

Minutes: July 2010

Fulton Chamber of Commerce

Minutes from July 13, 2010

Present: Greg Naftzger, Patti Housenga, Phyllis Housenga, Linda Hollis, Bill Stoermer, Jami Smith, Heather Bennett, Tim Wright, and Kim LaShelle.

Absent: Steve Owen, Deb Schaver, and Bill Wilkin.

Minutes: A motion was made by Stoermer and seconded by Rogis to approve the minutes from June 8, 2010. Motion carried. The April minutes reflected that Colleen Wilkin was no longer going to be the Campaign Manager for The Complex. This was not an accurate statement in the April minutes. Clarification was made noting that in addition to Colleen Wilkin another individual has been hired to assist with fundraising and marketing efforts. Colleen Wilkin is still an employee of The Complex.

Treasurer's Report: Hollis reviewed the June Treasurer's Report: revenue as \$3,486.03 and expenditures of \$2,879.69 leaving an ending balance of \$9,784.27. A motion was made by LaShelle and seconded by Rogis to accept the June Treasurer's Report. Motion carried. Bennett provided a year to date budget to actual report - total revenue received \$38,019.10 and total expenditures \$32,689.47 for an ending balance of \$5,329.63. Bennett noted while it may seem we have a generous balance it is because of donations for the Reagan marker and Hwy 84 sign, but neither have been invoiced. The Hwy 84 sign will be invoiced prior to the end of the fiscal year, but the cost for the Reagan marker will not occur until the new fiscal year.

Executive: A motion was made by Phyllis Housenga and seconded by Stoermer to amend the by-laws reflecting the Treasurer does not have to be a Board Member, but simply a chamber member in good standing. Motion carried. Attached was Bennett's monthly meetings report. The July E-Newsletter was emailed out to all members but is also available online. The Annual Dinner was attended by 54 chamber members. The meal, new seating arrangement, and program were well received. A total of six Fulton businesses have been approved to receive a grant from the USDA/NIU website grant program. The program is managed by the Western Whiteside Management Team (Bud Thompson, Prophetstown; Betty Steinert, Whiteside County; Heather Bennett, Fulton Chamber of Commerce; Corinne Bender, Morrison Chamber of Commerce; Robert Woods, City of Morrison; and Melissa Henricksen and Norm Walzer from Northern Illinois University). The management team met at the end of June and formalized a business survey that will be emailed out to all Western Whiteside community businesses to complete. The survey will provide insight into organizing future programs from the USDA Rural Development grant.

Planning Session Goals:

- Public Art - completed.
- Hwy 84 Sign - funding is in place. A proposal of the billboard was available for the Board to review. The only suggestion, since no lighting will be on the sign, was to add reflective white lettering. Bennett will contact Visual Imaging to see if this can be done and at what cost.
- Group Travel - Bennett has acquired a contact list of 100 tour group operators throughout the 4 state areas and the new visitor guide will be sent to the tour group operators on Fulton.
- Welcome sign plantings - completed.
- Tourism Inventory Spreadsheet - completed.
- Thomson Prison Initiative - city staff, including Bennett, continue to attend informational meetings hosted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Bennett will continue to share information with the membership as she receives notifications. The city website has a relocation link on the front page.

Tourism & Promotions:

- Historical Marker: Thus far, the Chamber has secured \$2,500 for the marker project, and \$3,500 is needed. A smaller marker can be purchased for \$2,500 (less wording). However, at the beginning of the school year Bennett will proceed with asking the principals (per Dr. Bauer's suggestion) to see if they would be interested in doing the "Lincolns for Reagan" fundraiser - children donate pennies. Bennett will ask to see if some more businesses would like to sell the note cards, which are a fundraiser for the Reagan marker project.
- Bridal Walk: very successful - 30 vendors and 46 registered brides. Positive comments were made from the participants and vendors.

- Summer Nights - the chamber night was held July 8, 2010, and it was very well attended. The Fulton Meat Market sold 300 sandwiches and 230 pieces of cake were handed out. There were lots of activities and the event was well organized.
- City Tourism Committee - no meeting was held in June due to scheduling conflicts and events. Stoermer would like the City Tourism Committee to discuss what to do with the tin cups at the end of October. Can the cups go in a city park, be recycled, or mounted somewhere? Bennett and Naftzger will bring up the idea at the July meeting.
- Lincoln Buy-Way Sales - August 6 & 7, 2010. The event is cosponsored by the Chamber and Wa Tan Ye Club. The Wa Tan Ye Club will have sale registration the week of July 19. Bennett will create and copy maps for distribution by August 1 and schedule advertising and press releases. Naftzger mentioned also announcing the event on "Fulton for Sale" on Facebook, "Stuff for Sale in Clinton" on Facebook, and KROS's Facebook page. Bennett will put another posting on the Chamber's Facebook page, too.

Government Affairs: Whiteside County Economic Development will host a contracting workshop in Sterling on July 13. The workshop will be for businesses wishing to become federally certified vendors for the federal prison in Thomson. No official report was provided on The Complex, but it was noted the group continues to seek funds. No official report was provided by the Senior Services Team, but it was noted they encouraged the city council to apply for state grant funds to remodel the Robert Fulton Commons (old fire station) for use as a senior meal/activity center, disaster/emergency relief center, food pantry, and Red Cross blood drive location. The city hired a grant writer and the grant will be submitted soon.

Member Relations: A business site tour of Agri-King, Inc. will be held August 17 from 8am to 9:30pm. Invitations will be mailed as the date approaches. A ribbon cutting for Curves and Supreme Tan's new owner, Sarah Eads, is scheduled for August 25 from 5pm to 6pm.

Downtown: Fulton Retail Development Group's building (gymnastics studio) is in need of a new roof and the back apartment is still available for rent. As an FYI, Nancy Kolk's Downtown Newsletter is available for viewing online at <http://www.cityoffulton.us/> under Fulton Shopping. Kreative Rentals is relocating to Morrison, Illinois. The owners live in Morrison and were able to purchase a building in downtown Morrison at a reasonable cost.

Old/New Business: Paula Rogis provided information on a community throw/blanket she saw while in Knoxville, IL. The blanket included historical photos of community buildings/attractions and was used as a fundraiser for the historical society. The throw sold for \$50. Rogis wondered if the Fulton Chamber of Commerce could do a similar project. Bennett will bring it up at the next Tourism Committee meeting in July. Hollis mentioned even a Fulton mug with photos of local attractions might be a good idea if we wanted to sell something less expensive.

Next Meeting: August 10 at Noon at Golden Wok.

Adjourn: A motion was made by Stoermer and seconded by Phyllis Housenga to adjourn the meeting at 12:50 p.m. Motion carried.