

Tourism Commission Meeting
Monday, March 12, 2018
8:30am

Attendees: Ken Gehl, 5th District Alderman, City of Oak Creek, Kim Jankowski, Clint Wills

Also in Attendance: Leslie Flynn, Communications Coordinator, City of Oak Creek, Shamire Goodwin II, Account Executive, WISN 12, Ted Johnson, Director of Public Works, City of Oak Creek, Kristin Kowaleski, Destination Marketing Specialist, City of Oak Creek, Catherine Roeske, City Clerk, City of Oak Creek, Cory Savage, Savage Solutions, Becky Schermer, Director of Human Resources, City of Oak Creek, Doug Seymour, Director of Community Development, City of Oak Creek, Andrew Vickers, City Administrator, City of Oak Creek, Barbara Wesener, Executive Director, South Suburban Chamber of Commerce, Lauren Wieloch, Savage Solutions

1. **Welcome/Call to order** – Clint Wills called the meeting to order at 8:33am.
2. **Approval of minutes of February 12, 2018 minutes** – Alderman Ken Gehl made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted from the February 12, 2018 Tourism Commission meeting. Commissioner Kim Jankowski seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor and the motion carried.
3. **Oak Creek Farmer's Market update** – Destination Marketing Specialist Kristin Kowaleski gave an update on the Oak Creek Farmer's Market. She said that there were 24 vendors signed up for all or part of the market season. Kristin said that they were still looking for arts and cheese vendors to round out the market's offerings. Kristin and the Farmer's Market Subcommittee are working with City Clerk Catherine Roeske on planning the best layout for the market in Drexel Town Square. Kristin is also working with people at MATC on plans for adding educational opportunities to each of the Saturday markets, to include information on seasonal products and how to incorporate them into healthy recipes. Doug asked Kristin how many vendors the committee was hoping to have for the first year and she said they were targeting 30-35 vendors. Commissioner Kim Jankowski noted that she had spoken to Dawn Carrillo last Friday and that the vendor count had climbed to 30. Kim said that it was important for the Tourism Commission to maintain plenty of contact with Dawn and the Farmer's Market Subcommittee and offered to attend any future meetings with them. Doug Seymour agreed that it was important for the Tourism Commission to help set policies for the Oak Creek Farmer's Market, with special emphasis on making sure the Oak Creek brand does not become diluted. City Administrator Andrew Vickers agreed that it was important to formalize our expectations of the Subcommittee, especially as it relates to traffic and safety issues for the new market. The Administrator thought it would be more efficient if the City, the Subcommittee, and members of the Tourism Commission met as a group to address major issues, especially during the Farmers Market

start-up period. The City Administrator felt that the City and Tourism Commission should be the final decision makers on the design and marketing of the Oak Creek Farmer's Market rather than the Subcommittee.

Catherine Roeske, City Clerk, noted that there is a Subcommittee meeting Wednesday, March 14, 2018 to address the layout of the Farmer's Market. She will be attending and agreed to invite the Tourism Commissioners and make sure to forward any information to the Tourism Commission about their proceedings. She agreed that the Farmer's Markets should be run like all other Tourism events. The marketing of the Farmer's Market was also on the agenda for the Wednesday Subcommittee meeting. The Tourism Commissioners agreed that any marketing for the farmer's market should be done by Savage Solutions, not the Subcommittee. Leslie Flynn noted that the Subcommittee was anxious to start a social media campaign, so it was important to get Savage Solutions into the conversation soon to help maintain consistency. Commissioners Wills and Jankowski reiterated the need for a Tourism Commission member to be in attendance at all Farmer's Market Subcommittee meetings. All present agreed it was important to get the Oak Creek Farmer's Market right the first year to ensure its success in the future. They all felt this could be accomplished with great cooperation between the Subcommittee, Tourism Commission and City staff.

- 4. Discussion on creation of the Farmer's Market Event Manager position** – Becky Schermer, Human Resources Director, City of Oak Creek, was in attendance to clarify what type of position the Farmer's Market Event Manager was envisioned as, so that the correct paperwork could be created by HR for hiring Dawn Carrillo. She asked whether the Commission saw the position as a seasonal part-time employee of the City or more like an independent contractor. Commissioner Jankowski felt the Commission had a vision of the position as an independent contractor or stipend for a Committee member. Becky was interested in seeing the description of the position given to Dawn Carrillo. She explained to the Commissioners that positions like seasonal part-time, independent contractors, and Board/Commission members were appointments, whereas regular part-time positions would have to be advertised and require working 25-28 hours per week all year long. If the Commission decided on the independent contractor route, they would be required to draft a contract and Dawn would be paid through Accounts Payable. This would be the easiest type of position with regards to amount of city paperwork required. If Dawn is hired as a Board/Committee member, the appointment would have to be approved by the Common Council. Cory Savage said that if Dawn is hired as an independent contractor, she would have to form an LLC, be self-insured, and be subject to a 40% tax on her \$3000 stipend. He said this might make her reconsider the offer to head the Farmer's Market Subcommittee. Andrew Vickers said that regardless of which type of position the Commission decided on, it would be important to formalize expectations of the position at the same time. Becky Schermer offered to help set up any paperwork that the Commission required for hiring Dawn. Catherine Roeske pointed out that Board/Commission members were likely to have statutory requirements vs. job requirements. Catherine believes Dawn is the best person for leading the Farmer's Market Subcommittee and hopes the Commission picks the right option to assure she stays on as lead. Catherine noted that Dawn is already a paid employee of the City due to her participation on other Boards. Other considerations include whether to give her a City email address, a City cell phone, and/or a badge with access to City

Hall. As a part-time City employee, Dawn's compensation would be determined by the Common Council. A background check and physical would be required. Commissioner Jankowski said she believes the Commission saw the position as a hybrid of all three types-volunteer/committee member/with a stipend. Andrew requested a job description be created and voted on by Tourism Commission.

5. Consider a motion to update the appointment date of the Farmer's Market Subcommittee members.

Commissioner Kim Jankowski made a motion to update the appointment end date of the Farmer's Market Subcommittee members, Dawn Carrillo, Farmer's Market Event Manager; David Kozlowski, Pinehold Gardens; Gina Goodwin, Burke Properties; Katie Henschel and Derek Mlacher, Oak Creek residents; to be extended to October 31, 2018. Commissioner Clint Wills seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

6. South Suburban Chamber of Commerce (SSCC) update – Executive Director of the South Suburban Chamber of Commerce, Barb Wesener, started her update by congratulating the City of Oak Creek for being chosen as Business of the Year at the SSCC Annual Awards dinner. She also congratulated the City on its increased contacts with businesses in the community.

Barb Wesener also updated the Tourism Commission on her work with Grace Fuhr, Program Manager for Doors Open Milwaukee. Barb and Kristin Kowaleski met with Grace to solidify plans for a joint Doors Open Milwaukee/Sneak Peek at Oak Creek event on September 23rd and/or 24th, 2018. The City of Oak Creek has been selected as a featured community in the Historic Milwaukee, Inc. event. Eight or nine Oak Creek businesses will be participating in the Doors Open event. They can decide whether they want to participate one or two days of that weekend. Each business is expected to provide at least one tour guide. There is also an opportunity to add extra guides provided by the Doors Open organization. Businesses are required to sign up for Doors Open by April. Barb Wesener showed the Commissioners the special Journal Sentinel advertising section from last year's Doors Open Milwaukee event. It usually comes out one week before the event. Commissioner Jankowski thought it might be beneficial to advertise Sneak Peek at Oak Creek in the 2018 version. Cory Savage said that an advertisement in that section would probably run in the \$4000 to \$5000 range. Cory asked Barb if Doors Open was planning a digital campaign or using search engine optimization for their website. He recommended Barb talk about advertising at her next meeting with Doors Open Milwaukee. Kim Jankowski thought online marketing might be better to promote additional hotel/motel room stays than advertising in the newspaper section.

The Commission asked if IKEA had been approached about joining the Doors Open/Sneak Peek event. Barb said she had contacted IKEA and they were considering it at this time. There was some question about how much they would have to display other than their warehouse area, and that might cause some safety issues. Catherine Roeske, City Clerk, reported that she recently heard about a bag of giveaways that IKEA planned to hand out to all shoppers during the first days after opening in mid-May. She thought it would be great if the Tourism Commission could get a Calendar of Events magnet or Sneak Peek at Oak Creek flyer added to the bag. Cory Savage said that the calendar magnet was already in development. Since the next big meeting with IKEA is scheduled for April 11, 2018 it was recommended that the Tourism Commission get something together before then. IKEA is expecting

10,000 visitors per day on weekends and 3,000-4,000 per day on weekdays during the first few weeks of opening.

Barb Wesener said she also continues to work with MATC on the March 28, 2018 panel discussion regarding workforce development in the hospitality sector. She reminded the Commission that Clint Wills is helping to develop the discussion topics which are expected to include workforce challenges such as how to get more employees in the pipeline, practicality of offering free coursework, discerning the hospitality industry's biggest problems.

The SSCC Executive Director presented an opportunity suggested by the SSCC Events Committee for future collaboration with the Tourism Commission on a new event. She asked if the Tourism Commission would be willing to partner with SSCC at the first Beer Garden event for 2018, with a VIP preview event, opening up the garden to chamber members and Oak Creek businesses one hour early for business networking. The event is proposed to include promotional tents/tables for any interested chamber members. Doug Seymour noted there would be no electricity available. Barb said they would charge about \$50 for each 10' X 10' spot and businesses would have to provide their own equipment. This is considered a fund raising opportunity by SSCC. Barb Wesener thought that approximately 30 chamber members could be expected to attend the one day event. Alderman Ken Gehl felt it was important to determine the goals of the event. Is it to inter-mingle businesses with Oak Creek citizens or as a business only networking opportunity? Alderman Gehl felt there needed to be more discussion between the SSCC and the City to talk about purpose and a possible theme for the event (i.e. Stronger Community). Barb asked how many people attended the beer garden in 2017. Kristin said that there were hundreds to 1000 on Thursday and over 5000 in attendance during the 3-day weekend. Doug Seymour felt that the focus should be on inviting business owners to the event, possibly giving 10 drink tickets to each organization. The City will talk with Barb Wesener to discern whether to promote the event as a SSCC Business After Five Fundraiser or an Oak Creek Business Appreciation event that offers business interaction while promoting business retention and expansion, or some combination of the two.

- 7. Winter Festival recap presentation** – Kristin Kowaleski presented a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the February 17, 2018 Oak Creek Winter Festival. Kristin's information showed that there were approximately 2000 people in attendance. The weather was 35 degrees and sunny. Indoor activities included face painting, Olaf kids' crafts, Elsa & Anna Characters, and a Winter Market that sold out of all the vendors' offerings. Outdoor activities included ice sculpting demonstrations, food vendors, hot chocolate station, winter beer & wine, ice games, Siberian huskies, nature walks by the Racine Zoo staff, appearances by Roscoe and the Bucks Dancers, and an on-site radio remote by 99.1 the Mix. The Winter Festival was promoted using WISN12 commercials and digital ads, 99.1 the Mix radio ads, social media, banners, posters and email. The Facebook Live 99.1 page received 1000 views! The budget for the event was \$15,000 and due to a \$1000 donation by Waterstone Bank and a \$200 donation by Connect Cell, the total spent from the Tourism budget was \$14,724. Waterstone and Connect Cell received promotional benefits from their donations.

Kristin collected 430 email addresses from an attendee survey at the festival. She received 196 responses from her survey. Over 150 responded very good or excellent when rating the event. The

majority, 120 of those responding to the survey, heard about the festival through social media. According to Cory Savage only word of mouth usually beats out social media when it comes to marketing. This should have a greater influence for the event next year. About half, or 106 of the survey respondents were Oak Creek residents. Ice sculpting, the chili cook-off and free kids activities were the favorite parts of the event. Some suggestions from the survey for next year's Winter Festival

included adding more food vendors, more adult activities, more kids' activities, and ice skating. About 12% of the people who answered the survey used the new Froedtert Parking structure. Ninety-seven percent said they would attend the event next year!

Kristin summarized what went well

- Ice carving demos & games
- Winter market
- Chili cook-off
- Free kids activities (slap shot hockey, face painting, etc.)
- Parking

Kristin summarized what to work on for 2019

- Additional/larger ice carving demos
- Additional outdoor activities for adults
- Confirm electrical needs of vendors before time
- Purchase additional giveaway items, since all were gone by 12:15pm this year
- Send vendors & streets department updates on weather and possibly rent large tent with heaters next year to make vendors more comfortable

Several Commissioners attended the festival and based on their experiences suggested emailing managers of DTS restaurants several times before each festival to ensure they are prepared for extra traffic in their businesses during our Tourism events. Kristin did email restaurants in January, but will send follow-ups a week before each event in the future, as a reminder when managers are most likely to be preparing their employee schedules. She will also be able to include the number of event attendees expected based on experience from first year's attendance. Kristin thanked the Commissioners for suggesting the chili cook-off because it was especially enjoyed by many festival-goers. Next year the plan is to curate the Chili Cook-Off a little better and perhaps sell chili along with the sampling. Other recommendations by the Tourism members included adding sleigh rides, husky team sled rides, and using the Emerald Preserve more. Commissioner Gehl thought that the ice carving should be spread out more during the day instead of happening early in the day. Most in attendance thought that the ice sculptures could have been larger and that it would be nice if all DTS businesses would sponsor a sculpture for their business like Cubanitas did this year. The Commissioners wondered about the possibility of adding ice skating to the festival through building of a simple "backyard" skating rink, addition of artificial ice, or a refrigerated ice skating pond. Department of Public Works Director Ted Johnson said that his research showed that flooding the area like a backyard rink would be very unpredictable due to weather fluctuations. Artificial ice ponds cost \$80,000-\$100,000 just to rent, while permanent refrigerated rinks like those at Red Arrow Park in Milwaukee can cost over \$1,000,000. In addition to the cost considerations, Ted mentioned that the City of Oak Creek currently

has three ice ponds that are very rarely used. The Commissioners asked Kristin to follow-up with Claudette at Froedtert to ask about any possible problems that occurred during the Winter Festival and to gain rapport for future event planning.

- 8. Discussion on Oak Creek wayfinding signage** – Doug Seymour, Director of Community Development, presented information about the City of Oak Creek’s initial steps in conducting a Wayfinding Analysis to understand what wayfinding tools are appropriate for Oak Creek so they can smartly plan for their development and implementation in the future. He asked everyone in attendance to go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BV6D9BW> to take the survey if they had not already done so. Seventy responses have already been collected. Doug explained that with IKEA opening soon, the Oak Creek area will be getting over 1,000,000 visitors in the next year. The City wants to be able to get some of these visitors to turn left and come into Oak Creek for dining, shopping, entertainment, and overnight stays. It is hoped that the survey will help the city pick the best level of street-scaping, boulevard signage, and possibly pedestrian signage. The City Administrator felt the survey was a good decision making tool. He also cited several examples of good and bad street-scaping. He thought Greenfield’s 76th Street around Edgerton Avenue was a good use of street signage and landscaping while the many different branded wayfinding areas in Milwaukee were not so good. Andrew thought the wayfinding signage could possibly be funded through Fund 31 of the City’s budget.

Doug emphasized the fact that the City of Oak Creek controls Drexel Avenue, not the county or state, so Oak Creek has the ability to design the Drexel Avenue streetscaping for what’s best for Oak Creek. He also pointed out the importance of signage for schools as well as the Fire and Police Departments. Doug wondered if the City should spend less on banner signs, especially on Howell Avenue because he is not sure how effective they are. He also said that right-of-way restrictions and sign clutter might limit the use of wayfinding signs on Howell Ave. Commissioner Jankowski would like to keep the banner signage because she feels it helps form a community feeling for the City and highlights the business community. Discussion by the Commissioners included concern for Milwaukee County street closures on 13th Street causing traffic problems on Drexel, effectiveness of banner signage from Rawson to Ryan on Howell Avenue, and necessity of focusing on Drexel Avenue signage for strategic reasons.

- 9. Discussion and action on Tourism Commission sponsorship and donation requests** – Kristin Kowaleski said that the Tourism Commission had been receiving numerous requests for sponsorship and donation requests for 2018. Since the donations would come out of the Commission’s event programming budget item, she was eager to get some guidelines to determine who should receive donations and in what amounts. Cory Savage designed and presented a recommended outline for deciding on future Tourism sponsorship requests. It included a tiered approach to setting standards of sponsorship, with a maximum amount based on budget size. He recommended setting a maximum annual amount around \$5000/year. Tier I donations would be \$1000, Tier II would be \$500, and Tier III would be \$250. He also suggested a Special Exemption Maximum of \$1500 if the Commission decides to push it to this level. To aid in decision making, the tiers would be associated with the number of potential consumers and room night stays the sponsored event would attract. The Commissioners felt that the donation levels should definitely be tied to the number of heads in beds or foot traffic that an event could provide. They also wanted to mainly sponsor community building events that have a positive economic impact on the City of Oak Creek. It was suggested that any excess revenue from

Tourism Commission events could go back into added sponsorships or be donated to a permanent beer garden as proposed by the Mayor. Kristin would also like to add a requirement to any event that receives a donation from the Tourism Commission, that the Commission would be offered event space to man a booth for added Tourism visibility and marketing opportunities.

Catherine Roeske recommended to Kristin that she research and create a decision-based matrix using number of volunteers, number of attendees and other parameters to create a scoring system for any future event donation requests, including regional draw events. Most thought that requests from personal projects such as those created by Eagle Scout would not qualify for the Commission’s tourism boosting and economic development missions. Catherine felt that the Lions would be a good organization to sponsor since they hold multiple community building events each year, including some that may draw out-of-town guests. She also noted that the Lions and Legion are celebrating their 60th Anniversary in 2018.

Doug Seymour asked what path the Tourism Commission plans to take on Art in The Parks request for a sponsorship of their Memorial Day weekend event. He felt the Commission would need to make a commitment soon since the event is rapidly approaching. Alderman Gehl and Cory Savage agreed that it would be beneficial for tourism to sponsor the event. Cory recommended sponsorship at the \$1500 level. The vote was postponed for lack of a quorum until the April 9, 2018 Tourism meeting, since Kim Jankowski abstained from voting due to her close association with the Oak Creek Franklin Foundation for Education’s it’s Art in the Park event. Kim asked Leslie Flynn about the possibility of the City of Oak Creek boosting the art vendors participating in Art in the Park. Leslie said it was hard to know at this point who would be allowed to promote the event. Doug Seymour encouraged using Tourism promotion at all future donation sponsored events. Cory urged the hotel/motel operators in Oak Creek to use special pricing codes on Facebook and www.visitoakcreek.com for all Tourism Commission events and Tourism sponsored events.

10. Adjournment – Commissioner Jankowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Wills seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25am.

ATTEST:



4/11/18

Kristin Kowaleski, Destination Marketing Specialist

Date