



Vernon Parish Tourism Commission

MINUTES

November 15, 2022

VERNON PARISH TOURISM COMMISSION VISITOR'S CENTER

Mission Statement (Written 2005)

Mission Statement: To promote all facets of Tourism to the parish and state level.

- CALL TO ORDER:** The Vernon Parish Tourism Commission Board meeting for November 15, 2022, was called to order at 8:31 AM by the Chairman, Diane Barney.
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Present were Commissioners Diane Barney, Tara Rindahl, Pat Martinez, John Guy, Bette Westerchil. Also present was John Crook, Executive Director, Kim Wallace, and Angela Broyard.
- PLEDGE:** Diane Barney led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- INVOCATION:** Tara Rindahl gave the Invocation.
- MINUTES:** No meeting held in October 2022 due to lack of quorum.
- FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:** Financial statement was unavailable due to VPTC has not received from VPPJ at this time. Request has been submitted for the current financial statement.
- DIRECTORS REPORT:** John Crook introduced the VPTC new hires Angela Broyard (Executive Assistant) and (Kimberly Wallace) Museum Director. John Crook spoke about the Museum of West LA. Renovation and updated on the progress. Cleaning, painting, window replacement and new signing has been completed. Projected opening of the museum is slotted for early Spring 2023.

Discussed the acceptance of the Junior League proposal for the garden at Dog Trot Park.

John Crook discussed the upcoming KCS Holiday Train Friday 02 December 2022 and Reindeer Run and Christmas parade Saturday 10 December 2022. VPTC will attend the KCS Holiday Train event. The VPTC Board was invited to attend. Local Leesville business The Flower Girl will decorate the West Louisiana Museum grounds for this event. Cider and cookies will be served. The Chapel on the Museum grounds will be open during the Christmas parade.

Kimberly Wallace conducted a Bus tour with Susan Hatcher 14 Oct 2022. She met the group from Michigan in Pitkin and provided a tour of the Senior Citizen where there was a guest speaker Richard Moran with Louisiana Maneuvers Museum, from there they visited the Talbert Pierson cemetery to discuss the historic grave houses. From there they met Chuck Cannon with Fort Polk Public Affairs office. He provided access to the Ft. Polk installation and led the group to the Ft. Polk museum. The group was led on a tour of the Military museum. Following the tour the group had dinner at Bubba Ques a local restaurant located in New Llano.

UK Travel writer Katja Gaskell and her family visited Vernon Parish to follow the Gas Station Eats trail 14 October 2022. Anderson Farms Pumpkin Patch extended their hours so that the family could enjoy a tour and hayride ride. The Gaskells stayed at the Sure Stay Hotel located in Leesville. The following morning they visited Strothers store for breakfast in Pitkin. The family then visited Wolf Rock Cave in Kisatchie National Forest before continuing to Sabine Parish.

John Crook discussed request from Bonnie Thompson for the Rosepine Park. He will obtain further details before bringing before the board. A request by the Kiwanis for their Pocket Park has been requested and will be discussed in the January 2023 meeting.

John alerted that the No Man's Land will be making some adjustments due to Lake Charles opting out of the program. Updates will be discussed as they are received.

Motion to accept the Director's Report for November 2022 as presented was made by Diane Barney. Seconded by Bette Davis.
All Approved; So Moved.

OLD BUSINESS:

NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

Diane Barney stated the Fair was a huge success this year. Crowd was very large.

John Crook discussed a promotion that is running to attract Military families to Ft. Polk and Vernon Parish. This campaign is running online and is targeting Military installations. John will provide statistics of this campaign in January 2023.

John Crook discussed the City building a new Splash Park on the Parkway which will be a multimillion project which will include Base Ball and Soft Ball

fields and an RV Park to bring tournaments to Vernon Parish.
Fort Polk is also projecting an 80 plus housing area.

John Crook has requested a meeting with Mike Reese to discuss increasing the occupancy tax rate by 1% bringing it from 3% to 4%.

Kem Vilajohn is promoting for the 4H conference to be held in Leesville. 80 plus hotel rooms are needed for the conference. Leesville currently does not have a hotel that can accommodate this request; however Holiday Inn and Hampton Inn are located next to each other that could accommodate the room request. A large meeting room will also be needed. The largest competitor for this conference is St. Landry Parish. Leesville 4H is the largest 4H in the state.

1 board member up for re-election (Betty Westerchil)
Motion to approve made by Tara Rindahl. Seconded by John Guy
All approved, so moved.

Board entered Executive Session

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business:

Motion to adjourn made by Tara Rindahl

Seconded by John Guy.
All approved, so moved.

Vernon Parish Tourism Commission Action Items from November 15, 2022:

ACTION #1: Motion to accept the Minutes as presented was made by Pat Martinez. Seconded by Tara Rindahl. All Approved; So Moved.

ACTION #2: Motion to accept the Director's Report for November 2022 as presented was made by Diane Barney. Seconded by Betty Westerchil. All Approved; So moved.

ACTION #3: Motion to approve re-election of board member Betty Westerchil was made by Tara Rindahl. Seconded by John Guy. All approved, so moved.

ACTION #4: Motion to adjourn made by Tara Rindahl. Seconded by John Guy. All approved; so moved.

. Respectfully Submitted:

John R. Crook
Executive Director

Angela Broyard
Executive Assistant