USA Weekend magazine, KARE11.com, various newspapers and try a graphic ad on exploreminnesota.com. Discussion was held on promoting area participation in the "Deals" section of exploreminnesota.com for \$300/year. The **committee** was requested to think about this opportunity for the area and be ready to discuss how the committee can disseminate information or promote participation at the April meeting. Fischer stated the subcommittee discussed holding a community contest for the My Favorite Minnesota section of exploreminnesota.com and received approval from Explore Minnesota to hold such a contest. The contest would ask citizens to submit their ideas and pictures or have each community come up with five things to highlight in their community.

Redefining state tourism regions. Carlson reported he sent an e-mail to Dave Vogel and John Edman with the committee's response from the February meeting to redefining the state's tourism regions. The Minnesota Office of Tourism (MOT) is looking to enhance or better define for visitors what a region may have to offer and create groups that have unique attributes. Carlson introduced Dave Baker, representative of the Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) and Steve Renquist, the EDC's Executive Director, regarding this topic. Baker stated the CVB voted in favor of Kandiyohi County being included in the north central/west region and gave background on the CVB's decision. Baker distributed a map showing the four tourism regions and copy of the exploreminnesota.com website (see copies attached to original minutes). A meeting will be held March 25 with MOT representatives Colleen Thompson, Dave Vogel and John Edman at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) on this topic. Baker encouraged the committee to look at the region from the standpoint of the consumer and what the area has to sell (lakes). Renquist encouraged the committee to be aggressive in promoting the area and the natural resources it has; the start of the glacial lakes. The committee discussed the pros and cons of being in the southern region. The resorters present stated the majority of their guests come from southern Minnesota and the states bordering the state to the south. Baker recommended asking the MOT if Kandiyohi County can be listed in both the southern and north central/west regions because it is on the border of both. Carlson encouraged committee members to attend the March 25 meeting at PWELC. **Fischer** will confirm the time of the meeting and inform the committee. This topic will be discussed further at the April meeting.

Billboards. Dean Shuck reported he spoke with Larry Kleindl, who approved the county's sentence-to-serve workers installing the replacement flags on the billboards as needed. The committee just needs to let Kleindl know when they are needed.

There was no other unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Conference on Sustainable Tourism. Carlson reported the Conference on Sustainable Tourism is April 15 in Duluth. Anyone interested in attending should inform the EDC office.

IT WAS MOVED BY Betty Bollig, SECONDED BY Dean Shuck, to pay the \$95 registration fee for any committee member who wishes to attend the Conference on Sustainable Tourism April 15, 2008 in Duluth. MOTION CARRIED.

25th Annual National Tourism Week. The **committee** was asked to bring ideas on promoting National Tourism Week for discussion at the April meeting.

There was no other new business.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Glacial Ridge Trail Association. Shuck reported the Association is working on the Ford Model T tour. **Shuck** will look into the financing needed for the tour. This committee has contributed \$1,000 to the tour.

Glacial Ridge Trail Ford Model T Tour. Ed Walhof distributed a Schedule of Events and Registration (see copy attached to original minutes) for the September 5-7, 2008 Glacial Ridge Model T Tour. Walhof will have copies of the Schedule of Events printed for anyone who asks for it. The Willmar Car Club has volunteered to assist with the tour. Walhof reported the first tour registration came from Connecticut.

Kandiyohi County Campgrounds. Laura Clark reported a letter will be sent in March as to the first meeting of the campground managers. Rates increased slightly for 2008.

Little Crow Resort Association. Bob Dice reported Carlson attended the Association's meeting and provided information on tourism in the area. The Association intends to participate with this committee on future advertising and promotion opportunities.

New London to New Brighton Antique Car Run. Walhof reported local tours for the drivers have been planned.

PWELC. Dave Pederson reported the next event to be held at PWELC is Earth Day on April 19 from 8 a.m. to 12 noon with approximately 30 exhibitors and including culmination of the Youth Energy Summit. Dice reported a Ducks Unlimited event will be hosted at PWELC April 26.

West Central Snow Drifters/Atwater. Garberich reported the West Central Snow Drifters is holding a radar run at Green Lake this Saturday and will hold its annual benefit 7 p.m., March 29 at Great Western Steak House. The cost is \$5 per person.

Willmar Arts Council. Wanner reported a committee is reviewing additional places that wish to be included on the Studio Hop tour.

Willmar Design Center/Main Street Willmar. Dick Larson reported on an article in today's *West Central Tribune*.

CVB/Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (WLACC). Fischer reported the CVB booked Minnesota Electric for a September conference and will be looking for social activities for them; the A Bantam tournament was held this past weekend and many compliments on the area were received; the state Peewee tournament is in March.

Other. Larson reported Minnesota and Kandiyohi County are celebrating their sesquicentennial beginning May 8, 2008. The local committee is looking for non-monetary participation by others, including appearances in area parades. Larson will keep this committee informed.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **11:30 a.m., April 7, 2008** at Michael's Supper Club, Spicer.