

Approved:09.23.2026

Posted:09.25.2026



**Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer**

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## PEPIN TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday July 22, 2026

**CALL TO ORDER:** Sue called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

**ROLL CALL:** Sue F, Mary P, Cheryl H, Shannon V, Denise P, Lisa S

Absent: Gabby

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** A motion was made by Sue to approve the secretary's report as written, seconded by Mary. Vote called; motion carried unanimously.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- Approval of invoices:
  - Invoice # 1217 HW Marketing Media – Destination Pepin (June) \$1395
    - A motion was made to pay this invoice for monthly June billable by Denise and seconded by Cheryl, vote called; motion carried unanimously.
- Financial report review: Current balance is \$23,688.06. Spent \$22k on directional signs.
  - Request made for quarterly revenue comparison and break out of hotel vs. STR's to better understand the market and differences by season.
- First quarter room tax was \$17,287.58. 2nd Quarter will be reported in August.

**GRANT PROPOSALS:** No new grant requests to review.

**HW MARKETING UPDATE:**

Approved:

Posted:

## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION EFFORTS

Gabby and Cheryl met with Karben Marketing to review their proposal/plan for the SEO strategy project. Cheryl walked through the proposal to improve Destination Pepin's visibility score which included 4 pillars of success designed to improve web site reach through keyword strategy, resolving red flags to google, building links and creating rich content that works for google and our market. Reviewed proposed cost of \$3500 per month. There is an option to move to a maintenance mode after the service contract ends after 9 months. To move forward, details on the month-to-month breakout need to be reviewed to determine project length vs. budget or if the service contract should be renegotiated in order to move forward. All should send their questions to Cheryl who will consolidate and send to Gabby with the goal to receive answered back prior to the next meeting to accelerate approval should we move forward.

## MAPPING PROJECTS:

### PRINT MAP:

Sue indicated that the final map changes were made and quantity 6000 maps were placed on order. They are at the printer.

**DIGITAL MAP:** No action is needed; it is easy to make changes when on the website. Please add an agenda item to discuss the digital map maintenance since Jenny is no longer on the Commission.

### SIGNAGE:

#### DIRECTIONAL MAPS

Sue made a motion to pay Milan Pesic \$100 for the volunteer help painting the poles ahead of the new signs were placed. Mary seconded the motion. Vote called; motion carried unanimously.

Mention was made that the signs are moving too much with high wind speeds. Discussion occurred regarding finding a welder to weld a bar and attach the bottom sign to the frame or attach arms to prevent blowing. Discussed possible welders to contact.

#### TOWN WELCOME SIGNS

Decals on the welcome signs at the end of town are up and look great. The cap is missing on one of the pillars, Shannon will check to see if it is in the shed. There is maintenance needed for the signs in general due to birds damaging the Styrofoam, and burnt-out solar lights.

## FALL & WINTER MARKETING CAMPAIGNS:

Approved:

Posted:

Discussion was held regarding a fall and winter marketing campaign with the beautiful fall leaves, Laura Days, and cooler weather. Discussion included creating experiences or itineraries (anniversaries, romance, family, bird watching, train rides, fishing) while promoting our local businesses such as golf cart rental, Rural Ride Service, E-Bike delivery to and from Durand, tour guides, etc. Sue will come up with a list to bring to the next meeting where we can also discuss distributing work to create content behind the key areas.

### **OTHER TOURISM BUSINESS:**

Denise brought a newspaper article titled "Tourism in Great River Road region contributes to a record-breaking year. Visitors generated \$980 million in spending in 2025."

This included eight counties along the Wisconsin great river road which contributed to Wisconsin's fourth consecutive record-breaking year. Overall, this was a 4.4% increase at a state wide level of \$27 billion.

The article discussed the economic impact and investment in western Wisconsin's future through supporting local businesses and local workforce.

- Tourism exposes visitors to our beautiful area who may want to return as students, teachers, business owners or residents.
- The eight-county area grew the number of part and full time jobs the industry supports to 185,594.
- Wisconsin residents save tax dollars. Without this revenue, each Wisconsin household would need to pay an additional \$692 to maintain government services.
- Travelers generate many more tourism dollars when they visit multiple attractions, stay overnight, and visit several restaurants.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

### **TABLED TOPICS:**

**MEETING FREQUENCY:** Consider moving meeting to bi-monthly. Tabled until a new chair to replace Sue is in place.

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday Aug 26th, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

**ADJOURN:** There was no further business to discuss and Sue made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Denise. Vote called, all ayes for unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Cheryl Herbison

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