

Tourism Advisory Committee

March 9, 2023

8:00 am

Minutes

Approved: _____

Janet Haroian

Date: _____

5-11-23

1. Roll Call:

Present

Charlene Blair
Janet Haroian
James Arnold
Nancy Schneider
Lisa Bohannon
Kristi Hyten
Sara Berkbigler

Absent:

Rich Walker
Kimberly Goodner

Others:

Brandon Bell, Edwardsville Y
Corey Jobe, Great Rivers & Routes
Elizabeth Grant, Alderman

2. Public Comment-

None

3. **Approval of Minutes** The minutes from the Jan 12 meeting were approved.

4. Administrative

a. Kristi Hyten was welcomed to the TAC. She is a past Vice Chair of Great Rivers and Routes Board of Directors and will bring valuable experience to the committee.

b. Tourism Advisory Plan. James is researching additional plans and will share them with the committee as they become available.

c. Community Calendar. Brandon Bell, YMCA director, led the discussion of a community calendar by noting the development of a non-profit "round table" group of approximately 30 organizations, mostly located in Madison County. A criterion for inclusion in a community calendar needs to be established. Brandon is researching the development of a new website to house a community calendar which would be a stand-alone website, not on the Y's website.

Criteria would include NFP events, free city events, and some fund raisers. A policy and criterion need to be developed to support the integrity and utility of the calendar.

d. City Marketing. Corey Job spoke at length about Great Rivers and Routes, their mission, goals, and value they bring to the city. Some benefits to the city are a landing page, blog content, SEO, AI automation, promotion and branding to specific markets such as St. Louis, Kansas City, Paducah, and Chicago. He spoke about how state tourism dollars are allocated among the 30+ tourism bureaus south of Chicago. That amount for "downstate" is about \$18 million. Communities that participate still have to provide a local match, based upon individual community contracts and local "bed" taxes. GRR is also applying for more funding for Rt 66 events and promotion.

Cory also spoke of a first-time event planned for this area in October, in conjunction with SIUE's homecoming and Que & Brew.

e. Public Survey. The TAC needs to decide how to proceed with the survey and what the budget will be.

f. Guidelines for Tourism Funding. After discussion about the requested increase in GRRTB's contract, the funds allocated to special parks, Plummer Family Park, community redevelopment and park improvements, and the specific tasks assigned to the TAC by ordinance, Sara moved to increase the FY 24 Tourism-Marketing budget line (265-4-630-4-4165) to \$120,000 to cover existing projects and underwrite the development and tracking of a public tourism survey and creation of a Tourism Advisory Plan. Seconded by Lisa, all ayes, motion approved. James was directed to provide this information to the city's finance director and city administrator when they start the budget planning process. ***The recommendation from the TAC was to limit the increase in the GRRTB contract to \$85,000.

5. Old Business

a. West End Service Station. Work has started on the service station. There will be a picture in front of the station of the original service station.

b. QR Code. It was suggested that local restaurants could put the QR code on their menus or table-tent cards and hotels could provide the code to their guests upon check-in or at a visible location in their respective lobbies.

6. New Business

none

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 0945.