

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
August 4, 2008
EDC Office, Willmar

Present: Betty Bollig, Alan Carlson, Laura Clark, Bob Dickerson, Connie Filley, Beth Fischer, Jolene Garberich, Dick Larson and Dean Shuck

Excused: Bob Dice, Deb Geister, Trudie Guptill, Marilyn Johnson, Dave Pederson, Ed Walhof and Connie Wanner

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

Chairperson Alan Carlson called the meeting to order at approximately 11:41 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Dick Larson, SECONDED BY Dean Shuck, to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2008 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

Trails subcommittee. Connie Filley reported the subcommittee met in June and will not meet until additional updates to the website are needed. The subcommittee discussed how to market the website, having a more pronounced link on the kandiyohi.com home page and recommended still having a printed map as maps printed from the website become wet and illegible, if there is snow or rain. The Tourism Committee discussed producing printed county trail maps. **Dick Larson** will speak with Mike Ulferts of the Snowmobile Trail Association about the need for a printed map. The committee discussed coordinating efforts with neighboring counties to provide trail maps covering a larger area and Beth Fischer suggested a multi-community grant could possibly be accessed for such a project. **Fischer** will contact the tourism associations in surrounding counties to find out what trails they have and whether they would be open to coordinating marketing efforts. **Fischer** will also contact Gregg Soupir of the Department of Natural Resources as to the Glacial Lakes Trail, his jurisdiction as to area trails, plans for future enhancements to the Glacial Lakes Trail and the his input on marketing the state trails. **Filley** will contact Jean Spaulding as to area WiFi locations and coffee houses that could market trail information. Laura Clark stated the biggest request at County Park 5 this year was access to WiFi and the Internet. The campgrounds will bring this issue to the County Commissioners as it is becoming a priority for visitors.

Advertising Tracking. Fischer distributed the 2007-2008 Inquiries to date, which the committee reviewed (see copy attached to original minutes). In June 2007 there were 180 inquiries compared to 246 in June 2008 with 109 inquiries coming from the Minnesota Office of Tourism (MOT) website; July 2007 there were 189 inquiries compared to 201 in July 2008. The committee discussed the MOT website continuously being the highest source of inquiries. Fischer reported the Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) purchases an online ad each year through the MOT. Carlson suggested this committee coordinate an online ad with the CVB or do its own ad. **Carlson and Fischer** will meet in this regard.

[Bob Dickerson joined the meeting.]

kandiyohi.com statistics. The committee reviewed the Traffic and Activity Summary for kandiyohi.com (see copy attached to original minutes).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Central Minnesota Tourism Region. Fischer reported the Heartland Tourism Association will remain as an association. Discussion at the recent meeting was whether there should be two marketing groups, one for northwest central and one for central. The attendees also looked at the variety of marketing used, vertical markets (who is the customer, lakes, trails, family orientated, fishing), messages (outdoor recreation, location, relaxed) and marketing mediums (print, e-newsletters, survey). Bob Dickerson commented there were many CVB and Chambers of Commerce represented, but not many businesses. Carlson stated the minutes from the meeting will be sent out by the MOT. McLeod County is interested in coordinating marketing efforts in the Central Lakes subregion. Carlson reported the Central Minnesota Tourism Region appears to be a strong region and this committee's concentration will be in participating financially and marketing in the new Central Minnesota Tourism Region rather than in the Heartland Tourism Association. The Central Minnesota Tourism Region markets more to the Twin Cities metro and northern Iowa areas as compared to Canada for the Heartland Tourism Association. The Central Minnesota Tourism Region will meet July 30, 2008 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Sauk Centre. The Minnesota Heartland Tourism Association will meet August 14, 2008 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Rutger's Bay Lake Lodge in Deerwood. Carlson recommended this committee have a presence at that meeting. Fischer will be attending and anyone else interested in attending should contact Fischer before the RSVP deadline of August 8. Filley voiced an interest in attending future meetings, but is unable to attend the August meeting.

2009 budget. A copy of the 2009 budget approved by both EDC boards was distributed to the committee (see copy attached to original minutes). The committee will be provided a year-to-date of the committee's 2008 budget for the next meeting.

2009 committee chair. Carlson reported a new chair for 2009 is still being sought. Interested members should contact Carlson.

Other. Dean Shuck reported the county's sentence to serve program will be installing the new flags on the highway billboards.

There was no other unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Tourism racks. The committee was informed that the large wood tourism rack and metal rack with wood base located in the EDC's previous location must be relocated from their new location. **LAA** will measure the racks and e-mail the measurements and a photo of the racks to the committee. **Nancy Birkeland** will contact the MinnWest Technology Campus; **Filley** will ask Rice Memorial Hospital; and **Carlson** will ask the Kandiyohi County Historical Society and other locations.

2009 Sportshows. Birkeland informed the committee the contracts for the Northwest Sportshow (March 12-15), Sioux Empire Sportsmen's Boat, Camping & Vacation Show (March 12-15) and the

Omaha Boat Sports and Travel Show (February 26-March 1) have been received and will be submitted for payment per the committee's 2008 budget.

There was no other new business.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Glacial Ridge Trail Association. Dean Shuck reported the association is working on a new brochure and will be adding birding sites; they may also print a separate birding site brochure. The association is also working on the Ford Model T tour.

Kandiyohi County Campgrounds. Clark reported attendance at area parks was down in June due to bad weather, but otherwise the rest of the summer has been good.

Little Crow Water Ski Team. The team won the midwest region tournament and this weekend will be competing in the national tournament. Advertising the team's success was discussed. **Carlson** will contact Deb Geister as to whether the team plans to market their success. Suggestions were to announce the team's win on local tourism websites and place an ad in the Sioux Falls *Argus Leader* under the committee's budgeted impact ads.

New London to New Brighton Antique Car Run. Dickerson distributed flyers for the car run (see copy attached to original minutes). Registrations are good with 58 cars participating.

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC). Dick Larson reported PWELC is holding a fund raiser, An Evening Under the Prairie Stars, September 12. Tickets are \$50.

Spicer. Filley reported on a successful July 4 celebration. Volunteers have finished the gazebo and picnic shelter. The city hopes to complete more projects, including installing accessible sidewalks into the park in September, more landscaping, a water fountain and ramp into the playground. Dependent upon funding, the city intends to do shoreline plantings next year. Meetings on WinterFest will begin in October.

West Central Snowdrifters. Jolene Garberich reported the club held four-wheeler training this summer and plans to broaden its activities to motor sports, not just snowmobiles, in hopes of getting more members.

Willmar Design Center/MainStreet Willmar. Larson reported the Willmar Design Center's designer presented information to the city of Willmar on renovating Becker Avenue between Seventh Street to Fourth Street to become a "convertible street." A new downtown street fair called Willmar Blend will be held August 14 with an alfresco dinner at the Northern Grounds patio and a concert by Peter Yarrow and Friends at the Willmar Education and Arts Center.

Willmar Lakes Area CVB/Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. Fischer reported the county has been very busy the past couple of months with area celebrations. There were 325+ RVs that attended the Monaco Motor Coach conference at the Civic Center; the group spent lots of money in the area and donated a large amount to the local food shelf. MTV filmed a show at a special show by the Little Crow Water Ski Team. Upcoming events include the New London to New Brighton Antique Car Run, Green Lake Triathlon, Kandiyohi County Fair and Farm Fest in Redwood Falls, which attracts visitors who stay in the Willmar area. The CVB was awarded the bid for the Minnesota League of Women Voters 2009 conference and the bid for the 2010 bowling tournaments, which will take place over 16 weekends. The Visitor's Guide Committee just completed a photo contest and awarded four

top prizes, which were given to Loretta Fenske for first and second place, Greg Harp for third place and Don Fisher for fourth place.

ANNOUNCEMENT—EDC open house 4:00-6:00 p.m., September 9, 2008.

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

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **11:30 a.m., September 8, 2008** at a place to be determined. **NOTE** meeting date change due to Labor Day on September 1.