



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2016
Hurstville Interpretive Center, Maquoketa**

MRPC Call to order:

Chair Edith Pfeffer called the meeting to order.

Roll call was taken with a quorum of the nine-member 2016 roster present.

Commissioners:

Edith Pfeffer, Chair, Dan Petersen, VC.; Jane Regan, Treas.; John Goodman, Secretary; Scott Tunnicliff, Lisa Walsh, Martin Graber.

Tech Members: Ron Diess and Wendy Frolich, Army Corps of Engineers; Nicole Shalla, Travel Iowa, IEDA; Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program

Guests:

Daryl Parker, Chandra Ravada, Jerry Schroeder, Beth Peters, Connie Cutlott, Bob Schiffke, Brian Ritter, Jess Wegmann, Jenna Pollock, Matt Parbs, Jean Peiton, Rita Hart, Mike Norris, Denise Bulatt, Rachel Howe

Welcome and Announcements:

Business:

Minutes –

March 21, 2016 meeting minutes as distributed were reviewed. Motion to accept minutes as distributed and read: Goodman, Second: Graber

*Approved.

April 29, LaCrosse Motion to accept minutes as distributed and read: Regan
Second: Walsh

*Approved.

Treasurer reports

The printed report of the MRPC DOT appropriation budget was shared with a current balance of **\$5777.56**. Commissioners received detailed lists of the claims processed. Motion to accept MRPC DOT report as distributed: Peterson

Second: Schweitzer

*Approved.

National MRPC Committee reports

Culture and Heritage-

Iowa Interpretive Center staff present reported on their current events:

- Old Ft. Madison: Jean Peiton
- Motor Mill: Jenna Pollack and Jessica Wegman
- Hurstville Interpretive Center: Daryl Parker- on the Grant Wood Scenic Byway. It highlights marsh, prairie, lime mine and kiln, 20 miles off the Mississippi and draws 10,000- 12,000 visitors annually.
- Nahant Marsh: Brian Ritter Just off the river. Pollinator conference Thursday and Friday this week in Davenport drawing 300 coming up. Booth space available.
- Clinton Sawmill: Matt Parbs. Summer event is Milling around with the Wind Mill, Saw Mill, other events including a free ride on the Blue Herron eco tour boat at Camanche, water table on the river and a rafting event. Admission is \$4 and \$3-7 days a week til 6 PM. Heritage Day is in September.
- Buffalo Bill Museum in Le Claire, Iowa: Bob Schiffke, Beth Peters, and Connie Curlott. The museum includes regional History- rather than just Buffalo Bill. On the Mississippi River including local inventors. Feature is the 1890 river tow boat. About 20,000 visitors a year. Open all but major holidays. Quad City museums feature "Museum Week" this week with a mystery theme. Also Native American items including 13 Native American cradle boards. Admission is \$5, \$4 seniors \$1 children- student and teacher groups are free.
- Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District: Ron Deiss is an archeologist on staff. We are the Rock Island District, Mississippi River Project, Recreation and Natural Resource Management Section. The Visitor center focuses on the Upper Mississippi River. Part of their mission is Environmental compliance. Mississippi River Master Plan. USACE. Mississippi River Project is in the process of updating its Master Plan (MP). They feature military engineers history at the site in Moline. Clock tower tours etc. The Arsenal Museum has been threatened with closing and advocates are working to keep it open.
- Our Mississippi River education materials: Ron and Wendy reported Navigation studies were not funded, but concern about the historic riverfront continued. There is an Our Mississippi River home page online and the program has been well received, successful and award winning. All of the naturalists along the GRR have received these. Commissioners reported the schools have reported excellent use and Camanche has won awards for using it. It is a great resource and especially well-received as the Army Corps is highly regarded and trusted for quality research and education.
- Osborne Welcome Center : Jenna Pollock reported they have a roomful of materials and then have added a computer for easy access to information.

Commissioner Graber reported that National needs the new surveys completed and each commissioner should help their county's I-Centers complete and return them.

Marketing-

This is the Year of birding; and Drive the Great River Road Month September and October 2016. National Geographic: Please visit your I-centers and locals to post on this. Google analytics on the performance are improving. New 10-state maps are out
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and have been delivered to the I-centers. If you don't need them all, please pass them on. Bike the Great River Road Facebook give-away is underway. Please promote. Camping is the theme for next year.

Iowa: The Great Race Sunday, June 26th at noon at the I-80 Interstate Museum. Commission workers should arrive at 10:00 a.m. to set up. The route includes Mason City, Cedar Rapids, lunch at Walcott and finishes at Moline. Dan and Edith will participate. Others should confirm with Edith.

Transportation-

Commissioner Walsh reported from the published committee minutes and a committee conference call is scheduled tomorrow. (June 21, 2016.)

Environment, Recreation & Agriculture –

Commissioner Schweitzer reported that the committee is looking to do an inventory of agriculture and environmental assets. Only 2 members attended and there were no minutes.

Chairwoman's Report

MRPC Board Meeting April 27-29, 2016, La Crosse, Wisconsin

No Board report published yet but the Annual MRPC meeting is Sept. 14-16, 2016, in Natchez, Mississippi. The city is celebrating its 300th year.

Iowa Byways Sustainability:

Commissioner Pfeffer reported on the collaboration and developments in shared resources including an audio interpretation "mobile app" that may be adaptable for Iowa GRR interpretive centers. One of the byways is testing it and will pursue how to use or share the product among the 11 Iowa Byways.

Iowa State Fair: including the Iowa State Fair Booth scheduled for August. All Iowa byways will be promoted and most will participate. DOT will provide the statewide materials and assistance. The MRPC and its stakeholders on the GRR will staff Sunday, August 14th and Friday, August 19th. Schweitzer, Graber, Walsh, Pfeffer and Regan indicated they would assist.

Byways of Iowa Coalition: The Coalition will meet July 6th. Pfeffer requested additional stakeholders to represent the Iowa Great River Road.

Tourism grants and marketing – Nicole Shalla, Iowa Tourism Office, IEDA

Nicole reported on the Travel Iowa Web site analytics produced by staff in her office that are showing great visits and low bounce rate for the Iowa GRR on these pages. Nicole passed around the ads that MRPC placed in the Travel Iowa and Iowa Outdoors publications. Casey's topper marketing impact may not be trackable. MRPC could ask to confirm the date these went up and look at the analytics for that period. The numbers will be tracked through this month for the year. The Google promotions are showing results. The Iowa byways and the Great River Road are higher performers on the Travel Iowa web site. The economic impact of the River and GRR is well documented. Regan

commented that MRPC needs monthly reports and an annual summary to track the impact of marketing efforts.

IEDA Partner ad purchases for fiscal year 2016 were discussed along with changes/options available for Fiscal Year 2017.

2016	2017
\$2,600 ½ page Travel Iowa	Yes -2600
\$1,000 promo clicks	Yes-
\$ 225 Iowa Outdoors	No- Not available
\$1,350 Casey's	No
\$ 495 for ¼ page Eastern Iowa	

2017 Marketing Discussion

- Best of the Midwest \$900 140,000 circulation
- Midwest Living \$3,500 (950,000)\
- Family Package \$1600- 2 publications Kansas City
- Trip Advisor \$2000 – 147,059 impressions- Branded banners come up on Midwest search
- You Tube \$1000 – Midwest region 15/30 second commercials before videos play
- Sponsored listings - \$1,800 on the Travel Iowa.com web site. (Promo spaces on the top of the page.
- Leads- emails on Travel Iowa
- Billboards – \$800 Digital for 2 months at a time, Moline March-April John Deere and 60th /(confirm)

Brian Ritter suggested using Iowa Public Radio. They had been successful \$600 for 2 weeks to promote an event and a key feature is that you can target geographically.

Beth Peters- Trip Advisor works- personal experience.

Matt- Billboard is a quick option

Daryl- East into Illinois is a good target area.

Le Claire \$45,000 budget to market Peoria and into Chicago.

Cost are higher for Chicagoland.

Nicole administers the Travel Iowa Grant Program. Grants: Available online now. \$5,000 max Applications are due July 6th. A 25% match is required with a limit of two applications per applicant. These are often awarded for an event, advertising, a web site, a publication, training or conferences. Applicant could be a stakeholder. September 2017. These are always posted on the Travel Iowa web page. Scroll to the bottom and find this and other partnership information for tourism advocates. Commissioner Tunnicliff suggested visiting Iowa grants.gov. It contains all other state grant opportunities as well.

Break for Lunch

Reconvene

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Other Business:

Marketing Budget:

Commissioners discussed the IEDA Partner Program opportunities that should be decided soon.

Motion to commit again for ½ page in the Travel Iowa publication and ¼ page in the Eastern Iowa Tourism publication: Schweitzer, Second: Peterson

* Approved

Motion to purchase web page remarketing: Goodmann. Second: Schweitzer

*Approved

Motion to have Goodmann and Regan proceed with researching and purchasing with FY2016 marketing budget: billboards and NPR and other opportunities as a marketing working committee: Tunncliff; Second: Graber

MRPC would like to have monthly stats from the Travel Iowa website to know more about the activity. Regan will request more detailed reports from Amy Zeigler, IEDA.

Introductions:

Additional guests present for the afternoon session were introduced. Commissioner Regan provided a presentation about MRPC responsibilities and the economic impact of the Mississippi River and the Iowa Great River Road. She stated that the MRPC goal is to partner with MPO's / RPA's to support this effort and

- the interpretive centers along the Iowa GRR
- the infrastructure of the road and the signing
- better communication including constant comment, web site, Facebook

The MRPC is going to need assistance with funding or staffing to strengthen and support the Iowa GRR in terms of transportation and economic development.

Regan presented the draft models that Zach James prepared after attending the MRPC Iowa Great River Road Corridor Management Plan rollout meeting in June 2015. Each model would include local match. Discussion with the planning organizations present followed.

Discussion summary:

- The planning organizations affirmed that the Iowa GRR CMP could be integrated into their plans.
- To provide assistance in other ways, if MRPC can come forward with a finite list of what they want from the organization, the conversation could go forward within the regular mission and practices of the organizations to consider. Come forward with smaller issues we could start discussing what we can do. If you give us a list of what you would ask someone to do... we can go through the list.
- We do not do marketing. That piece is not in our scope. That is more appropriate for the Chambers and CVB's
- Transportation and economic development are more in our bailiwick. The information in the CMP can be presented to the organization boards.
- Assistance would not be for staff and operations support.

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- We may be able to help with destination signing for attractions.
- It seems the communications is the key and there needs to be a simple and consistent communication. You could have a meeting with all the CVB directors.
- On occasion, a COG will do a contract to organize and manage a project (e.g./ a trail project.
- Trails- Being aware of the GRR and the MRT for the needs toward projects that benefit both when we have more information.
- Bi-state is pushing to put up bike trail signing with free signs from IDOT and local posts and installation.
- Commissioners and attendees agreed that Interpretive Centers should be invited to attend all MRPC meetings.

Adjournment

The business meeting was adjourned