

SPECIAL EVENTS
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 15, 2020

Present: Michael Dougherty, Wayne Eichelkraut, Jani Eichelkraut, Alaina Rivers, Peggy Schneider, Candy Moore, Jim Reilly and Heidy Eisert.

Absent: Sherra Blakley.

The committee met a day earlier than scheduled at the request of guests who could not attend a Thursday meeting.

Guests: Scott Struchen and Anna Wright, representing Tangled Roots Brewing/Friday music series; Curt Bedei, director Ottawa Visitor Center, and Mary Olson, downtown store owner and representing Downtown Merchants Association.

Friday Music in the Park: Scott and Anna outlined their goals for the 3-year-old series, and aired some plans and requests. Some of the requests were referred to the city.

- 1) They requested use of a portable toilet. They tried to use one set up for the Farmers Market, only to find it locked, and didn't realize Special Events had installed one at the other end of the park. The toilet will be provided for use both nights in Washington Park next year, and Wayne reported it has been arranged to empty it on Saturday in the middle of its heaviest usage.
- 2) They requested to add their event to a single banner posted in the park, hoping to promote both events.
- 3) They requested to add a themed night promoting a non-profit organization, a local pet shelter, through beverages and promotional items, and to host an adoption night occasionally.
- 4) They requested to sell food from their restaurant at the Friday concert, which now only sells beer. They would take orders at the park and deliver prepared food to the tent. Anna also wanted to know if they could sell non-alcoholic drinks and whether the popcorn wagon would be operational this summer. If it is, they won't sell competing refreshment; if it isn't, they might add water and soda. The committee had no objection to food sales, but Alaina wondered what would happen if people requested the same service Saturday night, when Tangled Roots would not be serving. Special Events Committee has brought up the subject of additional food options on Saturdays, but has taken no action.

Curt explained that the Visitor Center's role was to distribute information about events. He also mentioned that OVC receives requests from musicians asking to play Ottawa venues and wondered where to forward that information to. Jim suggested that OVC, Special Events and the city work to coordinate their websites.

Minutes: On a motion by Jim and second by Jani, minutes from the November meeting were approved.

Financial Report: Alaina reported no change since nothing new has been spent. A total of \$3,800 remains in the contingency portion of the budget, and \$2,000 remains from a Movie Night that didn't happen in 2019.

Action: On a motion Jani and second by Candy, the financial report was approved.

Old Business:

2020 Music in the Park: Peggy presented a 2020 lineup and expenditures. The lineup consists of 9 bands: Five are new to the series, one is returning after two years, three are returning from last year. Three are local bands. Total cost will be \$9,650. Concerts will start earlier in the season, in June (June 27) and run through August (concluding August 29).

Publicity has been sent to calendars and magazines/travel guides: LaSalle County, Heritage Corridor CVB, OVC and Shaw Media's Starved Rock Country Magazine (which also has a website and calendar).

New Committee Shirts: The committee has discussed shirts, since some committee members have shirts that are several years old and other members don't have shirts. The committee discussed a different design and shirt color.

Action: Peggy was authorized to seek bids for new shirts and have information to present at the February meeting.

Children's Events: The committee continued to discuss various children's activities, since it has been tasked by the city to develop kid-friendly free events. Wayne said corporate sponsors who did not want to sponsor events that served alcohol might be available to support children's events. The city could partner with a local children's art festival, perhaps schedule a swim night, and continue a movie event. Jim suggested a kite festival and events with a National Guard unit, fire and police responders and farmers – letting kids explore equipment. Peggy suggested that local organizations – such as Downtown Merchants, the library, and others – that host children's events be invited to partner for maximum attendance and coverage. The Ottawa Rec Board could be another potential partner.

Discussion continues. The city would like to offer up to 10 kids' events.

New Business:

Wayne was asked how the city is proceeding with the annual event schedule. Based on discussions, Riverfest might reappear in an abbreviated 4-day version with music and food sales; craft beer events would continue and/or be combined in some fashion; Wine Fest and Chris Kringle market would continue. Morel Fest might have run its course and might not be rescheduled, since it's becoming more difficult to find fields of morels.

Adjournment: 7 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2020, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Peggy Schneider