

# **MORTON GROVE SPECIAL EVENTS COMMISSION**

## **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 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:

Terri Cousar	Jon Kobus
Ralph Czerwinski	Paul Minx
Bill Grear	Dan Stueber
Jim Karp	Jeff Wait

Commissioners Georgianne Brunner and Ann Estey were absent.

### **Introduction of Guests**

Village Finance Director Hannah Sullivan was present, as was Eric Poders and Event Subcommittee Chairs/Co-Chairs Maria Toth and John Pietron, Rita Minx and Chris Minx, Pat Zmolek, Ed Ramos, Melanie Brodsky, Cindy Miehlke, Rich Block, and Katie Shimanski.

### **Commission Chair Comments**

Chairman Minx said he had invited all the Event Subcommittee Chairs/Co-Chairs for input on the topics to be discussed this evening.

### **Presentation/Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Terri Cousar had prepared and emailed Minutes of the June 14, 2016 Morton Grove Days Commission, as well as Minutes of the August 23, 2016 Morton Grove Special Event Commission.

Bill Grear moved to accept both sets of Minutes as presented. Jim Karp seconded the motion.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Karp said that, as of August 31, we have \$51,760.23 in our business account and \$58,077.40 in our merchant account.

### **2017 Planning**

Chairman Minx said we need to discuss and decide whether the 2017 Morton Grove Days event will be a five-day affair or shorter.

Jon Kobus said he felt the carnival would like to do a five-day fest, but he acknowledged that a five-day fest would be harder on the Police Department.

Jeff Wait asked if there was a precedent for a five-day event. Chairman Minx said the last cycle where we could have held a five-day fest, we went "dark" on Sunday and had a four-day fest. There

was some discussion of not opening the Beer Garden on Sunday, July 2, 2017, because Sundays are usually slow days from a revenue standpoint, but Commander Stueber said the Police Department's staffing would remain the same, so that didn't seem to be worthwhile. Chairman Minx said we could also think about delaying our opening until Saturday, July 1, 2017 (instead of opening on Friday, June 30) and thus have a four-day event.

Jeff asked about entertainment. Chairman Minx said that, if we booked a "hot" band for Sunday, a five-day event could work. He added that there are not really any other carnival company options we could go to should North American Midway balk at a four-day event.

Chris Minx said the carnival company really showed their professionalism and felt it would be a mistake for us to "lose" Friday. Chairman Minx agreed, saying it's often been our busiest day.

Jim Karp agreed that it would be a burden on the Village to hold a five-day event, but the fact is, it is a *priceless* event. He added that we're not really in this to make money, and commented that it might be harder to find enough volunteers to staff a five-day event.

Other suggestions were to make Sunday a "Children's Day," or to host local garage bands as the entertainment for Sunday.

Bill Grear said that we've got months to figure out what to do each day, and whether or not to shorten the hours on a particular day. He said that, while he's not really wild about a five-day event, we need to decide if the event is going to run from June 30 to July 4 and we need to be cognizant of the increased Village expenditures.

Ralph Czerwinski said that it does make sense to start on Friday, June 30, and thought that having the Sunday as a "family day" had some merit—possibly holding a pancake breakfast to kick it off. The proceeds of the pancake breakfast possibly could help defray the increased Police Department expense that we'll incur with a five-day event. He added that maybe on that Sunday, the carnival could be open from 11am to 5pm, and maybe have a shortened beer garden going from 1pm to 5pm. Maybe there could be a pizza competition or something similar.

Jon Kobus said he heard some complaints about the food (lack of choices) and that the carnival would like to start around noon every day. He also said some people were asking why the pool wasn't open!

Rita said that, by hiring a cleanup crew, we've cut down on the need for volunteers to do that; by having the carnival take care of ticket sales, we've eliminated the need for volunteers to do that. The people who staff the beer garden love it and like to come back because of the comradery.

Rich Block said having a five-day event will give us a safety net if we have inclement weather one of the days.

Pat Zmolek said that having a "dark" day is confusing for people. Rita agreed, saying it felt like having that break caused the event to lose momentum.

Chairman Minx said that maybe on one of the days, we could go back to the "old days," where they held a picnic and did sack races, egg tosses, and other competitive games.

Commander Stueber said a five-day schedule will be difficult for the Police Department, in terms of scheduling personnel. Mr. Czerwinski wondered if perhaps, like Highland Park does with events at

Ravinia, the Village could use officers from other communities. Rita suggested maybe entering into an Intergovernmental Agreement with some of our neighboring communities for this.

Rich Block asked what the Forest Preserve District does when they have events in St. Paul Woods that draw 30,000 people or more. Commander Stueber said that Cook County sends in officers; Morton Grove officers generally handle traffic flow.

Jim Karp moved to schedule the 2017 event to start on Friday, June 30 and run through Tuesday, July 4—a five-day event, with *possibly* amended hours on Sunday, July 2. Terri Cousar seconded the motion. **Motion passed: 3 ayes, 2 nays, 1 pass.**

Dan Steuben: ..... NO  
Jeff Wait: ..... AYE  
Bill Grear: ..... PASS  
Paul Minx: ..... AYE  
Jim Karp: ..... NO  
Terri Cousar: ..... AYE

Chairman Minx said he had talked with Randy from Village Inn, who is on the board of Lincolnwood Fest. This year, three of the four days of Lincolnwood Fest were rained out, yet Randy told him it was a great event, and they made \$12,000. When Paul asked how, Randy said they had taken out rain insurance. Mr. Czerwinski said he would reach out to Randy and get the contact for the rain insurance. Jim Karp said we have to check out the prices. Chairman Minx said it's definitely something we could look into.

Katie was asked about the range in prices for the headline bands we had this year. She replied the cost ranged from \$2,700 to \$5,000.

## **Santa Claus**

Jon said that Andy DeMonte wanted to volunteer to be Santa but he does not want to chair the event. Chairman Minx said we need to name a chairman and committee members. This will be in conjunction with the holiday festivities the Park District is planning. The thought is to have two Santas, one for the east side of town and one for the west side of town, and both would go out between 9am and 11am. Santa will ride on a fire truck.

Jon said that Paul Tobin volunteered to help, too.

Chairman Minx said we need to determine a budget for this event.

Jeff Wait explained about the Park District festivities. The Holiday Fest will begin on Friday, December 2, with an interfaith ceremony and the lighting of a Christmas tree. Attendees will be encouraged to put messages of peace on the tree and there will be a candlelight walk.

On Saturday, December 3, the Farmers' Market is holding its Winter Market inside the Civic Center. Outside the Civic Center, between 11am and 3pm, there will be an ornament workshop, a dogsled demo, ice sculptures, a food truck, hot chocolate and s'mores, and music. Olaf and Elsa from Frozen may be present. Possibly there will be the traditional "hide a pickle" in the Christmas tree. Jeff said he's working with local schools to bring out some choirs and he'll reach out to the Library for participation as well.

Jim Karp asked what the budget was from previous years' Santas. Chairman Minx wasn't sure. Jim said we should work on getting sponsors for this event.

Mr. Czerwinski volunteered to chair "Santa" because it utilizes the services of the Police, Fire, and Public Works departments. He suggested that he, Jeff, and Andy get together and talk about this some more. Chairman Minx said that Andy has the maps that the Santas used in the past.

Mr. Czerwinski said that if anyone has any suggestions about this, they should email them to him.

**Bill Grear moved to name Ralph Czerwinski as Chairman of the Santa Claus event, seconded by Terri Cousar. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **Subcommittee Reports**

***Beer Garden:*** Rita said the beer garden was successful; they had multiple volunteers working. As far as what was served, the Twisted Tea and Root Beer did not go over well; she thought we should see what else Malarkey's has.

Chris said that people were asking for wine, and noted that Costco sells 4-packs of small bottles of various wines. Rita noted that Malarkey's doesn't offer wine. Jon Kobus said that we wouldn't have to get fancy, just offer a white wine, a red wine, and a rose. He said that Randy at Village Inn has a wine contact.

Rita said we had a limited number of the Doughboy mugs (87) and they sold out on the first night. Chairman Minx said we donated \$5,000 to the Doughboy Repair Fund, and felt we should make the Doughboy our "mascot" and donate annually to its upkeep, either with bar tips, mug sales, etc.

Rich Block said the mugs were at a good price point.

***Carnival:*** In the absence of Paul Yaras and Pete Witko, Chairman Minx said the only "report" was that they would begin negotiations with the carnival company in November.

***Children's Activities:*** Jeff said he's willing to do it again. Rita asked if it was successful. Jeff responded that it wasn't really, but since it was only the first year, he didn't have high expectations.

***Entertainment:*** Katie said she and Dan DiMaria are going to start booking bands. They're going to mix it up and have some returning bands and some new ones. She felt that they would definitely bring back Mike and Joe and the Hairbangers. Eric Poders asked if they were going to do a competitive analysis of other fests' bands.

***Festival Operations:*** Jon said he and Paul are going to work on organizing the trailer. He added that the 2017 price for WR will be higher because of the extra day.

***Finance:*** Jim said that it was much less of a burden having the carnival company handle the ticket sales. One thing we need to do a better job on is working with credit card sales.

Bill Grear said that Jim, Hannah, and Debbie did a great job this year.

Chairman Minx said we would be having a meeting in October to set our budget. Mr. Czerwinski said that once the Commission decides on the budget, they should give it to the Village. The Village will then ask the Morton Grove Days Commission, the 501(c) entity, for a "grant" of the money equal to

the budget. Jim Karp said he would talk with Ralph and Hannah about how they want the budget line items categorized.

**Fireworks:** Bill Grear said 2017 would be the last year of the Mad Bomber's 3-year contract. Both Jon and Cindy said the fireworks were great this year.

Commander Stueber said things went smoothly traffic-wise with Skokie's fireworks and our own. Only two cars were towed; other than that, there were no meaningful traffic issues.

**Fundraising:** Chairman Minx said this will be covered at the next meeting Morton Grove Days Commission—the 501(c)3 entity. Ed said that subcommittee needs a chairperson.

Regarding the Eat & Earn component, Cindy said it appears that members of the Morton Grove Days Commission are the only ones who support them. Culver's is the only one that can be called successful. Cindy said she and Ann had talked about it, and both felt that the Eat & Earns should take a year off. Bill said that she and Ann had certainly made a noble effort getting these events to be successful.

Chairman Minx said we can talk about other options, i.e., a pancake breakfast.

Melanie Brodsky asked, "What about a multi-day Eat & Earn?" Eric Poders said, "Or a 'restaurant of the month' event."

Rich said he thought we were spinning our wheels with the Eat & Earns.

Eric Poders suggested reaching out to the ethnic communities, and noted that the Commission needs to look at other revenue streams.

Regarding the Merchandising component, Chairman Minx said we sold over 100 MG Days hats at \$25 each, and suggested that we showcase just ONE item a year. Rich said we would need to be mindful of buying too much and getting stuck with inventory.

Bill said he got rid of hundreds of "glow" wristbands; the kids loved them. The wristbands were donated so he was giving them away. Rich said we need to try to get 6–8 people in Harrer Park on July 4<sup>th</sup> selling glow items.

**Parade:** Nothing to report.

**Public Relations:** Maria said that people don't understand about children in the beer garden; she said the Facebook page was getting lots of inquiries, such as, do kids need a parent to be in the beer garden in order to get in? Do children get charged? She said people were also asking if there was a charge to get into the carnival. She thought it would be a good idea to set up a "Frequently Asked Questions" section on both the Days' website and Facebook page. She added that people love our fireworks, but questioned having a start time of 9:45pm when the next day is a work day.

Bill said that the chairs of each subcommittee should have those questions forwarded to them to address. He said he personally would like the chance to explain, for example, about the start time of the fireworks.

John Pietron said he heard questions about ticket prices. He suggested, if it's possible, to make a large poster for every day of the event and put it near the entrance; each day's "attractions" would

be featured so people would know what was going on that day and when. Maria agreed and wondered if the brochures she's been doing were worth it.

Eric Poders said the poster is a good idea, or, have the brochures ready very, very early in the process.

Maria said we had brochures at the Civic Center, the Park District, and Village Hall. Mr. Czerwinski said the schedule of events was also prominently featured on the cover of the Summer edition of the Village newsletter.

Mr. Czerwinski asked John and Maria to please advise him and Boyle Wong what they need to reproduce logos of sponsors. John agreed, noting that some of the logos were not a high enough resolution to enlarge. Maria commented that, in particular, the Morton Grove Days logo needs updating. John recommended the development of a new logo; he felt the current logo didn't convey a sense of "fun." Ralph suggested contacting Mark Ingram; he was good at that. Maria felt the Doughboy should be incorporated into the logo, as long as we're developing a new one.

Jeff Wait said he has a marketing person at the Park District who is working on something, but if we let him know what "elements" should be included in a new MG Days logo, he would ask that person to take a shot at it. He also commented that the carnival "dropped the ball" on the posters it provided. We received them almost too late to get them out.

Rich asked about utilizing the kiosks on Waukegan Road, and using any electronic/digital signs in town. Ralph said the kiosks were used this year.

Chairman Minx said that Malarkey's donates the larger signs, and the carnival donated four large signs too.

**Restaurants:** Nothing to report. Chairman Minx said we need a new chairperson for this subcommittee.

**Security:** Commander Stueber said we will continue to use the same private security firm; they're great to work with and the feedback on them continues to be good. Plus, the person who runs it lives in town.

Eric Poders asked about expanding the space; it seems to stop where the Village property ends. Jon agreed, and wondered if Harrer Park could be "opened up a bit."

**Volunteers:** Nothing to report.

### **Old Business**

None.

### **New Business**

None.

**Adjournment/Next Meeting**

Chairman Minx said the next meeting will be a Budget meeting and will be held on October 18, 2016. There will be a November meeting too; thereafter, it will be every other month on the THIRD Tuesday of each month.

Jim Karp moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Terri Cousar. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Terri Cousar*