

Tourism Commission Meeting  
Monday, June 10, 2019  
8:30am

Attendees: Kristie Busch, Alderman Ken Gehl, Kim Jankowski

Also in Attendance: Sarah Anderson, Executive Director, South Suburban Chamber of Commerce; Katie Corbin, Savage Solutions; Kristin Craig, Destination Marketing Specialist, City of Oak Creek; Leslie Flynn, Communications Coordinator, City of Oak Creek; Ted Johnson, Director of Streets, Parks, & Forestry, City of Oak Creek; Catherine Roeske, City Clerk, City of Oak Creek; Cory Savage, Savage Solutions; Doug Seymour, Director of Community Development, City of Oak Creek; Andrew Vickers, City Administrator, City of Oak Creek.

1. **Welcome/Call to order** – Alderman Ken Gehl called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.
2. **Approval of minutes of May 13, 2019 meetings.** – Commissioner Kim Jankowski made a motion to approve the May 13, 2019 Tourism Commission meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Kristie Busch seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously.
3. **New Business.**
  - a. **Introduction of South Suburban Chamber of Commerce Executive Director.** Sarah Anderson introduced herself as the new Executive Director of the South Suburban Chamber of Commerce. She said she was excited to start her new position with the Chamber of Commerce. She explained that she had worked in fundraising at the Hunger Task Force and had also worked for the Harley Davidson Foundation before she came to her new position as Executive Director. The Commissioners welcomed Sarah to the City of Oak Creek and said they looked forward to working with her.
  - b. **Discussion on the Confluence: A Gathering at Lake Vista Park.** Kristin Craig, City of Oak Creek Destination Marketing Specialist, gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the new event at Lake Vista Park called The Confluence. The Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup> event is described as a free, family-friendly festival. The park will come alive with live music and entertainment, food trucks, an artist market, and a pop-up beer village. The event, created by NEWaukee, will feature public art installations, which will remain on display in the park for several weeks after the event for the community to enjoy. Kristin explained that the goals of the Confluence include showcasing Oak Creek, highlighting Lake Vista Park, as well as the city's artist and maker scene. Another goal is to increase collaboration, bringing people from the Greater Milwaukee Area to Oak Creek. The final goal is to build Community, creating a family-focused community event for Oak Creek residents. The stage set-up will include a 12' W x 8' D x 2' H performance area for use by live DJ's, the Oak Creek High School Jazz Band, dance performers, children's story-tellers, and more.

Kristin and NEWaukee are hoping to have 20 art vendors at The Confluence. So far fourteen vendor acceptance letters have been sent and five vendors have already paid and are confirmed. Samples of some of the vendors include jewelry designers, painters, sign makers, and small decorative arts. The Confluence will also feature a craft beer lineup which will include Eagle Park, Gathering Place, Milwaukee Brewing Company, MobCraft Beer, Sprecher, and Third Space Brewing. Kristin is currently working with Andrew Swofford, owner of Happy Dough Lucky in confirming the Food Truck Lineup. They have a goal of eight food trucks for the June 20<sup>th</sup> event. NEWaukee has received submissions for five different art installations so far. One installation is a steel and plastic sculpture called Harbor Moon. Another called Interdependence is made of wood and steel. The third one is seating shaped like a windmill called Sense-Stations. Yet another art installation is created using ribbons on trees. And the fifth creation will be a wooden picture frame that can be used for selfies. NEWaukee is still looking for additional art installations, especially through their contacts at area art schools and colleges.

Kristin asked if the Commissioners had any questions about The Confluence. Alderman Ken Gehl wanted to know if Ted Johnson's DPW staff would be working to clean up the park before the event takes place. The alderman was particularly concerned with the area around the water utility's gate. Ken said that the grass and weeds were looking better recently, but DPW should continue sprucing up the Lake Vista grounds before the event. Ted said that they are currently hauling dirt and stone but should be done with that before the event. Commissioner Jankowski was concerned about the City's liability if someone should get hurt trying to climb on some of the art installations at Lake Vista Park. She felt the installations should all be bolted to the ground to prevent injuries. She suggested that the artist working with ribbons on trees should work with Rebecca Lane, the City Forester. Cory Savage recommended fencing around all of the art installations to deter people from climbing on them. Ted Johnson said that there were some state rules to consider regarding digging into the dirt to anchor the art pieces, since Lake Vista Park had been created using landfill. Andrew Vickers, the City Administrator, said that there was a six foot leeway in rules for digging into the earth at Lake Vista. Alderman Gehl asked if Cory Savage was involved in promoting The Confluence. Cory told him that NEWaukee was taking the lead and spending \$5000 to market the event. He felt that NEWaukee's list of followers and contacts would create a generous amount of marketing clout to promote the event. Alderman Gehl also thought that it might be good to add mulch around the installations and on walkways between them to improve the look and cleanliness of the art presentations and make it easier to navigate between them.

#### 4. Informational and discussion items.

a. **Discover Wisconsin.** Kristin Craig gave an update on the Discover Wisconsin preview event that took place on Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm at the Oak Creek Community Center. The event included networking for 45 minutes, followed by announcements and a showing of the Discover Wisconsin episode called "Oak Creek – Reinvented and on the Rise". Kristin said that the preview event included comments by the hosts of the Discover Wisconsin show, Eric and Mariah. The preview had a good showing of attendees. The City of Oak Creek received a Discover Wisconsin 2019 Choice Destination sign to hang up in City Hall. The episode was aired June 1 and 2 on WITI-6.

Commissioner Kim Jankowski liked the show and felt that it gave a positive reflection of Oak Creek, highlighting our younger demographic and showing beautiful views of the city. Kristin noted that Kim was in the Discover Wisconsin episode, along with a short interview with Jerry Peterson, former City Administrator. Sarah Anderson, new Executive Director of the South Suburban Chamber of Commerce, asked if the city could show the Discover Wisconsin Oak Creek video in City Hall on one of the lobby monitors. Leslie Flynn, Communication Coordinator for the City, said that rights wise we could show it on the lobby monitors or in the multipurpose room at City Hall, but the sound may be distracting to the front counter staff in the lobby. Instead it was recommended that it might be better to run the episode in City Hall during the next few Food Truck events after regular working hours. The Commissioners also recommended adding the link to the Discover Wisconsin episode to the Oak Creek social media campaign. Another possibility suggested was to show it as a 30 minute trailer on Drexel Town Square movie nights.

**b. Oak Creek Farmers Market.** Kristin Craig, City of Oak Creek Destination Marketing Specialist, gave an update on the start of the 2019 Farmers Market. She said that the first market on June 1<sup>st</sup> turned out to be a bad weather day, with showers most of the morning. Regardless of the bad weather, about fifty people were waiting in line at the 99.1 The Mix onsite program that morning in order to pick up their free Wisconsin Dells coupon books. On the second farmers market Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, it was 72 degrees and sunny. The market had the best sales ever since its inception in June 2018. Sales for the 13 onsite vendors totaled close to \$14,000. Doug Seymour, Director of Community Development, recently visited the farmers market in Drexel Town Square and liked the setup better this year. He felt the new arrangement gave the market a smaller and more personal feeling and made it easier to visit all the vendors. Kristin informed the Commissioners that Pinehold Gardens will not be participating in the market until August due to the rainy spring weather that has ruined all the plants they had planted early in the season. Commissioner Jankowski questioned whether there will be enough produce to sell since all the farmers are dealing with the wet and cold weather. Kristin hoped that the other vendors would be able to pick up the slack. She pointed out that the Wisconsin Soup Company vendor had been selling out during the last two weeks.

**c. Oak Creek Beer Garden.** Kristin Craig gave a report on the Abendschien Beer Garden that took place from Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>. She said that the beer garden had its best sales ever for a Friday and Saturday. Sunday, however, was not the best due to the rainy weather. Total sales for the four days were \$19,320. Cost of putting on the event was estimated at \$14,000. On Thursday night, food trucks were available to feed the crowds. The Salvation Army supplied and ran the food concession stand one night and was able to make a \$1200 profit for their organization. The Oak Creek Community Center was also able to raise funds running concessions on the other nights. The Commissioners asked if Kristin was able to cover her costs on Thursday night since attendance was lower that day. She said she did not have an exact head count but felt that she was able to cover costs. Commissioner Bush said that there were a lot of Little League games scheduled for Thursday nights so that might have been one of the reasons for lower attendance at the beer garden. Kristin reminded the Commission that the Thursday beer garden was only five hours compared to nine hours on Fridays and Saturdays.

The Commissioners also mentioned that Boerner Botanical Gardens had their concerts on Thursdays, South Milwaukee had their Farmers Market on Thursday evenings, and many schools were holding awards banquets in the evening during the first week of June. Kristin still felt it was important to continue including Thursdays in the Beer Garden event schedule. She felt it helped get the event up and running and helped fine tune the operation before the garden got really busy on Friday and Saturday. City Administrator Andrew Vickers suggested adding a business hospitality hour at the beginning of the Thursday beer garden again next year to increase attendance. He felt it had been beneficial last year when it was first implemented.

The Commissioners asked how parking worked out at Abendschien Park during the Beer Garden. Those who had attended said that parking was overfilled on Friday and Saturday. A cricket tournament at the park exacerbated the issue. Commissioner Busch said it was particularly hard for attendees to find their way to the music stage from over the bridge and from the second parking lot. All agreed it would be important to add wayfinding signage to the park for next year's beer garden, especially from the parking lots to the garden and to inform attendees that there is a second parking lot available.

The Commissioners asked Cory Savage if he had any update on the billboard sign marketing he was investigating for promoting Oak Creek during the Democratic National Convention in 2020. Cory said that Savage Solutions was not able to get the downtown billboard, but said they were able to purchase billboard signage at the Miller Park location during the DNC.

**Adjournment:** Commissioner Kim Jankowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Kristie Busch seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m.

ATTEST:



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Kristin Craig, Destination Marketing Specialist

8/16/2019

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Date