

CITY OF EDWARDSVILLE
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 12, 2026

8:00am

Governor Edwards Conference Room, 118 Hillsboro Ave.

Approved: Janet Haroian

Date: 3-12-2026

I. ROLL CALL

Present

James Arnold
Craig Becker
Sara Berkgigler
Lisa Bohannon
Kathryn Biarkis
Dillon Borri
Kimberli Goodner
Janet Haroian

Guests

Elizabeth Grant
Cathy Hensley
Lindsey Laird

Absent

Amanda Eckert
Jake Sutter

Janet called the meeting to order at 8:03am.

- II. PUBLIC COMMENT** – Craig gave a Hadley House update. ECUSD7 is planning to retain ownership of the property and work with the community to figure out how it will be used. An open house to let the public see the home has been suggested. More meetings are planned in the future.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Kathryn and a second by Lisa meeting minutes from January 8, 2026, were unanimously approved.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE

A. Tourism Budget

1. FY25/26 Budget – James provided an update on the new banners and A-frames that were purchased. Cathy had them on display for the committee to see – and everyone is very pleased with them. Discussion led to the need to purchase more for additional use by the City, businesses and organizations willing to display them. On a motion by Sara, seconded by Kimberli, the committee unanimously approved the purchase of five (5) retractable banners and ten (10) A-frames, including printed inserts. Cathy will be working on an inventory and check-out procedure to keep track of where they are placed.

2. FY26/27 Budget – After evaluating and discussing the Great Rivers and Routes (GRR) proposal that included two additional options, the committee decided to amend the budget to invest more in sports marketing and meeting opportunities. Committee members are pleased with GRR and their results to date and feel that there is room for growth in sports and meetings. This increase would be evaluated after this first year to determine what would be considered in the future. On a motion by Sara, seconded by Dillon, a budget of \$170,000 (\$144,000 for GRR, \$6,000 for committee marketing and \$20,000 for holiday décor) was unanimously approved for recommendation to the City Council.

B. Great Rivers & Routes Proposal

On a motion by Sara, seconded by Craig, the GRR proposal was approved for \$144,000 with changes noted for Section 4. f) regarding a dress code for part-time workers, deleting a portion of Section 4. j) that refers to the city and snow removal, and adding one more notation under Option (B) MICE: h) economic impact reporting and data analysis.

C. Tourism Grants

James reported that Edwardsville will receive \$400,000 as part of the 5th round of Route 66 grants. Most of that money, \$380,000 will be dedicated to the property at 246 N Main Street. The additional \$20,000 will be used for 1-2 new murals.

D. QR Code

Committee members have been asking for data regarding the QR code, but James confirmed with City staff that is not possible. The QR code was not created in a way that can be tracked. They will be looking into possibilities to transition to a trackable format and James will report back to the committee.

E. Route 66

Governor Pritzker held a press conference in Granite City where he announced that there will be a celebration of the 100 years of Route 66 and the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Several things are planned to include a film premiere on September 10th, activities highlighting Route 66 foods and drinks, and GRR has plans for events at the Wildey recognizing Illinois specific people and items. GRR will be applying for a liquor license from the City to highlight Old Herald Brewing's Route 66 beer. The City is planning activities for October 9-11 for the Last 100 Miles Celebration. There will be mini events. SJ Morrison has taken the lead on this planning. There will be activities at The Wildey, City Park and Goshen Commons. They hope to attract some larger-scale artists to perform.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Janet reported that she attended the Madison County Historical Society's (MCHS) meeting regarding the US 250th birthday plans. The MCHS will be championing the plans for the 250th.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Cathy reported on the upcoming Chocco-Lotta_Fun event in the city set for February 28th. She is still lining up business partners, and it sounds like another great city activity.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38am.