

# Houston Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting

## Tuesday, January 21, 2020 6:30 p.m., Houston Legion

### Meeting Minutes

Present: President Chris Schroeder, Vice President Rod Torgerson, Treasurer Nancy Forsyth, Secretary John Evenson, Board Member Ron Evenson (Board); Taylor Laschenski (Director); Mel Laschenski, Eilene Loken, Rae Evenson, Evonne Snow, Richard Snow, Marlene Schultz, Karla Bloem, Hein Bloem, Gene Lundak, Bob Carlson, Mimi Carlson, David Wilson (Chamber and Community Members)

- I. Meeting was called to order by President Chris Schroeder at 6:38 p.m.
- II. Karla made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by David. Motion was carried.
- III. Chamber Director Taylor introduced herself to the group.
- IV. Some highlights of 2019 were reviewed including a successful Lawn Chair Concert Series and Block Party along with SEMAC and Explore MN grant activities.
- V. Treasurer Nancy presented the Chamber's total balance of \$9,982 as compared to beginning of last year at \$10,493. Use of funds and allocation were discussed as they pertain to donations marked for the Lawn Chair Concert Series, Hollidazzle funds, a portion of Chamber Director's wages, and dues. A P&L broken down by class/activity is available upon request.
- VI. Board members of 2019 were reelected for the 2020 year with the following officers: Chris Schroeder (President), Rod Torgerson (Vice President), Nancy Forsyth (Treasurer), Ron Evenson (Secretary)
  - A. David opened the floor to nominations, seconded by Hein. The board members listed above accepted nominations. Floor closed by David, seconded by Hein. Gene moved for unanimous election of the above officers, seconded by Hein. Motion was carried.
- VII. Proposed changes to Chamber bylaws were presented in writing and are to be presented at a special Chamber meeting on Feb. 17 (5:15 p.m. at the Houston Legion) for approval.
- VIII. Houston Community Foundation committee member Mimi presented information about the Foundation's goals, examples of fund uses, and applications.
- IX. 2020 Opportunities & Ideas
  - A. Members are reminded to renew for 2020; membership forms are available online or upon request.
  - B. The Block Party is planned for Sept. 26 with the idea of new BBQ contest, continued bean bag toss tournament, potential new kids' activities, and continued Chamber fundraising efforts. The Block Party is an opportunity for area organizations (both Chamber members and non-members) including the Chamber to help establish a local presence.

1. The Root River Triathlon was discussed; should the Triathlon be postponed, it would fall the Saturday before the Block Party.
  2. The idea of new holiday decorations for city light posts was discussed with the potential of a fundraising opportunity.
- C. It was proposed that Houston Area Chamber of Commerce put together funds from the Chamber and business/organization sponsors to participate as a group in fair auctions in consideration of the Houston area youth involved in 4-H.
- D. The Chamber website is currently undergoing a refresh in design and contact layout; Chamber members listed will be updated to reflect current membership by the end of February with members receiving extended listings/more detail as compared to the whole of the business directory. The Chamber offers management of members' Explore MN website listings as a perk of membership.

X. Member Updates

- A. Eileen discussed feedback and observations regarding guests opting to stay in Rushford versus Houston due to limited restaurant/meal options. Also discussed was the impact of CWD on hunters choosing to sport in this area and cancellations for future hunting dates. A key takeaway was the need for tourism and traffic sourced elsewhere.
- B. Festival of Owls is the first weekend in March with international speakers coming from Nepal, the Netherlands and other areas. Owl artwork is coming in for judging, and the owl center is establishing a partnership with the Museum of Russian Art.
- C. Any local events may be sent to the Chamber ([houstonmnchamber@gmail.com](mailto:houstonmnchamber@gmail.com)) for placement on its community calendar.
- D. The possibility of a heritage house was discussed with an old property in the City of Houston. The potential project is in the beginning stages of conversation but would center on purchasing and restoring a property to maintain as a historic site to serve as an attraction and venue for small meeting or events.
- E. The idea of a veterans' courtyard in the community was also discussed.

- XI. Marlene motioned to adjourn; Richard seconded. Motion was carried; meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.