

Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce
Minutes, September 11, 2008

President Coni Bush called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Members present: Steve Lafady, Connie Bush, Mayor Barbara Larsen, Ryana Covington, Mike Vorse, Cowlitz County Tourism Director Mark Plotkin, Sharon Traub, Ashley Opsahl-Scibelli and guest Mike Wind.

Mr. Wind introduced himself by stating that he has been working in tourism and economic development for the past 12 years. Even though Mr. Wind is fairly new to the area, he has been volunteering his time at Seaquest Visitors Center and the Exhibit Hall. He would like to see the Castle Rock business area work together to bring tour buses from SR504 into the business core. Some recommendations that he made were: create activities to promote interest from tourists (especially older travelers), collaborate with Cowlitz County and Lewis County to promote the region, and have business owners continue to take responsibility for the areas around their businesses. He stated that a city is judged within the first 10 seconds – impressions really do count. Mr. Wind listed many good qualities that our community has. Currently he is working with a few of the local business owners pertaining to marketing and promotion of our community.

Secretary's Report—approved as printed

Treasurer's Report— approved as printed

Parking—Coni stated that she has again received comments from other business owners stating that parking issues continue to be a problem. Mayor Larsen noted that Police Chief Heuer has asked business owners to record the license numbers of vehicles and his officers will follow-up. In addition, the officers should be chalking tires. Business owners have seen them chalk tires, however there does not appear to be adequate patrol follow-up to free up the parking spaces.

Cowlitz Street West; Street Light Styles — On behalf of the Public Works Director, Ryana distributed pictures of six choices for street light styles being considered for the Cowlitz Street West reconstruction project and asked everyone to independently decide on which style was their favorite.

Phase I of the Cowlitz Street West construction will include completion of the parking lot behind the Exhibit Hall, including lighting. Completion of this phase will allow alternative parking options during construction.

Ryana stated she also has asked business owners to choose their individual preferences. Results of that poll, along with choices made at this meeting will be forwarded to the public works director.

Mark asked the chamber to consider participating in the 2009 AWESOME brochure, at a cost of \$1,000. He explained the distribution of the brochure and outlined other entities that have asked to participate. He felt that if the chamber and the city both contributed, the presentation for Castle Rock can be made larger. A decision will be needed by December of this year. Coni stated this will be a discussion item at the next meeting.

Coni stated there were a lot of visitors this year requesting to purchase T-shirts with the Castle Rock Chamber logo on it. She asked if this is a project that the chamber would be interested in.

Coni announced that the Exhibit Hall will be having a 'house cleaning' session on Sept 17th beginning at 9:00 am. They ask that any organization having items stored at the Exhibit Hall either remove their items, or come to the clean-up and repackage/identify their belongings.

Letters were sent out regarding maintenance of the flower boxes in front of businesses. Some boxes will need to be relocated.

Mark – announced that applications for grant funds to support community events are now available from his office. Deadline to apply is November 24th.

Mark has also successfully worked with Washington State Department of Transportation to change the signage on SR504 regarding access to Coldwater Lake area.

He also reported that the promotional video of Cowlitz County will be finalized in December. Mark stated they got some good pictures of the Riverfront Trail which will be included in the video.

The small business training seminars will be offered again next year through the Longview/Kelso Chamber of Commerce.

Steve reported on the PUD's progress to install electronically read meter devices.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—October 9th, 8:30 A.M., CASTLE ROCK SENIOR CENTER. ELECTION OF OFFICERS WILL BE HELD. YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED. JOIN US AND AS ALWAYS THE COFFEE WILL BE ON.