



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Agenda
Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 10, 2015
Hurstville Interpretive Center
18670 63rd St
Maquoketa, IA**

Call to order: 9:30 am

Chair Edith Pfeffer called the meeting to order.

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

Attendees:

Commissioners:

Edith Pfeffer, Chair, Dan Petersen, VC.; John Goodmann, Sec.; Jane Regan, Treas.; Lori Wallace, Marvin Graber, Jay Schweitzer. Scott Tunnicliff arrived later

Tech Members:

Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program

Guests:

Craig Markley, Office of Systems Planning

Rod Marlatt, Chair, Byways of Iowa Foundation

Jessica Rilling, Chair, Byways of Iowa Coalition

Jean Peiton, City of Ft. Madison

Cody Barnes, News Director, KMAQ Radio

Welcome and Announcements:

Pfeffer introduced new Commissioner Marvin Graber. Introductions followed.

Byways of Iowa Coalition and Byways of Iowa Foundation and Funding

Jessica Rilling – BIC Mission to protect.. Officers: Jessica, Paul, Jan G

Rob Marlatt – BIF and Art grant example

Discussion:

Explain the financial constraints. Commissioner commitments and time limits

Byways of Iowa Foundation membership and BIC agreement.

Table decision to the afternoon business session. Moved: Reagan, Second: Goodman

Business:

Minutes –

Moved to accept July 7, 2015 minutes as distributed: Petersen; Second: Regan

*Approved.

Treasurer reports

Jane Regan reported on the MRPC Foundation costs for the local match on the Great River Road Corridor Management Plan and foundation legal fees.

Moved to accept MRPC Foundation as distributed and read, and pay the final legal fees leaving a balance of \$563.70: Schweitzer Second: Goodmann

*Approved.

Mary Stahlhut Reported the MRPC DOT appropriation budget balance at \$39, 854.20.

Motion to accept MRPC DOT report as distributed: Regan Second: Petersen

*Approved.

Iowa Byways Sustainability Project:

Edith reported that she sent commissioners the notes from the latest Byways call. Monthly conference calls and quarterly training meetings are conducted with the eleven Iowa Byways managers and other program participants. The GRR is not part of the contract but is entitled to be fully informed and participate in the project's collaboration among byways through the shared projects and resources the project produces. Edith has participated in the calls and trainings in Ames.

The group now shares a "Cloud" file of resources. Submit new overlook sites
New shared web site with templates
Review the minutes from the sustainability

10-State MRPC Reports- Edith Pfeffer

- Annual reports are due in August.
- MRPC Annual Meeting is October 6-8 in New Orleans, Louisiana.
 - Hotel reservations should be made ASAP. Travel requests due back to Peggy at DOT by September 4, 2015.
- Semiannual MRPC meeting April 27-29, 2016, La Crosse, Wis.
- Annual MRPC meeting Sept. 14-16, 2016, Natchez, Miss.
- Semiannual MRPC may be held in Iowa in spring 2017

Committee and Project Reports

National Geographic Geo-Tourism

Pfeffer reported that local meetings have been started with participation by CVB, Conservation etc. Commissioners are to contact interpretive centers and encourage them to go to the site to make entries. <http://mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com/>. Go to the bottom of the page and click on "nominate a place" in the black box at the bottom. All web entries are reviewed before being accepted. Jean Peiten from Ft. Madison CVB reported on the activity and delays. Edith reported that the web site capacity should expand.

Culture and Heritage Committee: Edith Pfeffer

- Annual update worksheets for the interpretive centers in your county need to be completed, signed by the commissioner and turned in.
- New interpretive center nominations are due. Forms are online. Jane has Motor Mill between Elkader and Guttenberg to submit. Edith reported Clinton is working on a new one as well.

Communications and Marketing:

"Drive the Great River Road" materials are now available online for use from MRPC office in Wisconsin. (Commissioners- check your email from Edith.) Press release, proclamations etc. are provided. Commissioners are encouraged to contact their local jurisdictions. Each interpretive center will receive some key tags and can promote in their local media. Jane Regan gave an example of using a local radio program. National will have an online sweepstakes for a \$500 gift card. Edith forwarded the information to CVB's and Shawna Lode. This afternoon the discussion for marketing will include this. Edith may request a Governor's proclamation. New maps are produced every two years and will be available at the La Crosse meeting after a redesign. The GRR logo policy is under review.

Jane reported that Iowa has been billed \$400 for the shipping cost of 10-state maps from the printer in Wisconsin. It was moved to pay this cost from the marketing budget line: Goodmann, Second: Schweitzer

*Approved

No Reports: Transportation, Agriculture, Executive Board

2017 Budget Discussion

Craig Markley, Office of Systems Planning, explained the process that works from Systems Planning, through the Planning and Model Division up to DOT Director Trombino. It is then submitted with other DOT budgets to the Iowa Department of Management, then the Governor's office and then the Legislature. The appropriation comes from the Road Use Tax Fund and has been at \$40,000 since (2004 or 2005).

A draft budget request letter for DOT was prepared by Pfeffer, Regan and Goodmann. Edith and Jane led commissioners through the content providing background and budget line item proposals. A number of revisions were discussed.

Revise the proposal for budget as discussed and submit to DOT this week.
Moved Regan and Second Goodmann.

*Approved.

2016 Current Budget Discussion

Table this budget until after the afternoon Marketing Workshop this afternoon.

Move Regan. Second Goodmann.

*Passed

Networking Lunch – Historic Squiers Mansion

Afternoon Session

Call to Order – Hurstville Interpretive Center

Chair Edith Pfeffer called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

Roll call was taken with seven of the eight member 2016 roster present.

Attendees:

Commissioners: Edith Pfeffer, Lori Wallace, Jane Regan, Dan Petersen, Jay Schweitzer, Scott Tunnicliff, Marvin Graber

Tech Members: Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program
Shawna Lode, Iowa Tourism Office

Guests : Jean Payton, Ft. Madison
Regina Lehman, Fulton Illinois
Cody Barnes, News Director KMAQ Radio

Travel Iowa Updates – Shawna Lode

2017 Iowa Travel Guide Development

Shawna asked commissioners to contact their key local people to input tourism data. Be sure local stakeholders go to the Travel Iowa website and bring all their local attractions and records up to date. It is imperative that local concerns populate their own data to be best represented in the statewide guide. They must do this in the next week. Contact your key local people to input. If a record has not been touched for 18 months, it will be de-activated. The content for the 2017 Iowa Travel Guide is created from the online information. August 21 will “dump” the data to move into the print version.

www.IowaGreatRiverRoad.com Report

Travel Iowa staff have tracked the web activity for this site since adopting the dormant web content. It is performing at or above the standards expected/ set by the web team.

- 5,070 user sessions.
- 72% were new users.
- Bounce rate is only 34%. (Bounce rates can be as high as 90%... goal is 50%.)
- Visiting 2.94 minutes per visitor. Generally goal is 2.5 minutes.
- Travel Iowa has seen traffic grow from 1 million to 1.5 million in a year.
- Highest Users on Travel Iowa are women 55-65.
- Travel Iowa buys search engine marketing words that are seasonally changed including scenic drive, fall colors and other GRR assisting terms.

Marketing Workshop - Shawna Lode, Iowa Tourism Office

Details are in a separate report

Marketing Purchases

After discussion, the MRPC agreed to make these five marketing purchases through the Travel Iowa partnership marketing program:

- Travel Iowa- remarketing \$1,000 – reminders guaranteed 50,000 impressions and 1,000 clicks Jan – March
- Iowa Travel Guide \$2650 ½ page.
- Casey's General Store Out of Home \$1350 - 10 gas pump toppers- you choose the stores (April- June)
- Iowa Outdoors \$225
- Eastern Iowa Tourism ¼ page once a year- \$495

Moved: Petersen Second: Graber

*Approved

Action required:

Travel Iowa – Art work due Nov. 4th

EITA – Art due September 30, 2015

Wallace and Regan will work on draft ad content and design services. Stahlhut will ask about DOT resources.

Other Business

Committee Assignments

- Culture and Heritage Committee:
Edith Pfeffer, Martin Graber, Scott Tunnicliff, Shawna Lode
- Communications and Marketing:
Jane Regan, Lori Wallace
Wednesday at 9AM call for this committee.
- Transportation
John Goodmann, Mary Stahlhut, Ron Diennes
- Environmental, Recreational, Agriculture
Jay Schweitzer, Dan Petersen, Margo Underwood

The 10-state committee conference call number and links to committee records can be accessed from this site: <http://mrpcmembers.com/>

Conference Call Information:

Phone: 916-233-0790 Participant Pin: 879564#
Toll Free: 888-861-1255

Byways of Iowa – Coalition Agreement and Foundation annual membership fee.

Payment of the \$500 annual membership fees to the Byways of Iowa Foundation and signing the Byways of Iowa Coalition agreement was moved: Petersen; Second: Regan

Discussion:

Petersen stated that it is important for the Iowa Great River Road Byway to be a team player with the other 10 Iowa Byways. Benefits of the affiliation were discussed- based on the discussion earlier in the day with BIF and BIC representatives. The BIF affiliation is intended to promote byway financial support to benefit Iowa Byways efforts statewide. BIC is another way to improve communications and to support all the byways in collaboration and replication of good practices from the strengths and experience available among the byways managers and their local boards. Signed agreements should be sent to Jessica Rilling by August 31st, 2015.

*Approved

Meeting Dates

September – Executive team to meet in DSM with Governor or his designee

October – Maison Dupuy Hotel, New Orleans, Thursday, October 8th 7 AM

November – Meet and invite legislators Monday, 9th- Muscatine- Dan 9:30

Project Updates: Mary Stahlhut

- GRR Signing Project- Commissioners can help with local jurisdiction agreements later in the process. Letting November and construction 2016.
- Lansing- Authorized for letting
- Marquette- Construction halted for endangered Mussel assessment
- Bee Branch in Dubuque- MRT and overlook project are in line for September and November lettings.
- MRT in Riverdale- nearly complete but on hold for utilities conflicts
- Louisa MRT- In line for letting August 18, 2015
- Louisa project archeological report and progress on hold for potential redesign.

Adjournment

The business meeting was adjourned at 3:15

Marketing Workshop- Shawna Lode- Facilitator

Preparation Questions were sent to commissioners in advance:

1. Who is the target audience?
 - a. Primary:
 - b. Secondary: (if applicable)
2. What is the target market?
3. What are the goals?
4. How will they be measured?
5. What is the desired action? Click? To web? To social? Like? Call?
6. What is the message?
7. How is it best delivered? Advertising? Social media? Blog? Media relations?
8. What is the budget?

Who is the primary target audience?

Boomer Leisure travelers (women 55-65 largest demographic)

Where are the travelers drawn from?

Regional draw: from the west I-29 through Des Moines and East into Illinois to Chicago.

Other target areas? Minneapolis, Probably not south into Missouri

Goals: What do you want people to do in response to the ad?

Action step... link to GRR web site and Phone for product

- www.lowaGreatRiverRoad.com
- 800- 345-IOWA for print mailings. (Travel Iowa and DOT coordinate.)

Message: What are you selling?

The river, Midwest welcome/ nice people, History (US move west and ancient) ,
Outdoor, the river, scenery, communities with unique culture, recreation, National byway,
3rd most popular global destination

Draft summary of message:

The Iowa GRR is the world's third most sought after river destination. This nationally recognized (designated) scenic byway is home to charming riverfront communities rooted in history, with abundant wildlife encounters, and recreation.

What is the best delivery method for this message?

Discussion: Print, online, billboards, radio/TV?

Magazines with related content, web, billboards, targeted radio/TV

Travel Iowa Partnership Program

Wait listed:

- Preservation Magazine \$900
- Minneapolis Star Tribune \$600

Ready			
Travel Iowa- Web site	Remarketing reminders guaranteed 50,000 impressions- and 1,000 clicks Jan - March		\$ 1,000
Casey's General Store	Out of Home - 10 gas pump- toppers. you choose the stores (April- June)		\$ 2,650
Iowa Travel Guide	½ page ad		\$ 1,350
Iowa Outdoors	DNR Magazine ad		\$ 225
Eastern Iowa Tourism	¼ page once a year		\$ 495
Midwest Living Magazine			\$ 3,450
"O" Oprah magazine			\$ 2,300

Other discussion:

- The GRR has seasons outside the prime Iowa tourism primary target ad dates. March – May.. Early Spring Eagle watching around March and a fall push for GRR is appropriate.
- Reserve balance of marketing funds for graphic development and Fall promotion.
- Consider motorcycle community promotions.
- Jane: local radio "103.5" program buy. \$103.50 ad cost and tag words. Trivia about GRR on the air all week with a Friday prize of \$103.50.

Other Opportunities

Constant Contact

MRPC will soon have access to the GRR CMP Constant Contact account. DOT can manage the renewal from the MRPC budget, but using it will be up to MRPC. Newsletters can be distributed through this and stakeholder contacts from the CMP need to be maintained.

FaceBook

https://www.facebook.com/IowaGreatRiverRoad?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

MRPC also has a GRR Facebook page but management is not in place and postings have been rare. A valid FB presence requires regular postings.

The last three posts are:

- DOT New web page for the 2015CMP,
- Newsletter release on CMP from Constant Contact,
- Notice about the new Iowa Great River Road byway signs coming in 2016.

The last post before that was May 2014.