



Indiana Office of Tourism Development

MINUTES AND MEMORANDA OF A MEETING OF THE TOURISM COUNCIL

Held: April 6, 2017

A quarterly meeting of the Indiana Tourism Council was held April 6, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at the Indiana Historical Society, 540 W. Ohio St., Indianapolis, IN 46202.

The following Council members were present at the meeting and contributed to quorum: Mark Wuellner (Lieutenant Governor delegate), Mike Johannes, Denise Pence, Gale Gerber, Phil Bloom, James Wallis, Carrie Lambert, Mark Wuellner, Mark Newman, Rob Caputo, Pete Eshelman, Elise Shrock, telephonically Chris Leininger and Misty Weisensteiner. Senator Lonnie Randolph, Senator Chip Perfect, Representative Wes Culver, Representative Justin Moed, and Lu Porter were not present. Brenda Myers stepped in mid-meeting as proxy for Carrie Lambert.

Upon noting the presence of a quorum, Chairman Wuellner called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

I. Welcome

Mark Wuellner welcomed the council.

II. Approval of minutes

Mark Wuellner asked for a motion for the approval of the Council's March 3, 2017 minutes.

A motion was made by James Wallis to approve the minutes for the meeting held on March 3, 2017, as presented. Carrie Lambert seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLVED, that the minutes for the Indiana Tourism Council meeting held on March 3, 2017, are approved as presented.

III. Message from the Chair

Mark Wuellner went over future efforts for the grant application review process, regarding open meetings to review application in full.

IV. Update on Destination Development Grants

Executive Director Mark Newman reviewed the intent of the Destination Development program. Carrie Lambert noted her appreciation of the ability to view full applications. It is noted that the Columbus Visitors Center has met the conditions set forth at the last meeting, finalizing the approval of their grant.

V. Destination Development Grant Presentations

Wuellner introduced Kyle Johnson to start the presentations.

Johnson explained that each presentation will be approximately 15 minutes in length with ten minutes for questions following each presentation.

A. Pike County Parks & Recreation Department

Pike County Parks & Recreation Department has requested \$228,900 for a project titled Prides Creek Event Center. The presenters described the need for an event space in their community, which was a need identified by a survey in 2014. The proposed facility will be located along a 90-acre lake and will be big enough to host 350-400 people. The region does not have a venue of this size within 50 miles.

The event center is in a park with a lake and camping and the plan leaves room for future expansion. The park is home to a top 5 disc golf course in the state as well as an 18-hole golf course. The facility would host an annual farm-to-fork event and catering from local businesses. The Azalea Botanical Garden in Hazelton is a local attraction, and in 2015 Petersburg was designated an Azalea City. The new center would be decorated with azaleas to make it a stop on the Azalea Path.

The area is along the new I-69 corridor and is a halfway point between Evansville and Bloomington. The local community looks to capitalize on its location. The project fits into a comprehensive plan for the county.

James Wallis asked what type of events would be hosted at the facility. The presenters said that a venue does not currently exist in the area to accommodate 100 people or more for events such as regional meetings, weddings, graduations, etc. Carrie Lambert asked about marketing. The presenters said that they planned billboards, digital and signage along I-69.

B. Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites

Indiana State Museum and Historic sites has requested \$107,000 for a project titled Metamora Visitor Experience. The mission of the museum is the celebrate, explore and steward all that is authentically wondrous around Indiana. The museum manages 12 historic sites, one being the Whitewater Canal at Metamora. The site is important historically but has experienced dropping attendance due to its seasonal appeal, being outdoors. The attendance is largely dependent on the functioning of the canal boat rides.

The project will create new experiences and strengthen interpretation at the site. It will put the canal and Metamora in regional and statewide context. The project will allow the museum to promote the site regionally and beyond. It will change the flow to allow school groups and includes a new exhibit pavilion. Outdoor interpretive signage will be placed along the 14 mile course. Partnerships exist with the Franklin County CVB as well as a regional group of tourism officials and the Whitewater Canal Trail.

James Wallis asked about the number of annual visitors. The presenters replied that the site sees 115 to 150 thousand visitors annually. Mark Newman asked how the project compared to another project the community developed a few years ago. The presenters said that the previous project closed and never really developed. There is no clear way forward with that project, and if it was completed, it would serve as a complement and not competition. Carrie Lambert asked about the distance between the site and the Levi and Catharine Coffin House. The sites are within one hour of each other.

VI. Council Discussion and Decision on Grant Awards

Following the presentations, the Council discussed and voted on each presentation individually.

A. Pike County Parks & Recreation Department

The Council noted that the project would be great for the community but several members questioned the project's ability to "enhance Indiana's tourism profile" as the guidelines for the grant suggest. The council noted that the impending completion of I-69 presents this project as an opportunity for the community.

A motion was made by James Wallis to approve the funding for Pike County Parks & Recreation. Pete Eshelman seconded. The motion carried with Denise Pence dissenting.

RESOLVED, that the Tourism Council approves an amount not to exceed \$228,900 for the Prides Creek Event Center project to Pike County Parks & Recreation.

B. Indiana State Museum and State Historic Sites

James Wallis moved to approve funding for the Metamora Visitor Experience project. Denise Pence seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

RESOLVED, that the Tourism Council approves an amount not to exceed \$107,000 to the Indiana State Museum & Historic Sites for the Metamora Visitor Experience.

VII. Marketing Asset Recommendations

- a. Intent of the program is increase Marketing and Promotions Effectiveness across the state.
 - i. Museum of Miniature Houses seeks \$7,386 toward Mobilization and Website Optimization. 32% of visitors were from outside Indiana and the hope was to increase that to 50% through this project. It is noted that the project did a great job previously with a festival fast track grant.

1. Gale Gerber moved to approve the funds. Phil Bloom seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLVED, that the Tourism Council approves an amount not to exceed \$7,386 to the Museum of Miniature Houses for Mobilization and Website Optimization.

- ii. Fayette County seeks \$9,416 for signs in the Connersville Historic District. The application had a comprehensive town plan for signage and a very clear budget. The project plans to use hotel stays to evaluate the impact of the project.

1. Denise Pence moved to approve the funding of the project. Rob Caputo seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

RESOLVED, that the Tourism Council approves an amount not to exceed \$9,416 to Fayette County for the Connersville Historic District signage.

- iii. Blackford County EDC seeks \$19,850 for a marketing tools to be used to promote initiatives countywide. The project aligns with several local plans and includes a multi-media approach. The project will use real estate value as a means of evaluation.

1. Gale Gerber moved to fund the project. James Wallis seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLVED, that the Tourism Council approves an amount not to exceed \$19,850 to Blackford County EDC for a Countywide Marketing Initiative.

- iv. Renew Cannelton, Inc., seeks \$25,000 for a historic gateway sign. It is noted that the maximum amount for the grant is \$20,000. The sign will replicate the twin towers of the Indiana Cotton Mill. Planning elements are already cleared by INDOT. The project has strong letters of support and the project notes that future plans exist to tie into other local initiatives. The project can accept partial

funding.

1. It is noted that money might be better used in creating a master plan for the city, but the sign will be in a heavy traffic area. It is noted that sometimes pride can be a catalyst for future development. Brenda Myers motions to fund the project. Denise Pence seconds and the motion carries unanimously.
2. RESOLVED, that the Tourism Council approves an amount not to exceed \$20,000 to Renew Cannelton, Inc., for the Historic Gateway Sign.

VIII. Review Grant Budget

- a. A quick place based grant program in conjunction with OCRA is currently underway with awards between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

IX. Preview June Meeting

- a. The Council will meet again on June 1, 2017

X. Adjournment

- a. Gale Gerber motions to adjourn, and Mike Johannes seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Suzanne Crouch
Lieutenant Governor

Mark J. Whelher, Designee for Lt. Governor as Chair

ATTEST:



Mark Newman
Executive Director for IOTD

How do you feel about the way you are doing?

Very good