

## Citizens' Advisory Committee

**April 3, 2012**

**Present:** Grace Brandl, Janet Breuer, Robert Elfner, Faiv Neng Her, Linda Hunter, Anthony Mack, Ed Rappe, Charles Stangel, Gloria Wallace

**Excused:** Pat Chermak, Roger Drape

**Guests:** Mayor Nickels, Ralph Kramer

**Speaker:** Jason Ring,

The meeting was called to order at 4:00.

Jason Ring, Director of the Manitowoc Area Visitor and Convention Bureau (VICB) talked about its mission, its marketing efforts, and how we could contribute to the effort. He said that the goal is to greet tourists here to leave their money. It seems to be difficult to persuade us to brag about our city, but that is exactly what we need to do. Tourism is the cleanest form of economic development. It is "a large producer of tax revenue." Visitors to Wisconsin reduces the tax burden for citizens by \$995—"portable taxpayers." Room taxes get split between the city and the VICB. Mainly Manitowoc is funded from the city's portion.

They market to Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Madison in particular. They use Wisconsin Trails, newspapers in the cities, Midwest Living, and e-newsletters. They also work with groups such as conventions, tradeshow, and sport groups. This year they worked with 47 groups 11,500 people. Our Discovery Guide is mailed to all states and 14 countries. The marketing slogan will be "Coast for a while.," referring to our lakeshore as "coast," not used by any other are at the moment.

The most visitor traffic in WI comes from Milwaukee, Madison, and Sheboygan. Out-of-state traffic comes mostly from Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, and Missouri. He outlined a list of attractions that he thought we should be familiar with so that we could tell/show friends and family. He also suggested that we could invite conventions of groups to which we belong. The VICB would provide name badges as well as other services.

There were a variety of questions from the committee:

- Are bus tours still coming? *Smaller buses are more common than large ones now. However, some larger ones still come.*
- Is he working with the Schooner Coast promotion of the Maritime Museum? *Yes.*
- Can he promote the Hmong Festival? *Yes. They should get reservations early, but if people arrive without rooms, they can help.*
- Does he promote summer and fall travel to those in the warmer climates? *Yes*

- Does he promote industry tours? *He has tried to promote Burger Boat, but the viewing isn't so good.*

His Call to Action was to promote the area to family and friends as well as to invite conventions of organizations to which we belong.

The Mayor's update:

- He invited us to the State of the City Address at Federal Mogul.
- Two new council members will be sworn in in two weeks.
- An offer has been made to a Finance Director candidate. He's had 25 years of public sector work as well as some private. This should be settled by the end of the month.
- Bitter Neumann is going into the old Aldi's store. They are working with the owner of the Penney's Mall.
- A Colorado firm bought the assets of the River Lofts, and they plan to sell them at a much lower price.
- No news on the old Mirro Buildig. It will cost \$6 million to tear it down and clean up the site.

We adjourned at 5:07.

Respectfully,  
Linda Hunter  
Secretary