

## Minutes: March 2011

Fulton Chamber of Commerce - Minutes from March 15, 2011 The February 2011 board meeting was cancelled. Present: Greg Naftzger, Patti Housenga, Heather Bennett, Jami Smith, Kim LaShelle, Steve Owen, and Chuck Dykstra. Absent: Edie Lenz, Tim Wright and Phyllis Housenga. Board Members: Charles Dykstra and Edie Lenz have been nominated to fill out the terms left by Deb Schaver and Bill Stoermer. A motion was made by Housenga and seconded by Owen to approve Dykstra and Lenz to the board. Motion carried. Minutes: A motion was made by Housenga and seconded by Smith to approve the minutes from January 11, 2011. Motion carried. Treasurer's Report: The January & February reports were provided: revenue \$1,124.32 (Jan.) and \$990.25 (Feb.) and expenditures of \$1,261.49 (Jan.) and \$599.84 (Feb.) leaving an ending balance of \$16,325.74 (Feb.). Bennett provided a year to date budget to actual report - total revenue received \$27,176.79 and total expenditures of \$17,618.33 leaving a balance of \$16,163.28. A motion was made by LaShelle and seconded by Smith to approve the reports. Motion carried. Chuck Dykstra will check with A & D Electric about providing a lift rental for installing the downtown Christmas lights. The Chamber and City usually split the lift rental invoice from RSC which continues to increase each year. The Chamber is also responsible for purchasing the light bulbs for the downtown decorations. Executive: The Executive Director's monthly meetings report was provided. Notes from the annual planning session were reviewed. The business survey noted the following: employee training programs, marketing the region, attracting complimentary businesses, retain/attract young adults, cost-sharing programs, business succession planning, low cost business financing, and increase agriculture value-added businesses. Participants to the planning session added: create more incentives to encourage the upkeep of structures, explore development of the bike path, build a boat dock by the windmill, regional marketing efforts, fix downtown alleys, install a four-way stop on 4th St. & 11th Av., implement more winter events like ice-fishing tournament, year-round produce market, and make walkway from mill to downtown more attractive. While there were many suggestions for improvements, no volunteers stepped forward to tackle any of the projects identified. The Chamber will continue to offer small business workshops and facilitate marketing the Great River Trail. Greg Naftzger and Bill Blecha are working on exploring opportunities to build a boat dock near the windmill for transient boaters. The Chamber is completing a downtown survey which addresses traffic patterns, parking, pedestrian safety and aesthetics. The results from the survey will be sent to the mayor and city administrator since it will be the city providing or writing grants for infrastructure improvements. The Senior Center would like to host a year-round produce market but they do not want to organize. Bennett noted she does not have time to organize a weekly produce market but would help with promoting it should someone step forward. The Chamber and Tourism Committee continue to market the region in various mediums - paid ads in newspapers and tourism magazines, visitor guide distribution, website, facebook, press releases, email blasts, countertop mats, fliers for events, etc. The Chamber will look into creating a poster that each business could display about "What to do in Fulton." The Chamber/Tourism Committee are involved in several marketing co-op programs: Travel Mississippi, Lincoln Highway, Great River Trail, Great River Road, Shop Hop, Blackhawk Waterways CVB, Northern IL Tourism Development, and the Ronald Reagan Trail. The Tourism Committee did request the city reinstate the façade improvement grant, since this was not funded the last two years. The city had to eliminate the program due to financial constraints and the lack of state funding. The Chamber may be able to find information on helping businesses with succession planning (retirement). Owen asked if the Trade Show should be resurrected. Due to lack of attendance and "real" interest from the public coupled with limited vendor participation was the reason the trade show was cancelled. The Clinton Herald and KROS hosts various trade shows throughout the year in Clinton. Numbers for the Fulton Bridal Walk have remained strong and there seems to be good interest from attendees to continue. Tourism & Promotions:

City Tourism Committee - The historical society and volunteer millers have been hosting monthly Reagan programs. The theme for Dutch Days 2011 is "Dutch Immigration: Experiences & Contributions";

Fulton's Greatest Love Story - The Chamber received six submittals. John and Nicole Kotman were the winners. It was noted that IF the program was sponsored again eligibility should be extended beyond the River Bend School District. The downside of the promotion was that only two people benefited - Kotmans. The Chamber usually likes to sponsor projects that assist more than just two people. It was not known if the participating merchants received increased business because of the promotion. Perhaps it is a promotion that some of the businesses should organize and do on their own for next year.

Reagan Marker Application - the application was approved and the copy is nearing completion. Once the copy has been approved, the marker will be cast at the foundry and shipped to Fulton for installation. A special post must be ordered from a company in Dubuque and three small direction signs must be ordered from Visual Imaging.

Shop Hop – set for November 4 & 5 and November 11 & 12. It will include Lanark, Mt.Carroll, Savanna and Fulton.

Fall Festival Beer Garden – Denny’s would like the beer garden held at his business this year. The Chamber provides no compensation or organization for the beer garden. The Chamber only lists the beer garden on the schedule of events. The Chamber encourages any chamber member business to get involved with events. It is not up to the Chamber to decide who can or cannot have a beer garden. If both Denny’s and Johnnie’s Tap want to host a beer garden during the festival it is their choice and they must seek street closure approval and permission for an outdoor beer garden from the city council.

Summer Nights – June 9 (Second Reformed Church), July 14 (First Reformed Church and Fulton Presbyterian Church), and August 11 (Fulton Chamber, Fulton Kiwanis and Community State Bank.) The events will be held near the windmill from 6pm to 8pm.

#### Government Affairs:

City Council Elections – April 5, 2011. All positions are unopposed and Second Ward has no candidates running. Legislative Luncheons – are set for April 8 with Representative Morthland and April 21 with Senator Jacobs. Locations TBA. Times will be from 11:30am to 1pm. Invitations will be mailed to the membership.

Member Relations: The February and March E-Newsletters were emailed out to all chamber members and are available online. The USDA/NIU Grant is still accepting grant applications for website development. Upcoming workshops funded by the grant included Internet Marketing 101 & 201 plus Starting a Business scheduled for March 31. An Advertising/Cross Marketing Workshop will be held April 28. Bennett is assisting the mayor with facilitating a panel discussion for a year-round produce market and/or local produce processing/distribution facility on March 22. Invites were mailed to 50+ area growers. A Regional Economic Development luncheon/workshop with area Economic Developers will be held May 12. Western Whiteside County is serviced by 5 different ED groups so the meeting will be used for communication amongst those organizations. The Drives Site Tour was attended by 20 people but another 10 which made reservations did not show-up. The tour was informative. Downtown: Dykstra reported the Fulton Retail Development Group can’t sell their existing building and can’t buy any other downtown property at the time. The existing building does cash flow nicely with three rentals (2 apts. and business) and would be a good investment for someone. Nancy Kolk’s downtown newsletter can be found online under the “Shopping” tab at [www.cityoffulton.us](http://www.cityoffulton.us). Old/New Business: Due to two new activities sponsored by the Chamber this fiscal year: Shop Hop and the Ronald Reagan Marker, a \$500 donation to Dutch Days is not feasible. A motion was made by Housenga and seconded by LaShelle to donate \$250 to the Dutch Days Committee. Motion carried. The Chamber will continue to participate in the Dutch Days parade, help promote the festival in various annual advertising, keep all Dutch Days info listed on the website, and take inquiries from vendors and the public. The Fulton Bridal Walk will be held June 23, 2011. The Bridal Walk committee lost two members due to relocation – Kris Muur and Audrey Kooi. Both Kris and Audrey were asked if they still wanted to participate on the committee but they declined. Patti Housenga, Jami Smith, and Kim LaShelle all volunteered to help Bennett and Naftzger with organizing the Bridal Walk. Next Meeting: April 12, 2011 @ Noon @ Golden Wok.

Adjourn: A motion was made by Housenga and seconded by Smith to adjourn the meeting at 1:10 p.m. Motion carried.