

**Tourism Board Meeting
September 22, 2011**

Carly McCrory called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. In attendance: McCrory, Brian Moody, Phyllis Truitt, Devon Flesor, President Randy Hastings, Karen Dukeman, and Drew Hoel.

Motion to approve the minutes from the previous Board meeting (8/16/11) made by Truitt, seconded by Dukeman. All in favor, motion passed.

Motion to approve the bills list from the start of the City's fiscal year to this past Friday (5/1/11 – 9/16/11) in the amount of \$86,685.67 made by Truitt, seconded by Dukeman. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrory informed the Board that as part of this weekend's Homecoming festivities, she helped to plan the TCHS Alumni Art event that will feature the work of TCHS Alumni Jeff Little and Jim Gallagher. She noted that the event will take place on Sunday, September 25th from 3 to 5 pm at Flesor's. She also noted that many people plan to be in town for Homecoming weekend due to the festivities going on including the many class reunions taking place.

McCrory noted that she and Moody are still working with The Pantry to arrange advertising opportunities for their business. She noted that The Pantry was interested in doing some joint advertising with Tuscola Tourism at Tanger as well as the Hwy 36 billboard near Tanger. The Pantry is still working on getting the bulk food section of their business up-and-going so as soon as that is running smoothly, she will talk to Troy Mast (The Pantry owner) about advertising opportunities.

McCrory informed the Board that she is still working on the City's new website (www.tuscola.org) and that she hopes to have it up-and-running in the next month or so as long as her schedule permits.

McCrory informed the Board that the last Abundant Market will take place this Saturday, August 24th. She noted that the market has been a big success this year and plans to have a wrap-up document (for discussion) at the next Tourism Board Meeting.

McCrory reminded the Board that she and Moody are working on the 2012 Calendar of Events. She encouraged Board members to send any ideas or suggestions their way. Flesor noted that she would like to see more events and activities going on throughout the summer months.

McCrory informed the Board that she would like to start the planning process for the 2012 Sparks in the Park event to take place on Friday, July 6th and Saturday, July 7th so that she could book the better entertainers. A motion to approve a budget of \$15,000 for fireworks and \$15,000 for entertainment/activities for 2012 Sparks in the Park made by Truitt, seconded by Flesor. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrory updated the Tourism Board on the Digital Sign Project by Kyle Bunch at TCHS. She noted that she and the TCHS Alumni Association offered help to organize the project and get it "off the ground" but that the help was declined. Bunch and his father, Elvis, are in charge of the project. She encouraged Board members to send questions/concerns to the father and son if they encountered questions/concerns from the community.

McCrorry informed the Board that she and Moody have received several inquiries about the green interstate signs that include area attractions, restaurants, and gas stations. She noted that several businesses have tried going through the process of getting a sign before but due to the different regulations and rules set by the State of Illinois, many have found the process to be too difficult and expensive. She suggested to the Board that she work on getting the regulations organized and out to the various businesses that qualify for the interstate signs and perhaps even starting a grant program that would subsidize part of their costs. An update will be available at the next Board meeting.

McCrorry updated the Board on her recent trip to Hutchinson, Kansas for the 140 Characters Conference that she won via a Twitter contest. The conference was geared towards social media in small towns and how various individuals – including economic and tourism professionals – have used social media tools to benefit their communities. McCrorry submitted a list of travel expenses in the amount of \$568.15 (airfare and conference ticket were free). A motion to approve the reimbursement of travel expenses to McCrorry for the 140 Characters Conference in the amount of \$568.15 made by Flesor, seconded by Hoel. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrorry informed the Board that she recently started Facebook polls regarding questions about services by the City of Tuscola. She noted that Alta, Angie and Angela are providing her with various questions so that the City can have a better understanding of how and why community members use City services.

McCrorry informed the Board that she and Moody recently met with a representative of Commuter Advertising who is working with MTD for advertising in the Champaign-Urbana area along MTD routes. Moody noted that he was approached by Morrie Mendenhall at Tanger to see if Tuscola Tourism would be interested in supporting them in some MTD advertising for the upcoming holiday season since they are out of money in their marketing budget. Three different packages were presented by Commuter Advertising with a variety of options and prices: \$5,967.50, \$6,292.50, and \$7,860. After Board discussion about the benefits of Tanger and the importance of sales tax during the holiday shopping season, it was decided that helping Tanger out with MTD advertising was a good idea. A motion to approve the \$7,860 marketing package with Commuter Advertising and MTD made by Flesor, seconded by Hastings. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrorry presented Board members with the Chamber of Commerce grant request in the amount of \$5,000 for marketing their Christmastown event to take place the first weekend in December. After discussion among Board members, all agreed that \$5,000 was a lot of money to spend on such a small event. A motion to approve a grant request to the Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of Christmastown advertising in the amount of \$2,500 made by Hoel, seconded by Hastings. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrorry informed the Board of an opportunity to do some radio advertising with WDWS for the upcoming holiday shopping season in the amount of \$702. A motion to approve the radio ads in the amount of \$702 made by Truitt, seconded by Dukeman. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrorry informed the Board of an opportunity to place ads in the following publications: ½ page ad in the amount of \$800 for the 2012 Lake Shelbyville Visitors Guide and a ½ page ad in the amount of \$510 for the Life in Illinois Publication (November edition). A motion to approve the ads in the 2012 Lake Shelbyville Visitors Guide and the Life in Illinois Publication made by Flesor, seconded by Truitt. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrary informed the Board that she will be working with Bruce Wood for the 2011 Pumpkin House. McCrary suggested a budget of \$1,000 to place a variety of newspaper ads and online ads to promote the Pumpkin House. A motion to approve a \$1,000 budget for the Pumpkin House ads made by Flesor, seconded by Truitt. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrary informed the Board that the 2011-2012 CVB grant was recently approved by the State of Illinois. Included in the grant for Tuscola are print ads in 4 different publications (2012 Capital City Visitor Guide, At Home in Central Illinois, Spring & Summer Visitors Guide (Herald & Review), and Discover Central Illinois Magazine) and online ads via Facebook. The total amount that Tuscola submitted in the grant was \$9,402 with the intent of receiving 50% back from the State of Illinois. A motion to approve the \$9,402 worth of advertising in the 2011-2012 CVB grant made by Truitt, seconded by Dukeman. All in favor, motion passed.

McCrary informed the Board that the next Eggs & Issues would be taking place on Wednesday, September 28th at 12 pm at Tuscany Steak, Seafood & Pasta House. She encouraged all Board members to attend, as she will be giving an update about social media and sharing her thoughts of the 140 Characters Conference.

McCrary reminded the Board of the Strategic Doing Workshop coming up on Saturday, October 29th. An invite will be sent to all Board members shortly but she and Moody encouraged all Board members to make plans to attend.

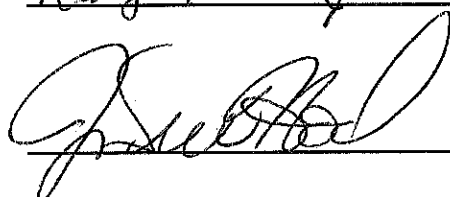
McCrary informed the Board that a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be taking place tomorrow at Tanger Outlet Center at 2 pm for the new store Justice.

McCrary informed the Board that the City of Tuscola's trick-or-treat hours have been set for Monday, October 31st from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm and that Tanger will also host their trick-or-treat hours that night from 5 pm to 7 pm.

Hastings made a motion to adjourn at 4:30 p.m., seconded by Flesor. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2011 – 8:30 a.m. at City Hall


_____ **Randy Hastings, President**


_____ **Drew Hoel, Secretary**