

Tourism Commission Meeting
Monday, January 22, 2024
8:30 a.m.

Attendees: Commissioner Melissa Rasmussen, Commissioner Alicia Haase, Commissioner Clint Wills, Alderman Jim Ruetz

Also in Attendance: Paula Nevarez, Leisure Services Assistant, City of Oak Creek; Andrew Vickers, Administrator, City of Oak Creek; Catherine Roeske, Clerk, City of Oak Creek; Leslie Flynn, Communications Coordinator, City of Oak Creek; Maxwell Gagin, Assistant City Administrator/Comptroller, City of Oak Creek; Bill Elliot, President and CEO of Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association; John Jessard, past chair of Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association

1. **Welcome/Call to order** – Commissioner Clint Wills called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
2. **Approval of minutes December 11, 2023 meeting** – Alderman Jim Ruetz made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Clint Wills seconded the motion. All were in favor.
3. **American Cornhole League Sponsorship** – Paula informed the Commissioners there is interest again in holding the American Cornhole League Tournament in Oak Creek from June 26 to June 28th. The League is requesting the City to sponsor the event at the \$15,000- level as was done in 2023. There was a brief discussion as to whether it would be worthwhile to sponsor this event during a high hotel occupancy time of year. The Commissioners agreed to discuss it further at a future meeting, and requested additional information regarding the media exposure with the sponsorship.
4. **World Dodgeball RFP** – Tom Hickson, World Dodgeball President, met with the Commissioners via Zoom call to discuss the ways hosting a World Dodgeball Event could benefit the City. National and international visibility as well as room stays were the main talking points. Mr. Hickson informed the Commissioners the organization is very flexible and can deliver events during months that can produce the greatest impacts for the City. They are also willing to work with the City regarding event cost. Commissioners discussed how the level of investment would require a regional approach with multiple tourism partners. No decisions were made.
5. **Kites in Flight Contract Term Sheet**- Paula presented the term sheet for the possible Kites in Flight Event. Jake Peters and his team of 15 people will fly Kites and provide a Kids Kite workshop

at the Lake Vista Park. Paula informed everyone that his events typically draw around 3,000 attendees from as far away as Madison. Paula will forward the term sheet to the City Attorney to review and formalize into a contract.

6. **2024 Tourism Budget-Amended Framework-** City Administrator Andrew Vickers acknowledged a letter all Commissioners recently received from a law firm representing several organizations regarding the City's obligations with its room tax dollars. Mr. Vickers informed the Mayor and Common Council also received the letter and stated City staff is moving forward with the contract proposal and new budget framework the Commission has been discussing. He introduced Assistant City Administrator/Comptroller Max Gagin, who discussed tourism fund revenue, expenditures, and 2024 provisional budget framework. The budget structure aligns with the outline proposal of a potential City-tourism services contract presented at the December 12, 2023 Commission meeting. Alderman Jim Ruetz mentioned the current tourism fund cash balance really give the Commission flexibility for numerous projects of initiatives it wishes to pursue. Commissioner Wills stated he was uncomfortable moving forward with these decisions if the legal structure of the contract and funding a City Department are not sound. Alderman Ruetz pointed out that a tourism entity still does not exist in the City and City resources are required and still being used in the meantime; he would not like to hold up continued actions. Alderman Ruetz stated he was not interested in entertaining a tourism zone. Commissioner Wills stated that although the functionality of the contract arrangement could be efficient, it may not comply with the way legislation reads in his view. Varying points of view and room tax law interpretations were discussed including those of the meeting guests Mr. Elliot and Mr. Jessard. No direction was given, nor action taken, on the budget framework.

Adjournment - Commissioner Clint Wills made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderman Jim Ruetz seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 a.m.

ATTEST:



Paula Nevarez, Leisure Services Assistant

02/12/2024
Date