

## **Tourism Board Meeting Tuscola Community Building July 21, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am. In attendance: Drew Hoel, Bill Hill, Michelle Black, Donna Kidwell, Randy Hastings, Devon Story, Anna Nelson, and Alta Long.

### **Old Business:**

Drew opened the meeting and presented the minutes of the February 18 meeting, noted the delay of approval due to COVID-19. Donna motioned to approve the minutes as presented and Randy seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

Alta noted major expenses included the firework display deposit. However the event was canceled and will be used toward a future show. She also noted the outdoor dining tents and the snowflake light pole decorations as larger expenses. Randy motioned to approve the bills lists from 2/14/2020-7/17/2020 in the amount of \$38,478.12. Michelle seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

Anna recapped virtual Sparks in the Park event. The virtual event included a 5k, scavenger hunt, and bingo. The run at your own pace 5K included a t-shirt, medal and bib. There were 41 runners, which is typical for the race for preregistration. The other events did not draw a huge number of participants. They also launched the downtown walking tour booklet. In the first week they sold 35 and all proceeds are donated to the museum.

Anna said plans to discuss adding a Tourism/Chamber employee with the personnel committee during budgeting meetings was put on hold at this time.

Anna explained at the last meeting they had a few ideas for the interstate signage. With the new Loves station going in they think pulling interstate travelers is the best option. Bill suggested trimming trees around the billboards so they are more visible. Alta also mentioned temporary billboards to promote Loves.

The Miss Tuscola pageant was postponed in March and they had an outdoor pageant at the park in June. Anna said she would contact Denise to get final expenses for the pageant. Typically the pageant makes money from sponsors and door admission. They did have sponsors for the pageant this year.

### **New Business:**

Anna updated the board on initiatives during the stay at home order due to COVID-19. IHSA bid for the state basketball tournament was accepted. They board pledged \$2,000 for 3 years. The downtown tour booklet is printed and available for purchase. The Douglas County Museum is also planning a cemetery tour for the fall. Anna mentioned they receive a lot of interest with history information on social media. Outdoor dining tents were rented for Joe's Pizza, Cast Iron, and Mi Veracruz for the month of June. The rental was extended into July for Cast Iron paid for by the City however August will be paid for by Cast Iron. Anna has been submitted ads to travel publications that are printing and will continue to do so as publications print their guides later this year. She also has been sending out bimonthly newsletters with community related info as well as COVID-19 information. Earlier in the year the Amish County of Illinois group decided to join Visit Champaign County. VCC is planning to do an online guide and have a printed guide later this year.

Alta explained that they would be following all state guidelines from upcoming events. All effort of tourism will be with social distancing in mind. Drew mentioned that although upcoming events may not be able to happen, they are open to hearing ideas for marketing and other initiatives to navigate during this time. Anna explained Christmastown vendor coordinators have been contacted and are tentatively planning the event; however understand the situation and guidelines may change. Anna also mentioned that the alumni association has canceled all their events for homecoming weekend.

Alta explained that there has been interest in displaying active military signs. In the past active duty military signs were displayed on the light poles on Main St. She would suggest doing a more durable material than what was used

last time. Bill suggested displaying on Main St. near Kelsey's warehouse for a visible location. They would need to find out how many active military are from/live in Tuscola and have some one as a contact point to add new signs.

Alta discussed the FY21 budget, which was emailed to the board. The budget was approved by the City Council in July.

Anna noted the annual board appointment. She will add this list to the city council's agenda for the next meeting. Any changes to please let her know.

Alta mentioned they do not plan to meet monthly, unless there are items that need a vote or discussion. Anna will keep them updated via email.

Drew motioned to adjourn and Randy seconded. All in favor motion passed.

Next Meeting Date: **August 18, 2020 – 8:30 am at City Hall**

Approved:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Randy Hastings", written over a horizontal line.

**Randy Hastings, President**