



City of Loves Park, City of Rockford, City of South Beloit, County of Winnebago,
Village of Cherry Valley, Village of Machesney Park, Village of Rockton, Village of Roscoe;
Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Rockford Park District

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

2:00 p.m.

UW Health Sports Factory – 305 S. Madison Street, Rockford, Illinois

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Winnebago County Tourism Facility Board was called to order by WCRTFB Chairman, Ian Linnabary at 2:05 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Chairman Frank Haney, Mayor Greg Jury, Mayor Tom McNamara, John Groh President & CEO Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Ian Linnabary Rockford Park District Board President, and Jay Sandine Rockford Park District Executive Director,

Absent: Mayor Jim Claeysen, Mayor Dale Adams, Mayor Steve Johnson, Mayor Ted Rehl, Mayor Mark Szula and Bobbie Holzwarth Board Representative of RACVB.

Also present: Tiffany Gallagher, Eastern Branch Manager for Civitas, and Jodi Carroll guest of RACVB and RPD.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the Board.

Consent Agenda

Motion by Mr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Haney, that the Board **approve** the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- A. September 10, 2019 Meeting Minutes
- B. 2020 Regular Meeting Schedule

Approved 3(ayes) 0 (nays) 0 (abstain) 5 (absent) (79.5%) by voice vote.

Bi-Annual Election of Officers

Mr. Haney nominated Mr. Linnabary, as designated representative of the RPD, as Board Chair. Nominations were closed.

Mr. Linnabary was named Board Chair 3(ayes) 0 (nays) 0 (abstain) 5 (absent) (79.5%) by voice vote.

Mr. Linnabary nominated Ms. Holzwarth, as designated representative of RACVB, as Board Vice-Chair. Nominations were closed.

Ms. Holzwarth was named Board Vice-Chair 3(ayes) 0 (nays) 0 (abstain) 5 (absent) (79.5%) by voice vote.

Financial Update: Hotel Tax Receipts and Projections

RPD Chief Financial Officer Penny Christians reviewed the reports provided on hotel tax revenues received in 2019, which showed a slight increase over 2018. She shared that an additional debt service payment of \$450,000 on the principle debt will be made in January or February, 2020 with Illinois Bank & Trust. Ms. Christians reminded the Board of a previous conversation regarding plans to invest a portion of the reserve funds into CDs when the fund balance reached \$250,000. We have now reached that mark, but CD market rates are not as high as current Money Market rates. The funds will be held where they are currently until the CD rates recover, and then \$100,000 will be invested in CDs. Ms. Christians shared that the Park District is undergoing its annual audit, and the WCRTFB fund activities will be audited as well. The audit results will be shared with the Board at the August, 2020 meeting, and Ms. Christians anticipates reporting on the additional principal payment that is made at the May, 2020 meeting.

Presentation

John Groh introduced Ms. Tiffany Gallagher of Civitas to the Board, and shared that he is happy to be at this point of learning more about the evolution of destination funding and Tourism Improvement Districts (TID). He also introduced Ms. Jodi Carroll who is assisting RACVB and the RPD. He shared a reminder that Civitas was discussed previously as being an advisor who can help the Board and the community more fully understand the potential for establishing a TID in Winnebago County, how they have worked elsewhere, and what the benefits have been to local hotels and to the broader community where they are located. Mr. Groh said there will be a series of additional presentations made tomorrow to provide more opportunities for education and information to help with making further decisions on whether a TID is something we want to pursue.

Ms. Gallagher provided information on her professional background, and on the work of Civitas as a consulting firm for special benefit assessment districts. The presentation provided an overview of the evolution of dedicated funding based on benefit, such as Business Improvement Districts, and Tourism Improvement Districts. Also discussed was the importance of travel and tourism on the local and state economy, and differences in the mechanisms we currently have in place, such as the bed tax, and the stability of TID funding which could allow for long-term planning for tourism growth. Ms. Gallagher reviewed other cities that have implemented TIDs, the benefits they receive, and the legal path to form TIDs where they do not currently exist, such as in Illinois.

The steps required for formation of a TID were reviewed, including outreach to local hoteliers and stakeholders, drafting a plan that will specify the benefit to be received by local hotels and the use of the proceeds, and hotel and local governmental approval. The timeline for formation of a TID is typically 9 -12 months.

The Board members discussed with Ms. Gallagher the length of term expected for the TID, which is typically 5 to 10 years. Performance metrics and expectations would be incorporated into the plan that is developed to provide for accountability. Also discussed was the approval process, which requires approval by the majority of hotels, and the requirement for the development of a governing board to oversee the use of funds that are raised through the TID. Policies and by-laws needed for administration would be developed by the Board, which could include local hotel owners, leadership from the communities involved, members of the WCRTFB, RACVB, the RPD and other stakeholders as required by the plan. There was further discussion on the details the plan would include for the collection and use of the funds and the geographical boundary for the TID.

In closing Mr. Groh shared the schedule of the additional informational meetings planned for initial discussions. Communication pieces to be used as resources are being developed and will be available in the near future. Mr. Groh shared a reminder that this idea is one option we are exploring in addition to others that may provide support for operations of the Reclaiming First facilities. We are beginning this exploratory educational process to provide information, and to gather feedback and input from everyone involved with no decisions being made at this time.

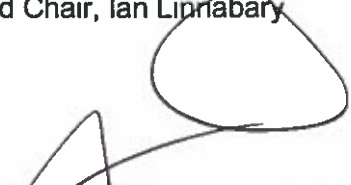
Adjournment

Motion by Mr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Jury that the Board **adjourn** the meeting at 3:19 p.m.

Approved 3(ayes) 0 (nays) 0 (abstain) 5 (absent) (79.5%) by voice vote.



Board Chair, Ian Linnabary



Board Vice-Chair, Bobbie Holzwarth

BOARD APPROVED:

APPROVED

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Winnebago County Regional
Tourism Facility Board

