

Member Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 12, 2023
South Side Christian Church

Meeting convened at 7:37 AM

1. 2. Board Reports

a. Secretary report – Bill McMahon

- i. Approval of September membership meeting minutes

b. Treasurer – Adam Cook

- i. Treasurer's Report as of September 30, 2023

3. Speaker: Scott Dahl - Tourism/ Visitors Bureau

- Overview
- Destination marketing.
- The only accredited Tourism/ Visitors Bureau that's also a city department.
- In Illinois \$536M tourism was spent in 2022. 2023 looking to meet or beat that.
- Hotel occupancy citywide hit year is 58%. Next year is projected to be better.
- More international visitors. Over 60 countries.
- Tied Route 66 in with Abraham Lincoln. Big Rte 66 anniversary. Springfield is the Rte 66 hub.
- Record attendees at the state fair – Route 66 featured there.
- Projected to welcome one million international visitors in 2026.
- We have been in sports marketing and tourism for the past 10 years, but the assets have been spread out. With the new sports complex that will bring much of that to one location.
- Scheels Sports complex – estimate \$30M new tourism dollars per year. Will affect the whole city.
- State fair grounds – Governor has invested \$80M in the state fairgrounds, with another \$80M expected. Ripple effect throughout the local economy.
- Tourism Improvement Districts signed into law. Sangamon County has been designated as such, and fast tracking an extension of that status to 20 years. Allows a 5% assessment to be added to the average room rates, which will allow Springfield to

expand the BOC Center. We're already a tier 3 convention city. This will move us to a tier 2 city. Will allow us to attract many more conventions.

- Q&A –
 - How is hotel occupancy calculated?
 - What's going on with the Wyndham? A: That's up to the policymakers.
 - Hotel taxes.
 - The Armory is being renovated. Mostly state offices. Visitor center.
- Mike Higgins questions:
 - This year we've seen more tourism at the restaurant, but fewer European tourists.
 - Marketing the high-speed rail and transportation hub?
 - What kind of conventions are we looking at, considering we're primarily a "drive" and "train" market? At some point air service to/from Springfield will need to be expanded.
 - What about marketing Springfield as the hub...and outlying communities as the spokes? Yes. And the new Visitor's Guide reflects that.
 - Did you do an ad in California recently? Mike noticed an uptick in Cali visitors.

4. Local Government Update

a. Ward 6 report, Jennifer Notariano

- Thanks to Scott Dahl.
- Ald Conely sends her regrets.
- City received a National Forest Service grant of \$900K for disadvantaged communities. Plan to plant 1000 trees.
- Our neighborhood police officer is being promoted to detective.
- New pizza parlor is coming.
- City council approved a study as to whether Dahlman coal plant should be converted to gas.

b. Ward 8 report, Erin Conley – Not present.

c. Mayor, Village of Jerome: Michael Lopez – Not present

d. Mayor, City of Leland Grove: Mary Jo Bangert – Not present

e. Board Member, Sangamon County: Tony Del Giorno – Not present

5. Announcements/Other Business

- a. Block party on October 21st at Lawrence & MacArthur. Bonfire. Live music. Free food. .S'mores!
- b. Josh Sabo discusses survey results.
- c. Call for MacArthur Boulevard cleanup volunteers – Meet on October 14, Franklin Middle School at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30