

# Allegan County Tourist Council



Allegan County Parks, Recreation &  
Tourism  
3283 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave  
Allegan, MI 49010  
269-686-9088  
[parks@allegancounty.org](mailto:parks@allegancounty.org)  
<http://www.allegancounty.org>

**Chairperson: Rick Burn**  
**Vice Chairperson: Debbie Laraway**

---

## TOURIST COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES

**Maria  
Albright**  
269-686-6595  
Allegan

Tuesday, August 15, 2023, @ 10:00am  
County Services Building – Board Conference Room -3283 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Allegan, MI 49010  
Virtual Connectivity Option: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81154144700>

**Scott Beltman**  
616-292-1414  
Hopkins

**CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order by Burn at 10:01am.

**Melissa  
Brower**  
616-550-3408  
Fennville

### **ROLL CALL:**

**Members Present:** Scott Beltman (ZOOM), Melissa Brower, Rick Burn, Debbie Laraway

**Members Absent:** Matt Helmus, Ashley VanZee, Maria Albright

**Also Present:** Brandy Gildea, Heather Bausick

**Rick Burn**  
678-296-1409  
Holland

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made by Beltman, seconded by Brower to approve the May 15, 2023 minutes as presented. The motion carried.

**Matt Helmus**  
616-355-1031  
Holland

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

**Debbie  
Laraway**  
269-416-0221  
Pullman

**ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS:** None

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** A motion was made by Burns, seconded by Brower to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried.

**Tim Perrigo**  
269-686-0276  
Allegan

### **PRESENTATION:**

Bill Mcilwaine, Publisher of What's Happening Guide

- Bill presented his publication of the What's Happening Guide that covers Saugatuck, Douglas, Holland, Fennville, South Haven, and The Lakeshore currently. His publication includes over 75 advertisers, and can range from 8 to 24 pages and he prints approximately 1,000 copies or more every two weeks with current happenings and events in these locations. Bill stated that he can do paid subscriptions that are mailed directly to the home. Gildea asked if Allegan County Tourism could be allowed to place a link on our webpage to his What's Happening Page, and Bill agreed.

**Ashley VanZee**  
616-834-1270  
Zeeland

Lisa Mize, Executive Director of Saugatuck Douglas Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

- Lisa presented that she had been with the Bureau for four years and showed a presentation highlighting what the bureau's marketing focus

and target audience includes. The CVB includes several members on the marketing, publication, and development team that targets marketing to “one-stop fly-in cities” including Chicago, GR, Indianapolis, Nashville, etc. The CVB also uses influencers to draw visitors to Saugatuck/Douglas area. Lisa presented several brochures and marketing pamphlets the CVB uses which detail niche areas within the City.

**REVIEW ITEMS:**

1. Financial Statements
    - Gildea presented that the marketing specialist the tourist department was considering, will not be hired due to other areas within the county needing mandatory staff.
    - Gildea presented the idea to combine the Parks Board with the Tourist Council to a 12-member board to combine ideas.
    - Gildea states many cities/organizations are already marketing very well on their own and the County should be used as a communication tool between the cities/organizations and link information instead of marketing further for these cities/organizations. Focusing less on marketing for these cities/organizations and simply linking current events and marketing would free up time for staff. By joining with the Parks Board, this would allow us to market for our current Parks, Recreation and Tourism and potentially target the smaller communities within Allegan County.
    - Gildea will type up this concept further and send out to all board members with the intention to move forward by the end of the year.
    - Tourist Council members are in support of this concept and collaboration.
- 

**RECOMMENDATION/ACTION ITEMS:**

1. None
- 

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

1. Z-Card Design Review
  - Change “Polaris App” title to ORV Map or “link to ORV/Snowmobile Trails”
  - Change “our” websites to “these” websites
  - Change strip color at top of map to blue instead of the current brown
  - Complete design and have ready at November meeting
  
2. Day Trip Ideas to Advertise – brainstorming

A motion was made by Burn and seconded by Brower to table this discussion item to the November meeting since Jenny Boerman, Otsego-Plainwell Chamber of Commerce was unable to attend the meeting.

3. Heritage Trail Update

- This fall, Gildea will work on a RFP to move forward with the design
- Redesign will take place through the winter months
- Once financials are determined, we can move forward with the design and the company to create the signage
- Complete and install signs by summer 2024

4. Combined February meeting with Parks Board (Date TBD)

- Would like to do a Special Meeting in March with both Parks Board and Tourist Council
- Burns states he would be available after 3/25/24

---

**NOTICE OF APPOINTMENTS:** None at this time.

Vacancy: term expires 12/23

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Day Trip Ideas to Advertise - brainstorming

**ROUND TABLE:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Burn and seconded by Bower to adjourn the meeting at 11:38am. The motion carried.

Next Meeting – November 14, 2023 @ 10:00 in County Services Building – Board Conference Room -3283 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Allegan, MI 49010