

MORTON GROVE SPECIAL EVENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2017 COMMISSION MEETING

Chairman Paul Minx called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance were:

Ann Estey	Ralph Czerwinski
Dan Stueber	Paul Tobin
Jeff Wait	Terri Cousar

Commissioners Georgianne Brunner, Jim Karp, and Bill Grear were absent.

Other Attendees

Also present were Event Subcommittee Chairs/Co-Chairs John Pietron, Eric Poders, Rita Minx, Pat Zmolek, Eric and Melanie Brodsky, Andy DeMonte, Rich Block, Paul Yaras, and Pete Witko.

Introduction of Guests

No guests present this evening.

Commission Chair Comments

No comments.

Presentation/Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

One change was noted on the Minutes. Commissioner Wait then moved to accept the Minutes as revised, seconded by Commissioner Tobin.

Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

No report.

2017 Planning

Morton Grove Days Event Days & Dates: Chairman Minx reiterated that the dates of this year's fest are Friday, June 30–Tuesday, July 4.

Review of 2016 Santa Claus Coming to Town Event: Ralph said that \$7,500 was budgeted for the 2016 "Santa," but only \$5,500 was spent. They had bought \$2,000 worth of gift cards from Apple, but ended up only using two of them. Five hundred candy canes were purchased, costing \$300. Ralph said they also bought 3,000 lollipops, and had 750 left. Between the candy canes and the coloring books, they spent \$1,000, and they have 650 remaining. Approximately 150 individual unwrapped gifts were distributed, mostly purchased from Menards. Ralph said the Menards

manager was very helpful. The leftover gifts were split between the Toys For Tots and the Food Drive.

Rich said it was a great event, and kids loved it. Pat said she thought it was a tremendous success due to Ralph and Andy, and said the kids were surprised at how nice the gifts were.

Rita thanked Eric and Melanie for the volunteers. She felt the event was great.

Ralph said the interaction between the “inside” and “outside” Santas was seamless.

2017 Santa Claus Coming to Town Event Planning: Jeff suggested the date/time be December 2nd from 11:00am to 2:30pm.

Andy mentioned possibly tweaking the route. Ralph said we should budget \$4,000 for 2017.

Morton Grove Days Subcommittee Reports

Beer Garden: No report.

Carnival: Paul said we have a signed contract with North American Entertainment. It’s for one-year only. They will have the same prices as last year and the same food. They have promised Morton Grove to have the Power Surge again and a Ferris Wheel. They have a \$2,000 advertising budget and will provide us with posters again this year. We will have a link on our website to start selling the mega-passes one month before the event.

Children’s Activities: Jeff said we should block out Saturday, July 1, from 2:00 to 4:00pm for children’s activities.

Entertainment: In the absence of Dan and Katie, Rita gave the report. She said that all of the headliners have been booked, except for Sunday night. The headliners include Mike & Joe and the Wedding Band.

Festival Operations: No report.

Finance: No report.

Fireworks: In Bill’s absence, Chairman Minx said that this is the last year of our three-year contract with Mad Bomber; this year, the fireworks will cost \$18,500.

Fundraising: Chairman Minx said, regarding Sponsoring, that John will send letters to everyone who donated last year. He asked everyone to network and ask around to get more donors. Rita suggest the fundraising effort get started fairly soon.

Eric Poders asked if we can use business licenses to tap into contacts for newer businesses. Ralph said that would have to be run past Corporation Counsel Liston. Chairman Minx said that we used the Chamber list one year, but we had to do a lot of “clean-up” as there were businesses included that had closed, and contacts that were no longer living.

Regarding the Pancake Breakfast component, it will be held on May 15, in conjunction with the Farmers’ Market. Ralph said there would be no problems with borrowing the equipment from the Skokie Rotary. He said this event will definitely need volunteers, i.e., like people to serve as wait staff. Coffee, pancakes, and sausages will be served. Ralph added that we need to set a ticket price

for the Pancake Breakfast (possibly \$10) and figure out how and when to sell the tickets. One thought was to give each Commission member a certain number of tickets to either sell or purchase themselves.

Chairman Minx wondered about the possibility of doing a second Pancake Breakfast on the Saturday or Sunday of the Days event.

Regarding the Merchandising component, there was no report.

Parade: Nothing to report.

Public Relations: Eric Poders distributed a "Social Media Strategy" document. The document asked for information about background, barriers to media/social media, objectives, measurable goals, and the target audience. Eric said he hoped people would fill it in and get it back to him by our next meeting. He said we basically need a strategy, not just for social media, but press releases, radio spots, etc. He also provided a PowerPoint deck.

John said that our strategy is based on trial-and-error and empirical evidence. He thought we'd spend more time trying to complete the strategy document than actually doing the necessary things. He felt that our best media strategy was "word of mouth."

Eric suggested doing a community survey via Survey Monkey, to find out exactly who our target market is.

John said we were highly successful last year, so we should just repeat what we did last year. He pointed out that ours is a relatively small operation, and thought the best thing would be for him, Maria, and Eric to get together to discuss strategy, but on a smaller scale, as John said he felt the document Eric had prepared was too much. He said that people come to the event because they want to eat, drink, see friends, and because their children want to go on nice / cool rides. He felt that a deep dive into "strategy" wouldn't be incrementally helpful.

Eric said that visibility helps drive word of mouth. Paul Yaras suggested using some of the carnival advertising dollars to boost Facebook posts.

There was some brief discussion about the Morton Grove Days logo. Ralph said that Boyle Wong is making the logo "expandable."

Ralph felt one thing that was needed was an administrative calendar. He felt that meeting deadlines was one of our biggest challenges.

Rita asked when the next Park District publication was due out. She said she felt we've missed it several times in the past. Jeff said the deadline is mid-March, but let's aim for getting something in there by March 1st. We need to get information out about the event dates, the pancake breakfast, the entertainment, etc.

Ralph said it would go in the Village Exchange too, noting the deadline for information for that is June 10th.

Restaurants: Nothing to report. There was a suggestion to get Nano's more involved. Chairman Minx said that Bill Grear and Ralph would be meeting to talk more about this. Ralph said that we should try to get Cheesy's and the Taco Truck that were at the National Night Out, because they

“killed it.” He thought having two “icon” restaurants and two food trucks would work well. The food trucks could go where the Information Booth was last year.

Paul Yaras said that “Savory” is getting a lot of good feedback.

Chairman Minx said he’d ask the carnival people about having kettle corn versus popcorn.

Security: Commander Stueber said he hasn’t heard back yet from the private security company. He said that, because the carnival company will be bringing in the equipment on June 26th and the event is a day longer, it will cost more than last year. He said he hoped to have a cost breakdown by the next meeting. He said he’s also working on figuring out officers’ schedules for the event time period.

Volunteers: Nothing to report.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Adjournment/Next Meeting

Chairman Minx said the next meeting will be on March 21, 2017.

Paul Tobin moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jeff Wait. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Terri Cousar