

Tourism Commission Meeting
Tuesday, January 20, 2026
9:30 a.m.

Attendees: Commissioner Christopher Adams, Alderman Jim Ruetz, Commissioner Majlis Seisay

Also in Attendance: City of Oak Creek; Alex Hayes, Tourism & Events Coordinator, City of Oak Creek; Kelly Shoff, Marketing Communications Manager, City of Oak Creek; Thomas Parker, Communications Coordinator, Guest Speakers; Josh Ostermann and Craig Ruhland

1. **Welcome/Call to order** – Alderman Jim Ruetz called the meeting to order at 9:51 a.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes from 11/18/25.**

Commissioner Christopher Adams moved to approve the minutes from 11/18/25. Alderman Jim Ruetz seconded. All voted in favor.

3. **Informational: Discover media works; digital promotions**

Josh who represents “Discover Wisconsin” complimented the City of Oak Creek on its strong media presence and effective promotion of city events and initiatives that attract visitors. Josh highlighted several strategies that contributed to increased engagement and improved ratings on the city’s website, which have helped generate increased interest in local events. Josh also referenced an upcoming podcast that will be used to discuss and promote a variety of topics. Kelly concurred and noted that the Farmer’s Market will be promoted through a refreshed strategy aimed at increasing attendance and positioning Oak Creek as a recurring destination.

4. **Informational: Mountain biking and related opportunities**

Craig is a co-chair for Metro Mountain Bikers and a trail advocate for Wisconsin Interscholastic Cycling League, and he provided an overview of mountain biking and discussed its potential to attract visitors from surrounding cities. Craig acknowledged that funding can be a concern for some organizations but clarified that no financial support is being requested for this project at this time. The presenter noted that while several destination trails exist in surrounding counties, Oak Creek is also progressing toward that goal. Craig noted that mountain biking events often draw participants from a wide geographic area, which can lead to overnight stays at local hotels. The

goal of the initiative is to attract not only adult riders, but also age-appropriate youth participants. Mountain biking was noted as an activity that encourages youth to develop new skills and reduce screen time, as it requires focus and active engagement. During the presentation, various styles of trails that could potentially be developed for this outdoor activity were discussed. Additionally, Craig noted that in previous partnerships, compensation was provided based on revenue generated by other mountain bike trails. Craig says that mountain biking is common to share the use of a park more than just hiking or mountain biking. Craig noted that the potential project is planned for Lake Vista Park, but development will take additional time due to the 'flow trail' design he mentioned earlier. Craig also expressed interest in developing mountain biking facilities throughout Lake Vista Park and discussed the possibility of partnering with WE Energies to expand the park's overall size. Craig described the community involvement during previous building efforts, noting that residents—including children, retirees, and local community members—volunteered approximately 2,000 hours collectively in support of the project. Craig clarified that the goal is not to choose one over the other, but rather to offer multiple amenities within the park and mentioned what can 'next steps' potentially look like. Kelly mentioned an article she is working on related to community development and noted how it aligns with the potential project coming to Oak Creek. Attendees suggested that Lake Vista Park would be a preferable location, as it could generate more overnight stays, while other suggestions included incorporating a dog park or a dog beach. Kelly noted that the project is intended to support year-round activity, as mountain biking attracts riders even in the winter months who seek out trails during that season. In closing, presenters and attendees discussed how mountain biking could increase the City's foot traffic, with individuals from surrounding areas likely to travel to the park to participate in the activity.

5. Motion – Music is Learning Play Educator Conference / Jim Gill Community Concert

Alex Hayes opened the discussion by informing attendees of the Oak Creek Public Library's primary goal in hosting the event. The introduction focused on Jim Gill, a nationally recognized children's performer, and explained that the event is intended to help the library engage with children and families. The proposed event weekend aligns with another City Hall-hosted event, 'Our Kids Night,' during which Gill would be able to perform a community concert. Estimated attendance for the conference is approximately 400 people, with an anticipated 40–50 attendees expected to stay overnight to participate in the following week's event. The grant request amount is \$4,500, which \$4000 will go towards bringing Gill in and minimal marketing and equipment for the rest. Kelly explains better that this educational event is intended to reach other librarians, educators, childcare providers and early learning professionals from northern Illinois and all over Wisconsin in hopes that they will stay overnight to be able to attend the conference the following morning. It was noted that approximately 25% of attendees are expected to travel more than 50 miles to participate in the event, which would require overnight lodging. The Marketing Department recommended that the Committee sponsor the event in its entirety, rather than 50%, due to its alignment with the city kid's event. Alex also spoke to how hosting this event could increase exposure to the Oak Creek Public Library and support future collaboration opportunities.

It was noted that the city and the Public Library will collaborate on promoting the upcoming events, as the city has greater reach to generate broader engagement.

Motion: Motion to approve music is learning educator conference/community concert

Commissioner Christopher Adams moved to approve music is learning educator conference/community concert. Commissioner Majlis Sesay seconded; sponsorship amount was approved in full.

Adjournment: Commissioner Majlis Sesay motioned to adjourn; Commissioner Christopher Adams seconded. All were in favor.

ATTEST:



Marcia Wayer, Director of Marketing & Public Relations

2/17/20

Date