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PEPIN TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

CALL TO ORDER. Sue called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm

ROLL CALL: Present: Sue F, Katie K, Pat S, Jenny B, Denise P, Mary P. Guests: Gabby P (via Zoom), Steve Macke (2026 WCOW President)

SECRETARY'S REPORT. The October 22, 2025, Tourism Commission meeting minutes were discussed. A motion was made by Katie to accept the minutes; seconded by Jenny. Vote was called; all ayes, no nays; motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

- Invoices to pay include HW Marketing for \$1,552.20 and \$600.00 for Gabby's hours and Kate Heilman's remaining hours to complete the website theme update, respectively. A motion was made by Sue to pay the HW Marketing invoices; seconded by Denise. Vote called, all ayes, no nays, Motion carried.
- Clarification given on the multi-page 3rd quarter room tax revenue reports.
- Grant requests:
 1. Pepin Peppies – \$4,762.77 for Pepin Days expenses. A motion was made by Sue to approve this grant; seconded by Mary. Vote called; all ayes. Motion carried.
 2. Evers Farm - \$950.00 for Christmas Barn event on December 6. A motion was made by Denise to approve this grant; seconded by Jenny. Vote called; all ayes. Motion carried.
 3. Laura Museum - \$6,500.00 for video shoot marketing campaign. After discussion, it was decided to postpone this grant request until we can invite Carey to share her vision for this project at the December meeting.

WCOW COST SHARE. Guest Steve Macke reported on WCOW's successes over the past year and its expanding reach. He shared plans for upcoming changes to WCOW's marketing approach to elevate the tourism group to the next level. The website will undergo an overhaul to modernize it and make it more user-friendly, and new members on the Marketing Committee will bring renewed energy. Additionally, a new Area Partner category is being developed to encourage networking and support among other municipalities in the region. After Steve left, Sue proposed increasing the traditional funding contribution to WCOW, our tourism entity, to support new initiatives and maintain momentum for the future. The commission explored various funding methods and largely agreed on the idea of purchasing WCOW memberships for all

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lodging owners in Pepin. This approach would not only boost the number of WCOW members but also enhance their funding and encourage overnight stays in Pepin. A motion was made by Denise to table this decision until the December meeting, when we can finalize the plan; Mary seconded the motion to table the decision. Vote was called; all ayes, no nays. Motion to table carried.

SLATE OF PRINT ADS FOR 2026. Sue presented a worksheet of the print ads historically purchased by the Tourism Commission. After discussion, a motion was made by Denise and seconded by Jenny to move forward with the publications and ad sizes below:

- Pepin County Visitor Guide – Full page ad \$747
- Wisconsin Great River Road Guide – Full page ad cost shared by T.C., WCOW, and Pepin County.
- Visit Bluff Country – Full page ad \$919
- St. Croix Valley Visitor Guide – ½ page ad (\$900) plus full-page advertorial (\$500)
- Big River Magazine – 2/3 page ad in May-June / July-Aug / Sept-Oct issues for \$1632.
- Fresh Art Tour – Sponsorship in both art tour brochures - \$125

HWY 35 BEAUTIFICATION. It was decided to table the decision on pole light selection until the December meeting. Lights will be ordered in January to take advantage of the supplier's 35% discount. There will be a \$50 shipping cost for each unit; there is a 5-year warranty on these light fixtures. A motion was made by Sue to table this decision until the December meeting; seconded by Denise. Vote called; all ayes, no nays. Motion carried. There was a brief discussion on a Christmas swag, however, there are no longer any tall poles at the intersection of 2nd and Lake Streets to support a swag. More discussion on this next summer.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Gabby reported that the destinationpepin.com website is up and running well on its new theme. She is working on SEO optimization to increase its ranking. Gabby requested that everyone let her know of holiday events as the season moves forward.
- Denise reported that River Road Doe on the Go will be held in participating Nelson, Pepin, Stockholm & Maiden Rock businesses on Saturday, November 22. There are 15 business participants.

NEXT MEETING. December 10 at 3:00 pm.

ADJOURN. There was no further tourism business to discuss, and Sue made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jenny. Vote called, all ayes, no nays. Motion carried.

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