

## Minutes: December 2010

Fulton Chamber of Commerce

Minutes from December 14, 2010

Present: Greg Naftzger, Patti Housenga, Jami Smith, Tim Wright, Deb Schaver, Phyllis Housenga, and Heather Bennett.

Absent: Steve Owen, Bill Stoermer, and Kim LaShelle.

Minutes: A motion was made by Patti Housenga and seconded by Deb Schaver to approve the minutes from November 9, 2010. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: The November Treasurer's Report was provided: revenue as \$6,303.28 and expenditures of \$2,792.12 leaving an ending balance of \$17,606.75. Bennett provided a year to date budget to actual report - total revenue received \$23,145.04 and total expenditures of \$15,010.01 leaving a balance of \$14,739.85. A motion was made by Phyllis Housenga and seconded by Deb Schaver to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Executive: The Executive Director's monthly meetings report was provided. Board members divided up the remaining non-renewals (14) and plan to make personal contact with the businesses. As of December 13 the Chamber has 8 new members and lost 4 members due to closings or moving out of town. The Annual Planning Session will be held January 27 from 11:30am to 1pm. The board would like to hold the working lunch session, which is complimentary to chamber members, at Manny's Too. Bennett will inquire with Kathy Kingery on reserving the banquet room.

## Tourism & Promotions:

• City Tourism Committee - Goals for 2011: 1.) The committee has chosen the theme "Celebrating Reagan's Roots, 1911-2011" as the 2011 community theme. 2.) The Early American Crafters plan to host teas in February, March, and April. 3.) To go along with the 2011 theme, perhaps as part of Fall Festival a Reagan name activity can be added to the festivities - anyone with the first name or last name Reagan would be invited to come to Fulton. 4.) The committee would like to work on finding an intern/part-time staff for the tourism department. 5.) The summer night programs will be continued in 2011 with 3, possibly 4 dates. 6.) The Volunteer Millers and WCC Ed Committee have offered to organize one program a month at the WCC. 7.) Request the city consider implementing the façade grant program again. 8.) Get involved with creating another Great River Trail map. 9.) Work on getting a boat dock near the windmill or canyon. 10.) Create signs/plaques for several Reagan sites to match the walking tour brochure by the Fulton Historical Society. 11.) Add the Hobby Store in the Industrial Park to the next visitor guide and website. Greg Naftzger is willing to be the Chamber representative on the Tourism Committee if no one else is interested. A motion was made by Deb Schaver and seconded by Phyllis Housenga to approve Greg Naftzger as the Chamber representative on the City Tourism Committee. Motion carried.

• Highway 84 Sign Update - Per IDOT, the sign is illegal due to a 2006 law stating no new signs can be placed along National Scenic Byways (84 is the Great River Road) unless the sign is for a business on premise. The idea of the law was to prohibit any new billboards from popping up along national scenic routes. The Welcome to Fulton signs were placed before 2006. However, IDOT will allow a city to place a sign along the route as long as it does not promote the sale of goods. The current sign states "attractions, shopping and dining." The words "shopping" and "dining" must be removed from the sign. They can be replaced with "Historic Downtown." Bennett has contacted PW to remove the sign and has asked Mike Ottens to redo the wording. Once it is complete, PW will place the sign back on the posts and move it up 2 to 2 ½ feet higher in the air. Come spring, Wendy Ottens will plant flowers and/or shrubs beneath the sign.

• Christmas Walk - very well attended. Community State Bank served over 300 cups of cocoa and there were many people that did not drink. The Board thought extending it three hours was a bit long and recommends the 2011 Christmas Walk be set from 5pm to 7:30pm.

## Government Affairs:

- The Complex - a feasibility study is currently being performed to see if there is a need and if so, how much could realistically be raised in Fulton to support such an effort. The findings will also help determine if the current site is the best solution.

- Senior Services @ Robert Fulton Commons- the River Bend Senior Center will open daily beginning mid-December. Karen Abbott is the part-time director in charge of programs. The goal is to also provide senior meals.

- City Council Elections - April 5, 2011. The deadline for candidacy filing is December 20. Thus far, Howard Van Zuiden has taken out papers for 4th Ward, Wes Letcher has taken out papers for 3rd Ward, Chuck Dykstra has taken out papers for 1st Ward, and no one has taken out papers for 2nd Ward. As of right now, everyone is running unopposed.

**Member Relations:** The December E-Newsletter was emailed out to all chamber members, but is also available online. The customer service workshop, via the USDA/NIU Grant, was attended by 16 people from Fulton, Morrison, and Prophetstown. The results from the online business survey that was sent out this summer will be shared at the Chamber's planning session in January.

**Downtown:** The Fulton Retail Development Group decided at their annual shareholders meeting to meet quarterly, rather than monthly due to inactivity in downtown real estate. Nancy Kolk's downtown newsletter can be found online under the "Shopping" tab at <http://www.cityoffulton.us/>.

**Old/New Business:** Deb Schaver proposed the Chamber help sponsor/organize a Valentine's promotion called "Fulton's Greatest Love Story." The idea is for a person/couple to submit a story how they met. Several local businesses will donate prizes to the winning couple. Deb got the idea from a retail magazine and has already contacted some businesses to participate - Sweet Woodruff (jewelry), Fulton Comfort Inn (free one night stay), Corner Treasures & Treats (chocolate dipped strawberries), Brinkman Building Center (tool box) and Words of Wisdom (prize TBA). Deb would like the see the Chamber help promote the event and get more businesses to donate towards the grand prize. Bennett noted the Chamber did not have any funds allocated to promote this new activity, but she could manage to come up with \$200 to put towards promotions. The Chamber could assist with free promotions - press releases, fliers, website and be the drop-off site for donated prizes and story submittals. The Board discussed whether to allow non-member businesses to participate. If the Chamber is coordinating efforts and putting some funds into the project, sentiment from the Board was for only chamber member businesses to participate. In addition, after much discussion the board though stories should only be submitted by those living within the River Bend School District. A motion was made by Patti Housenga and seconded by Phyllis Housenga to move forward with the Valentine's promotion noting it was only for chamber member businesses and story submittals accepted within the River Bend School District. Motion carried. Jami Smith mentioned the Clinton Herald might consider helping with some advertising.

**Next Meeting:** Bennett suggested the next board meeting could be held at the Robert Fulton Commons, in order for board members to see progress made on the building. Bennett would need to check availability with Karen Abbott. The next meeting will be held January 11, 2011 @ Noon - possibly at the Robert Fulton Commons.

**Adjourn:** The board meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

