

Please note: Minutes are unofficial until approved by the Special Projects Commission at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

**MINUTES
SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMISSION
March 31, 2010**

The Special Projects Commission Meeting was called to order at 3:10 P.M.

In attendance was Jim Simonson, Citizen Member; John Rocco, Citizen Member; Lori Schinker, Citizen Member; Tom O'Loughlin, Hotel Representative; and Mary Claire Lanser, Citizen Member. Also present was Amy Bennett, Associate Planner; Mark Schroeder, Director, Parks, Recreation, & Forestry; and Mayor Chiovatero.

Motion by Ms. Lanser to approve the March 25, 2009 Special Projects Commission Minutes. Seconded by Mr. Rocco. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Simonson to approve the May 13, 2009 Special Projects Commission Minutes. Seconded by Mr. O'Loughlin. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion and Review of Small Grants Project Materials

Ms. Bennett stated we received four applications this year.

• **Application 10-01 – New Berlin Jr. Women's Club - \$10,000 Grant Request**

Ms. Bennett: This a similar application from last year. This is for the New Berlin National Dash that is held on July 4.

Mr. O'Loughlin: At our hotel we had two overnight stays from this group.

Ms. Bennett: We have a \$40,000 budget this year.

Mr. Rocco: I think it meets the goal. I like it because the flyer attached has both hotels on it. They can't force people to stay there, but they have it advertised, and that is what we need. We need the exposure.

Ms. Schinker: It would be nice if we could get records from La Quinta too. We should think about that.

Mr. Simonson: Did they actually use \$10,000 last year?

Ms. Bennett: Yes. That is what they submitted for.

Motion by Ms. Lanser to recommend to Council approval of the Grant Request for \$10,000 for the New Berlin Jr. Women's Club. Seconded by Ms. Schinker.

Mr. Rocco: They gave them \$10,000 and they expect another \$10,000. They are supposed to match that, right?

Ms. Bennett: Yes. There is a question on this application describing the match. It is probably in-kind.

Mr. O'Loughlin: This will be the second year that we will be approving \$10,000. If they don't generate any over night stays, I can't see the continuance of supporting it. The spirit is great, but it is supposed to generate business. As of now, it hasn't. I am for giving the attempt, but if after two years and we don't see anything, I don't see how we can continue to support something that is not generating revenues in the City. It is a great project, and we are happy to work with them and hopefully it is successful, but there has to be some return eventually on the investment. It would have to at least be decreased next year if we don't see anything. This should be taken into consideration that this should be discussed next year.

Ms. Lanser: Can we get the number of rooms from the other hotel for next year too?

Ms. Bennett: Sure.

Ms. Lanser: It would be nice if we could also send a message that it would be great if they could use the meeting space that is available.

Ms. Bennett: Okay.

Mr. Simonson: They should be notified too as to what your thoughts are on that.

Ms. Bennett: They will receive the copy of the minutes.

Mr. O'Loughlin: There has been a representative out, and they talked to me last year. They stopped by and dropped some information off this year. They have attempted, it is not like they are just ignoring. They understand how important the grant is, and they would love to see everybody that comes to our town stay. Some people aren't, they are going to drive up, do their run, and drive home, and that is understandable.

Ms. Lanser: When you keep track of the rooms, do you discriminate between the ones who do the run and the ones who go to the parade?

Mr. O'Loughlin: Last year we had it set up for the run, and when it was all finished, I went back through the entire list of everybody who ran, everybody's time, everybody's place to make sure what I had was accurate. Somebody may have not known about it. I went through every person that stayed versus our registry and came up with the two people.

Upon voting, motion passes unanimously.

- **Application 10-03 – City of New Berlin Mayor's Office - \$10,000 Grant Request**

Mayor Chiovatero: I am here on behalf of the City as well as the Prospect Lion's Club. This year we were looking for people to try and take over the Christmas Parade. The Junior Women's Club has offered to participate, but they feel they have enough projects. The Mayor's Office is taking it over and trying to get businesses involved. In the meantime, the Prospect Lion's Club did commit to being part of the Christmas Parade. At the end of the parade, they have always had the stockings for the kids and setting up for Santa. We really want to get this going again. Last year, there was both positive and negative publicity due to the loss of the Christmas Parade. I think it is really important and the community really looks forward to this. A lot of people were telling us how they have people come from out of town to visit their families, and the Christmas Parade was one of the reasons they came in. What I would like is some consideration. This money would be used to support the return of the Christmas Parade and try to move forward. The parade costs about \$25,000-\$30,000

to put it on. It has been growing every year. We know we are in a rebuilding situation this year. Sherrie Ament has agreed to help in order to arrange some of the businesses and fund raising. I am glad to hear this because she was a one-person band and did all of the work. She didn't start looking to put it together until September. You know, it goes off in early November. It is a very short time to put a huge event like that on. The 4th of July starts theirs the day after the year before. I hope you give them some consideration for them in order to continue this. I think it is a great event for the City, and I know a lot of people look forward to it. I'm sure that it supports a lot of businesses locally, especially along National Ave., during the parade. I'm not sure what it does for the hotels, but I know people do come in from out of town.

Mr. Simonson: I am a Board Member of the Prospect Lion's Club, and they are excited about this. I had talked to John about this and that you had gotten the ball rolling with the dates, and I think this actually could get some hotel stays just like the 4th of July might. We don't have any other cities around that put on a very large Christmas Parade, so there is no competition.

Mr. Rocco: The concern that we have had in the past, is that there is no advertising for the hotels. They had it on different flyers, there has to be something that shows the support for these hotels. If they can do that, then I don't see why we can't support it.

Mr. Simonson: We have several different papers that we put stuff in, plus we have a member that does a lot of advertising for us.

Ms. Lanser: Could you just make sure that the hotels themselves, even though it was only two rooms, that on any advertising on anything about the Christmas parade that the hotels are mentioned.

Motion by Ms. Lanser to recommend to Council approval of the Grant Request for \$10,000 for the Mayor's Office City of New Berlin, subject to mentioning the hotels on the advertising of this event and that the rooms for attendees will be measured and reported to us next year. Seconded by Mr. Simonson. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Application 10-04 – New Berlin Fourth of July Commission - \$10,000 Grant Request**

Ms. Bennett: They are requesting \$10,000 for the parade.

Mr. Schroeder: We have been fortunate for many years, even before the requirement or connection of hotel stays was there, to have received a grant from this group. The biggest challenge is to measure the hotel stays. We did do some things, I will try to put in the packet this time some of the advertising for both hotels listed in the Freeman and then there were children carrying the banners for the two hotels. I am pleased you were able to fund the New Berlin Junior Women's Club organization. What we talked about doing is we do tri-fold flyers. The New Berlin Magic does our parking every year, and they hand those out. It goes along with the theme of trying to get the word out on the hotels. Tom, did Cheryl Schober stop by and talk to you?

Mr. O'Loughlin: I did not speak to her this year yet.

Mark Schroeder: We got an e-mail from the general manager of LaQuinta, and I'm thinking that it came to the Cheryl in our office, and not Cheryl Schober. It is a connection to start planning. It looks like there was some information relative to the discounted rates. We did have our carnival vendor comment to me about where can

our people stay? We know some of them stay on the grounds in their motor homes and trailers. He led me to believe some of their employees may have stayed at one of the other hotels. How do we know who is from these different groups?

Mr. O'Loughlin: We set up everything on what is called a rate code. I can put on any name I want to certain rate codes. For the Junior Women's Club, I put in the Junior Women's Club rate. Any time that rate gets attached to that room, I can then go and pull a report that tells me how many of those rates did I sell between which time and which time? That is how we track our business groups based on the pricing that we give them, because there are restrictions. If you want a corporate rate, you have to meet certain guidelines each year. Those things can be set up. It's always good for people that call to mention the rate, so we know we are supposed to put it in. If you see people that have advertising on their vehicles, that is a little bit easier. I don't know how many rooms, but I know who that is. When it is just people coming in to town for a wedding, unless they are in a wedding group, I don't really know. It is always kind of rude to ask everybody. For any of these events, we can set that up and track it. Just like last year, most of the hotels have the ability to do these things. I don't know how they would go about doing it and tracking it. With all the grants that we got, there has to be that stipulation that there has to be something trackable for these grants to continue. I think they are great events, but there is \$40,000 this year that is coming out of room tax dollars to re-support where the money came from, and right now, \$30,000 is really a crap shoot to see if we receive anything back. The City of New Berlin put the room tax in prior to their being hotel rooms, so they can say how they want the room tax dollars distributed. Had it not done that, anyone who institutes a room tax now in the State has to put 70% of the room tax dollars back into tourism and promotion. That will be almost \$190,000 out of this City that will be going back into promotion, whereas we have \$40,000. The patrons of the hotels are funding a lot of things in the City which don't regenerate. When we only have this amount, it has to be more fine tuned so that we can actually say it is self-perpetuation, regenerating itself. For these events that gets the dollars, I think that the hotels should be considered a major sponsor and not just put as a line item as a thank you. That would help to self promote. For me, I want them to come to my hotel, but as long as it is doing what it is supposed to do, that is all you can ask. If LaQuinta has had great results from this that I don't know about, that is all we can ask. In theory, you would think we would see a lot of return, I just don't know if New Berlin is a big enough place where people come from out of town and stay overnight to go to these events. That is what we are trying to continue to track to see what happens. We should pony up and make it worth while to have people stay with us. During the 4th of July this year, Summerfest is going on, Dave Matthews is playing at Alpine Valley, so the hotels should be pretty full. For us to do a discount at that time, it is going to be a pretty good deal. We will still offer something reduced for them because that is the best way for me to track so we can come back with numbers for next year.

Mr. Schroeder: I will tell Cheryl, our Coordinator, how important it is to continue to follow up with you.

Mr. O'Loughlin: We can get together and talk about what exactly we want to do and how we want to do it. I can let her know, but Cheryl and I can't sit down and say, here is what we are going to do with our rates. We can say we would like to offer a reduction for your group and for people coming in for the event, and here is our information and logo that might be helpful for your guests to know, and then work out something with a flyer or advertising on a web page.

Mr. Schroeder: Looking at what groups come in, Jr. Women's do have participants. I have seen the list of people who do come, and I have seen out of

state people participate. Granted, they might be coming home and staying with mom and dad or relatives. We have the Wisconsin Singers on July 2. That is made up of some Kids from Wisconsin. I know Cheryl has had communication with them, but if there is a way that she can communicate with the head of the Wisconsin Singers to make those families aware.

Ms. Schinker: I think it is shirt tailing too much with the Jr. Women's Club. We are going to give \$10,000 to them and you are requesting \$10,000. I think you need a separate code number, because how are they going to tell who is generating what. Just because the Jr. Women's had it on their dash thing, that should be a whole separate entity. I think you have to have your own separate advertising. The three-fold hand-out in the parking lot is way too late. You are not going to park at the festival and decide to look into staying over night.

Mr. Rocco: I like this, we are showing progress here. This is my fourth year, and we have never done this before. I think this is great. It might be late for this year, but it might generate for next year.

Ms. Schinker: How many years are we going to give it?

Mr. Rocco: At least there is some progress from last year. It is going to take a little while.

Ms. Schinker: I don't think they can be combined because, if we are giving them both money, I think they have to on their own stand with generating the hotels on their own.

Mr. Schroeder: That is just one example the Committee had mentioned. You are correct, if you come on that day and you grab one of those, you may already have your lodging taken care of. There are other ways that Cheryl does the promotions, so I will carry back the thought. We included the Jr. Women's. It is a big part I think the last two or three years. I will take back that you would like to see some evidence of different ways.

Mr. Rocco: In other years, we have had a request for more money than we had. Last year we did scale back. That is one reason why the Christmas Parade wasn't here. Next year, if all the money is not there, and the hotels don't get the stays, then we will cut back again.

Mr. O'Loughlin: With the 4th of July, how many of the people that have participated in the parade, are they all local or are there other groups from Madison or different areas?

Mr. Schroeder: The Wisconsin Singers is based throughout Wisconsin. Lately we have been only able to attract local bands. The thing about the bands and the parade is that they are in two or three different parades in a day. That is how they do the schedule to make it worthwhile. Most of the parade groups are going to be local.

Mayor Chiovero: I would say about 5% are from out of town.

Mr. O'Loughlin: The three events that we have talked about so far for me, they kind of fall into the same category. They are fantastic community events. At this point, I don't think that they have completely met the needs of this grant, but if we continue to seek progress, we could start to see revenue generated. The difference between the 4th of July Parade and the Christmas Parade is nothing. By what the statute says, we have to be able to track. LaQuinta getting on board would be huge, so that we can

say that we have seen progress. If we see no return on it, we have to go in a different direction and see where this money might be better spent to do what it is supposed to be doing. The first year that I was here, I saw nobody. It has gotten better in the last year.

Mayor Chiovero: Tom, I give you a lot of credit for being here. In all the years I have been Mayor, we couldn't get a hotel representative to come in. Your input is very valuable to get these grants and the money put in the right direction.

Motion by Mr. O'Loughlin to recommend to Council approval of the Grant Request of \$10,000 for the New Berlin Fourth of July Commission. Seconded by Mr. Simonson. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Application 10-02 - New Berlin AFS Chapter - \$10,000**

Ms. Bennett: This group was awarded a grant last year. They are asking for \$10,000 for a conference.

Mr. O'Loughlin: They had their event at our hotel last year. We didn't see many room rates because the timing in which they contacted us, we were pretty sold out. They stayed mostly at La Quinta and had their event in our facility. This year, they called really early, and between the room rates that are projected, between just the rental of the room, the projected revenue for this event is \$7,300. That doesn't include any meal rates or beverage service or breakfast service if they chose to do that. It doesn't include feeding them throughout. They will have to eat somewhere in town over the course of their stay. Last year was La Quinta. This year, it was our hotel, and it has generated room revenue and media revenue. If you read through their agenda, they have put in a few events like ordering lunch. It is good that we are spending the money locally.

Ms. Schinker: I can answer anyone's question for this. I will abstain from the voting. We are involved with the local chapter, and always looking for the national chapter to get a local chapter to host it and set it up. They will do some of their training sessions and some of their conferences, etc., here. Last year, I rallied them to try New Berlin out. They loved it. They used a lot of local restaurants and used Matty's for catering. They new the purpose of this, and I think they used it to their fullest.

Motion by Ms. Cera to recommend to Council approval of the Grant Request of \$10,000 for the New Berlin AFS Chapter. Seconded by Mr. Simonson. Motion passes, with Ms. Schinker "abstaining".

Ms. Schinker: Are we going to set the stage?

Ms. Bennett: This is it, we only have one application.

Ms. Lanser: There has been some tweaking done, and it has made it a lot easier then last year.

Ms. Bennett: I heard today that you really want to see tracking in numbers of the hotel stays. Maybe I can add something to the application for next year to the applicants that have applied in the past stating that if you have applied in the past, how many hotel stays do you generate? I can certainly add something like that if that will help the Committee to take a look at these next year.

Ms. Schinker: What if we would require them to have a discount number with the hotels that they use in all of their advertising?

Ms. Lanser: Let them know that there is room space available whether it is for these events that they are talking about or throughout the year.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Could we also ask them to put our local number on their advertisement? I noticed that in one of their flyers they used an 800 number. An 800 number will not know anything about this offer.

Ms. Bennett: I will send them an e-mail about that.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Communication between them and us is just as important as between me and the people at my front desk, so that when people call in, they don't say they do not know what they are talking about. They have to know what we have set up so they can go to the right place so we can track.

Ms. Schinker: Amy, I have a suggestion. How about a mayoral visit at La Quinta?

Ms. Bennett: Sure, I can set that up.

Motion by Ms. Schinker to adjourn the March 31, 2010 Special Projects Commission Meeting at 3:50 P.M. Seconded by Mr. Simonson. Motion carried unanimously.