

Garnett Tourism Committee
Minutes
April 12, 2017

The Garnett Tourism Committee met in the Commission Room at Garnett City Hall with the following members present: Tom Emerson Jr., Chairman, Susan Caron, Laurel Ladewig, Robert Risch (arriving later) and Travis Wilson, members. Also attending: Joyce Martin, City Manager, Susan Wettstein, Community Development Director, and Desiree Donovan, Administrative Assistant/Chamber Director. Absent: Nicole Stevenson and Paula Wallace, members.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Tom opened the meeting by welcoming Laurel Ladewig to the committee.

Positive Tourism Observations

Joyce reported a busy and wonderful weekend with city sidewalk sales, garage sales, artist reception at Walker Art Gallery and kart races. Travis noticed the iron art murals on some of the buildings that have recently been installed. Those are from the Arts and Creative Community grant that we were a part of. Joyce reported there are 3 murals still to be put on buildings. Tom announced the new season for The Chamber Players Community Theatre.

Approval of Minutes - A motion was made by Susan Caron and seconded by Travis Wilson to approve the minutes of March 1, 2017 as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Joyce presented the Transient Guest Tax Fund Report for March showing a balance of uncommitted funds to be \$11,566.71. This is after adding expense for printer ink cartridges, revenue from water bottle sales and TGT requests to date. The next tax distribution should be coming in late April.

Old Business

Susan reported that at least two (2) geocaches will be planted in Greeley by the end of this week.

New Business

Transient Guest Tax Requests:

The Committee considered the Non-Marketing Transient Guest Tax Application submitted by the City of Garnett for the purpose of helping pay the expenses of the Libertyfest Community Fireworks, including fireworks, licensed shooter and insurance per company's contract. The total amount of this expense is \$4,800. The amount of TGT funds requested is \$2,500. City Manager Joyce Martin spoke on behalf of this application, saying that a discussion came about last week during the City/County meeting in which a County Commissioner asked if the City was going to have the fireworks this year. The County Commission, along with several businesses and organizations, had received a letter from a board member of the Garnett Area Chamber of Commerce, some time ago, asking for financial assistance for Libertyfest in which they received no response. The County Attorney said in that meeting city funds paid for the community display in Coffey County and he assumed most cities did this. Joyce put it on the City's agenda and upon discussion at the City Commission meeting the Commission approved up to \$2,500 in Transient Guest Tax Funds contingent upon the Tourism Committee's recommendation. Joyce said she has talked to several city employees who have volunteered to take donations at the gate during the event to help gather the balance of funds necessary to pay for the event. If in the event there are not enough funds collected a private donation has been promised to make up for any loss that might occur.

Robert Risch entered the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

Per the Chamber's records they took in approximately \$3,000 in donations last year. Desiree has been in contact with the company to keep the licensed shooter scheduled until a decision on the event can be determined, but they need an answer soon. Joyce said that she was told that the County Commission will vote Monday to consider providing \$1,000 in funding. The firemen have been asked to do a boot drive and bring the fire truck with the big flag to the entrance of the North Park to help collect donations. She is awaiting their response to this request. City employees will be given the opportunity to decide on where to donate any excess funds within the local community. Joyce stated that it has been said to her that maybe the community should go a year without a big fireworks display so that the community can decide it's importance, but she and other city employees feel that the fireworks shows patriotism in our community and has become a reason citizens choose to stay here, camp here and plan family activities around it that keep local businesses busy. "We don't want them to get into the habit of leaving town," Joyce said. With no further discussion a motion was made by Susan Caron to recommend funding of this non-marketing grant request as submitted. Robert Risch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom explained to Laurel, the newest committee member that the non-marketing grant was created to help with requests that help foster tourism in which there was no advertising element. In fact, the non-marketing grant was created when the Anderson County Fair asked the City Commission for Transient Guest Tax funds to help pay the deposit on the carnival in 2014. At that time the fair had went over a decade without a carnival and was seeking to bring one back. Tom explained that Transient Guest Taxes comes from a tax charged on per night stays at lodging facilities (motels, B&Bs). The state collects the tax and redistributes it to the City. The stipulation on this grant program is that an entity is only allowed to make a request once per year. There can be multiple applications but they need to be submitted at the same time in one request.

The Committee considered a request by the Anderson County Fair Association in which there are two (2) applications with a total request of \$6,500. One application asks for funding assistance in the amount of \$2,500 to help pay the deposit of the Fun Time Shows Carnival during the fair to be held July 24-29, 2017. The other application asks for advertng the Anderson County Fair in the amount of \$4,000.

Discussion was held on one application at a time with the carnival deposit being the first to be considered. The narrative states that the guarantee of the carnival has increased by \$5,000 and the carnival was shy \$4,170 of breaking even last year. Tourism Committee members noted past applications received asked for the same \$2,500 carnival deposit stating similar things; that the carnival has not been well supported financially by the community. Deliberation on the comments within the application provided for a very difficult decision-making process, because of applicant indicating that if this application is denied that the fair board couldn't justify covering the additional costs themselves. It was questioned if the fair cannot justify losing money year after year because of the carnival and the lack of justifying any benefit in doing so, then why should the committee consciously continue to recommend the Transient Guest Tax Fund "lose" money also? If this committee were to recommend the \$2,500 for the deposit then are we encouraging the Fair Association to incur what could be massive, over \$9,000 in loses, if they only take in the same revenue in 2017 as they did in 2016? Susan Caron asked if the committee might have a conversation with the fair organizers after the fair is over this year to understand their situation better? Travis said there is nothing outlined in this application that says anything about what they plan to do to bring 600 more people to the fair in subsidize the carnival to help it pay for itself.

Susan Wettstein asked at the end of this discussion that if this is approved that the application requires invoices or receipts of approved expenses to be turned in before the check is made. The City has cut this check every year this application has been approved without receiving any invoice or contract for the carnival because they need the money in a timely manner.

Upon no further discussion on this application a motion was made by Robert Risch to recommend to the City Commission to decline the request to fund this application as submitted. Travis Wilson seconded the motion. Tom asked for a vote. By voting "Aye" you approve funding the request. By voting "No" you oppose funding

the request. The votes cast are as follows: Ayes-0. Noes-5. Therefore, the committee voted unanimously to recommend the City Commission decline the funding of this application as submitted.

The Committee considered the second application presented by the Anderson County Fair Association to promote the Anderson County Fair, July 24-29, 2017. The application's funding request is in the amount of \$4,000. Attached to the application is a list of advertising options with the sum total of \$10,800. There is no indication on the application which of these items are to be funded in this grant request. Susan Wettstein said she received this application this afternoon by email and replied asking if there were priorities in which they would like the \$4,000 to be used. The applicant replied, "The digital sign and Facebook, and Rockers Photography". Susan responded that the 70/30 rule would have to be followed and more than 30% of what was named would be considered "local". The applicant responded that "if the committee wants to select what to use the money for, that is fine". Tom stated that this application is incomplete. It does not tell us what the applicant plans are and it is not up to the committee to make these decisions for them.

Travis Wilson made a motion to table this application request pending the submission of more detailed and accurate information. Susan Caron second said motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Susan Wettstein and Desiree Donovan provided reports to the committee by email and are attached to the original copy of these minutes. Additional discussion on those reports are as follows:

Desiree was asked how garage sales and sidewalk sales went this past weekend. She responded that business participation in the sidewalk sales was new this year. Overall the day proved to be beneficial for those that participated. Committee members spoke favorable of the garage sale map in The Advocate as being wonderful. Desiree said that the map was in the newspaper that is distributed by mail and available to everyone in the area. There were many people from out of the county in Garnett this past weekend.

Susan asked if any committee members had any thoughts or suggestions for promoting National Tourism Week. She listed tours and activities that have been done in the past.

Susan, Desiree and Economic Development Director Dennis Arnold took a road trip to Second Hand Hardware, owned by Steve Cox and located south of Garnett near the Bush City Road. They host a swap meet every Saturday and are growing each week with visitors. The purpose was to become familiar with the business and offer any assistance they might need.

Susan reported that they will be visiting with Jody Troyer on April 18th about the new Event Barn and bed and breakfast that is underway at their location west of Crystal (South) Lake.

Susan mentioned that they have been working on some social media promotions focusing on economic development.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Travis Wilson and seconded by Laurel Ladewig to adjourn. Chairman Tom Emerson, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Susan Wettstein.

Report by Susan to Tourism Committee

Dated: Tuesday, April 11, 2017

The SimplyGarnett.com website hit a new high last month with 16,804 visitors. That is pretty good for an "off season" month (March).

The City Commission approved the TGT requests by the Garnett Area Chamber of Commerce and Cornstock. The Commission commended Desiree's application on behalf of the GACC, touting her display of the percentage of local advertising making it easy for them.

The Garnett Planning Commission recently reviewed an application by the City to rezone an area that is currently R-2 (Residential) to and O-I (Office-Institutional). The property includes the First Baptist Church and the former Dr. Steven's doctor's office located at 4th Avenue and Walnut Street. Dr. Steven's office building was purchased by two men, Justin Spurrier of Chanute and Robert Garcia of Shawnee, who plan to turn the property into a tourist attraction by making it a museum. The 1858 Garnett House Hotel was once the Lighthouse Hotel and is the oldest wooden structure in Garnett. The hotel had some famous guests back in the day, including Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, Belle Star, and some say Jesse James. A church or a museum is allowable classification in an O-I, but not in an R-2. The change for the church met with no opposition but the zoning change for the proposed museum met with opposition by one nearby property owner, Mayor Gordon Blackie. The City Commission will consider the approval of the zoning change this evening.

I attended the County Planning meeting to allow a special use permit for an event barn, with a proposed future bed and breakfast, to be established on the Scott and Jody Troyer property located west of Crystal Lake. The request was approved. Also a special use permit was granted to Steve and Pam Cox for their Second Hand Hardware business and swap meet south of Garnett. They host a swap meet every Saturday that stops traffic along the highway. You can find their Facebook page for more information.

Also on the City Commission's agenda for tonight is discussion of funding the community fireworks using Transient Guest Tax Funds. Joyce shared with me that during the City/County meeting the County Commissioners inquired if the City was going to have fireworks this year. The topic has since been put on tonight's City Commission agenda. Joyce has offered that some city employees may volunteer to take donations at the gate with city employees then having the opportunity to donate them or use those funds to help the community. The County has been asked also if they would donate to help pay for the fireworks but at this time I do not know if or how the county have responded.

We have 2 geocaches ready for planting at Greeley and if time permits we will plant these before our tourism meeting tomorrow. The weather and other commitments have prevented us from getting this done but it will be completed yet this week. We have noted on our attractions page of the website those attractions that have geocaches planted nearby.

Following the send off of *Town Talk*, I have been working on the patriotic banner project. The final promotion of this project gathered 53 more banners. The goal was to reach a final total of at least 100 banners. We crushed it with a total of 137.

Work continues to update the website and make it appear more mobile friendly. Our stash of brochures is getting low so we are making updates and printing in anticipation of a busy tourism season. We will be sending some brochures with Bauman Farms as they represent Garnett at the Kansas Sampler Festival in Winfield, May 6-7.

We are helping Garnett Recreation to encourage people to go to <http://www.meetmeatthepark.org> and nominate Garnett, Kansas once each day from now through April 30th. The community with the most nominations will receive a \$20,000 grant for a local park. So please, vote daily!

We are also encouraging everyone to take this super simple survey: www.tinyurl.garnettgas. By completing the survey you have the chance to win \$25 in Chamber Bucks!

Desiree and I continue to help Anderson County Economic Development in pushing vacant buildings and commercial properties. Tom Byler with the Small Business Development Center (PSU) visited with me wanting our partnership to help ACDA in promoting something similar to the Growing Rural Business Program. We are on standby waiting on direction from Economic Development.

By the May tourism meeting we will have a history brochure produced. That is my goal. I would also like to visit with you during tomorrow's meeting (or by email) to see if you have ideas, themes, etc. how we can do our best to promote our community during National Tourism Week, May 7-13.

In other news, the Anderson County Corn Festival announced that Easton Corbin, Casey Donahew and BlackHawk will be performing at this year's Cornstock music festival. The Anderson County Fair announced the Dirty Bourbon Band in the tent one night at the fair.

I have to take time to give credit to Desiree. She has been making posters and flyers for Chamber members and organizations, the upcoming City's Air Fair and more. She created a new logo for the Garnett Long Cedar Disc Golf Course. Desiree has been busy making the Garnett Instagram page a great tool for tourism too and teaching me a thing or two! As I drove my way around garage sales this past weekend I noticed license plates from JO, CF and FR, but I did not see any ANs. Which I hope means our junk is leaving town! I attribute that to some great advertising efforts by the Chamber Director.

If you would like to attend the City Commission meeting tonight, the meeting begins at 6 p.m. The public is always welcome. Otherwise, we'll see you Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

Thanks!

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Garnett Area Chamber of Commerce

Office Report

April 2017

- **MEMBERSHIP**
MEMBERSHIP HAS “ENDED”
- **AMBASSADORS**
 - Next meeting is April 18th at Guest Home Estates
 - Been making welcome bags for events
 - Twyla will be at a Chamber table during Sidewalk Sales
- **PAST EVENTS**
- **OUTREACH**
 - Visited business about Sidewalk Sales
 - Ribbon Cuttings
- **UPCOMING**
 - Sidewalk Sales April 8th 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
 - Easter Egg Hunt (Life Assembly of God) April 15th 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- **OTHER**
 - New database is complete including reports.
 - Over 300 welcome bags in our office ready to be given out during 2017.
 - New website
 - Instagram page growing
 - Fair Board has asked us to help with the Merchant’s Tent

The next Chamber Board meeting will be on May 11, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. at Dornes Insurance.

All members are welcome to come and provide ideas or give feedback at meetings from 5-5:30.