

# Stillwater/Oak Park Heights Convention and Visitors Bureau

## Minutes for September 9, 2015

Voting Board Members in Attendance: Jerry Helmberger, Steve Roll, Alex Rojas, Shannon Oldsberg, Larry Loyer

Voting Members Absent: Tiki Oswald and Chuck Dougherty

Others in Attendance: Christie Rosckes, Doug Menikheim-City of Stillwater, Sherri Hopfe

Meeting called to order by Jerry Helmberger, President, at 10:30 am

Approval of agenda, switched item 6 to 4, and Discussion item 8c moved to end of agenda, agenda approved.

**Doug Menikheim** wanted to get us up to date on what's happening with the City. Will report on VRBO research at next meeting. City completed the budget session and added a number of people. HR support for the city by 1<sup>st</sup> of April, will add someone to building inspection area to lower time for inspections, and add a zoning administrator in 2017. 6% levy increase this year. Have a new Administrator who has a lot of ideas. He figures out ways to move forward.

Fire Station is work of art, protection is increased as it is centered in the city now. Training capabilities have increased with the tower attached to the building. Training rooms are fantastic. Command Center for tornados or floods with connection to the Army. Official opening in early October.

Loss of Todd Streeter is a concern, as it leaves a hole in the downtown. He was terminated by the board. Want to be a network group. Hired a marketing director for the Chamber and is in search of an executive Director by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year. Doug will talk to all the organizations to figure out where we go from here regarding DRC.

Bridge is delayed, and no idea when it will get done. Turnblad will be talking to people to get things done for the DRC coalition. Don't want to lose the cohesion of the downtown. Will be talking to Andy and Brandon next week. Want to keep discussion open on cohesion, want ideas.

**Sherri Hopfe**-working Hometown for the Holidays. Met last week for fundraising, working on grant application, etc.

Minutes of August 5<sup>th</sup> were approved.

See Treasure's Report as Chuck absent from meeting. Will approve both August and September reports at next meeting.

**Marketing Report**-apologize for not having an official report. 2 Fan tours in September, 22 and 29<sup>th</sup>. Very busy on the phone to get people to attend, 15 people on each tour. Needs 2 rooms on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. GrandStay will do those two rooms. Lowell may be able to do the 29<sup>th</sup>

Explore MN social media person needs a hotel on Saturday October 3, and may need 2 rooms. Midwest Group travel planners coming on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and looking for a discount rate. GrandStay, Lowell, and Larry will look into getting rooms at the Rivertown as well.

Explore MN Director and CEO John Edman was named National State Tourism Director of the Year for 2015. Congratulations John!

Discussion on Guides, running out early. Larry has some to share, as there is a mailing to do. Business' downtown have them? We do have ways to get guides if they come to town. A decision was made not to print more guides. Better not to have them sitting around, but having them out there is so much better. Printed 57,000, and it's the earliest we've run out. We are careful on the distribution of them.

Pollination Event going on at Liftbridge Brewery, has 2 tickets to go to this event, Larry will use them.

Got a call yesterday from Jim Boo who is working on the World's Largest Hockey Event, put our logo on Let's Play Hockey brochure. Alex talked with Jim and it comes out one week before Valentine's Day. Takes place in Stillwater, and will bring business to town.

Watched two videos, MN Traveler, and Ways to Explore Stillwater. Different ways to see Stillwater: by air, Segway, biking, etc. Both are on the Facebook Page.

Doug brought in AAA Living and had connected with us a few months ago, and Stillwater is in this month's issue of the magazine.

## **2016 Budget Planning**

EMT Coops save money for advertising. Went through 5 types of advertising, but not a lot of interest in marketing to motorcycles, golf, snowmobiling, pheasant hunting, or fishing. Rather see bicycling.

Print Category-skip Midwest Living, MN Monthly, Winnipeg Free Press, Mpls. St. Paul Mag.? International Travel comes through EMT so as a CVB we don't focus on that market. Did Group Tour Magazine last year, so some interest in doing it again. Stillwater doesn't have facilities to house 80 people on a bus tour! No conference rooms for a large size groups. Day Trippers are good though, so put small part of budget towards them. Get 60% savings from the coop ad. \$1200 last year for a quarter page, \$3300 for a half page per issue in February and August, or 3% of our budget. Advertise twice a year, but Christie will check into costs. Take a break on Itineraries Magazine, so save \$1500 on that, and another \$1000 on a group travel brochure. We should have enough to do the half page from that savings. MN section prints 4 times a year, with a EM banner.

AAA is a good value, and made a verbal commitment already. Do a map Only in MN, but covers Wisconsin and Iowa also. Email sweep got lots of leads, plus special map for biking. 50% savings from the coop. Larger circulation. They distribute our guides at the AAA offices.

ABA tour book participation, and advertised in the booklet last year, \$600 for year and circulates 4000 attendees at conferences for group travel planners. Show is in January.

Out of Home outdoor banners, also looking into billboards.

Yes on Comcast. Minneapolis/St. Paul Winter Romantic Getaway. Do we want to tweak the video at 50% this less or \$5000 for the production fee? Cable is disappearing, Netflix is huge. The tv world is in

transition, so tough to know which new thing to chase. For now, if doing television stick with traditional or put money into google ad words/digital advertising. Christie will look into Hulu and Netflix.

Digital Stuff like we did last year, but can be done by Christie or local vendors.

Sponsored content and story creation, for example we want you to write a story about Stillwater is the most romantic getaway, or a third person publisher and has a lot of power to create a story. A custom written article, fresh content, leads and email blasts, new articles on the EMT website for one year \$2000, also at 50%. Let's sign up. 133,000 ad impressions.

Next meeting will bring more ideas for marketing.

Have to be in the Mpls/St. Paul Travel Guide with logo, ½ page ad taken care of @ \$5500 w/bigger circulation.

St. Croix Valley Regional Tourism Alliance guide. \$1425 last year for ad, part covered by grant

Minnesota Bed and Breakfast guide back cover and highlight Stillwater B & B's, will look into cost. \$750 for back cover – if available, reserve it.

EMT Metro CVB's group membership with annual campaigns. Keep same bronze participation level at \$4000? Next level is silver at \$8000. Get larger slices of pie. Decide at end of our budget? Christie will get actual costs.

Had a break, then went over **Photo Contest Winners** to determine 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners as well as honorable mentions.

**Next Meeting:** Lowell Inn, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 am