

Tourism Commission Meeting
Monday, August 12, 2019
8:31am

Attendees: Kristie Busch, Kim Jankowski, Jim Ruetz, Clint Wills

Also in Attendance: 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; Cory Savage, Savage Solutions; Katie Corbin, Savage Solutions; Doug Seymour, Director of Community Development, City of Oak Creek; Angela Damiani, NEWaukee; Nicole Behnke, NEWaukee

1. **Welcome/Call to order** – Clint Wills called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.
2. **Approval of minutes of June 10, 2019 meetings.** – Commissioner Kim Jankowski made a motion to approve the June 10, 2019 Tourism Commission meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Kristie Busch seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously.
3. **New Business.**
 - a. **Update on South Suburban Chamber of Commerce events.** Kristin Craig, City of Oak Creek Destination Marketing Specialist, let everyone know that Sarah Anderson, Executive Director, South Suburban Chamber of Commerce, is out with the flu and could not make it to the meeting. Kristin and Sarah will be working together on the Sneak Peak at Oak Creek, Women in Business Event and a future Round Table concentrating on the hospitality industry.
 - b. **Review Wisconsin Department of Tourism assessment process.** Kristin informed everyone that the Wisconsin Department of Tourism would be developing an assessment and Tourism development strategy for the City of Oak Creek. There will be 5 total meetings. The first will be held on Tuesday Aug. 27th, 2019 from 3-4:30 pm. A SWOT (Destination Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and multi-page document will be created. An example of the assessment done for Belgium in 2014 was handed out to the group. The first meeting will concentrate on brainstorming and overview. Katie Corbin and Cory Savage from Savage can attend.
 - c. **Discussion on Sneak Peek at Oak Creek.** Kristin Craig let us know that the Sneak Peak at Oak Creek will be happening on Saturday Sept. 14th, 2019. The list for application is out. The attendees last year felt they did not have enough time to see all the businesses, while the businesses thought a shorter timeframe would work better for them. A solution was put forth of dividing the day into two blocks of time. The first would be from 8:00am to 12:00pm and the second from 12:00pm to 4:00pm. There is a plan to partner with Go-Riteway for shuttle service again this year.

4. Informational and discussion items.

a. **Dog Days at Drexel.** Kristin Craig shared that Dog Days was a success. There were 25 vendors Friday and 50 vendors on Saturday. The vendors loved the event. Kristin felt that attendance was up although actual numbers were hard to gauge. She estimated 300-400 on Friday and 500-600 on Saturday. Kim Jankowski thought it may have been more. Two hundred people filled out the post event survey and 560 entry forms for the drawing were turned in. Attendees at Dog Days at Drexel were offered a variety of activities. They could decorate dog biscuits, watch a Police K9 demo, see a live band, visit vendors and watch the dock diving competition. The Commissioners agreed that the dock diving is always a big draw and that we could try to have 2 pools next year, one for competition and one for people who would like to let their dogs try it out. Dog Days enjoyed a sunny day with temperatures around 78-80 degrees and people were wanting places for their animals to cool off since the splash pad is not an option for dogs. Some even wanted to go into City Hall. Suggestions were made for sprinklers, misters, tents, more pools for laying in, and perhaps a RV with air conditioning for the dogs to cool off in. Another suggestion was made to move the event to Fall. The general consensus was to not move the dates.

b. **NEWaukee Confluence Event.** NEWaukee employees Angela Damiani and Nicole Behnke, designers of The Confluence – A Gathering at Lake Vista Park, filled us in on the cancelled event. The July 20th event, which was designed to include art installations, an artist market, food trucks, live music and a craft beer village, was cancelled on the afternoon of the event, due to severe weather. As originally planned, the artwork was supposed to stay in the park until after the Lake Vista Beer Garden ended on Sunday, August 11th. A wooden interactive artwork called Come to Our Table was returned to Lake Vista on Friday for the beer garden and was very popular with the children throughout the rest of that event. Maps of where to see the artwork were also passed out during the beer garden. Two art sculptures had to be removed before the Beer Garden took place. The ribbon art called “Color Wash” and another called “Inside Out or Outside In” were already removed from Lake Vista Park because they did not survive the weather. De-installation of the rest of the artwork was scheduled for the day of this meeting, but it was decided to keep things up until Labor Day weekend. Angela suggested that the Harbor Moon installation be kept because it is a more permanent piece and looks good where it is located. She also said that if the event were repeated in the future, more art pieces could be added. Kim Jankowski thought that the art pieces should be more substantial and they were not what she expected. She thought the artwork was too spread out and should be more weather resistant. She also suggested that Art in the Park, an Oak Creek -Franklin Foundation for Education event held on Memorial Day weekends, could be a good place to market to vendors for participation in a future confluence style event. It was also agreed that a rain date be in place if the event is repeated.

Angela said that they should call a rain date much earlier to avoid having to pay fees to vendors who may set up prior to the call. It was suggested that it be put into vendor contracts that if the event is canceled by a certain time of day, the fee would not be paid. The time of 9 or 10 am was mentioned as reasonable.

c. Oak Creek Beer Garden. Kristin reported that the Beer Garden which was held from Thursday, August 8 to Sunday, August 11 earned approximately \$16,000, with about \$2,000 in profit. The biggest crowd was on Friday. People seemed to enjoy themselves and look forward to it. Kim suggested more social media ads to boost the attendance. It was suggested that we separate the dates of the Lake Vista beer garden from the beer garden that is held at Bender Park, hopefully pulling in more people, while also attempting to draw more from out of town. Doug Seymour thought that we might have too many beer gardens close together. He said beer gardens are too saturated and we need to spread them out a bit so people will look forward to them and that we should offer more to do while there. Cory from Savage Solutions added that beer gardens are becoming “hyper local” and if you are keeping the numbers the same every year you are doing well. Kim thought that maybe having bigger and better wayfinding signage would help, specifically, on Ryan and 32. In addition, she thought signs that said “Beer Garden Today” or “Live Music” or “____Days until Beer Garden would be great advertising.

d. Business Appreciation Event. Kristin informed us that the Business Appreciation Event took place Wed. July 31st at Routine Field. Eighty were in attendance. More businesses came than at last year’s event. Complimentary food and beer were provided. Oak Creek branded hats and Milwaukee Milkmen branded socks were given out to event participants. Mayor Dan Bukiewicz threw out the first pitch for the game. Commissioners that were in attendance stated that no one knew the Hop Yard was going to be open to more than the Oak Creek businesses. There were many people who were not part of the event milling about. Kim Jankowski thought it made the event feel more segregated and that people stayed within their business group instead of taking the opportunity to network. The Commissioners generally agreed that more structure was needed. While Mayor Dan Bukiewicz was being interviewed, no one seemed to know it was happening. Kim also thought it would have been good to encourage participants to cheer the Mayor on when he threw out the first pitch. It was suggested the area be more roped off next time and that we offer ticket discounts so businesses could invite additional employees to attend. Doug thought that Oak Creek should be used more in the promotions. Overall the commissioners and the businesses liked the event.

Cory Savage ended the meeting with a brief report on recent traffic on the Oak Creek website, saying it was trending ahead on all of its goals this year. He handed out an information sheet showing the statistics on how the site is trending and what type of traffic it is getting. Most of the traffic is local to Oak Creek, but a good deal of it is coming from the City of Milwaukee and from Chicago. There is a live dashboard available and Kristin Craig has the link if anyone is interested. The commissioners were curious as to how this compares to other counties in the area and other local municipalities. Cory said that comparative information is not available at this time.

Adjournment: Commissioner Kim Jankowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Clint Wills seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

Submitted by Anna Spankowski
Administrative Support Assistant
City of Oak Creek
August 26, 2019