



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission Agenda
Meeting Minutes
Monday, Nov. 9, 2015
United Way
208 W. 2nd St.
Muscatine, IA**

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.; Martin Graber, Lisa Walsh, Scott Tunnicliff, Jay Schweitzer.

Tech Members: Mary Stahlhut, Iowa DOT Byways Program

Welcome and Announcements:

Business:

Minutes –

October meeting minutes as distributed were reviewed.

Motion to accept minutes as distributed and read: Graber, Second: Walsh

*Approved.

Treasurer reports

Jane Regan reported the MRPC Foundation balance is \$653.29. Additional donations for a gift to the Driftless Area Visitor Center have been received. Reported total dollars and funds to be forwarded in the name of the Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

Motion to accept MRPC Foundation balance and activity as described: Peterson
Second: Walsh. *Approved.

Jane reported outstanding bills:

Kane, Norby & Reddick, P.C. for filing 5013C status is fully filed and current. Moved to approve: Peterson, Second: Walsh

Mary Stahlhut Reported the MRPC DOT appropriation budget balance at \$32,220.

Motion to accept MRPC DOT report as distributed: Peterson Second: Graber

*Approved.

Reports of pending expenses.

Motion to pay a "Drive the GRR" radio promotion: Peterson, Second: Walsh.

*Approved.

Motion to pay the Eastern Iowa Tourism annual dues: Regan Second: Tunnicliff.

*Approved.

Other Reports

Commissioner Regan reported on the successful groundbreaking Tuesday, November 3rd at the Great River Road Driftless Area Interpretive Center in Lansing:



“Conservation Director Jim Janett welcomed a crowd of approximately 80 people to the groundbreaking ceremony for the Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center to be constructed just south of Lansing on the Columbus Bridge property along the Great River Road. The Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center, a three-story, 10,000 square foot building situated between Village Creek and Columbus Road, will offer experiences and exhibits reflecting the cultural, recreational, environmental and historical significance of the Driftless Area, which encompasses northeast Iowa, southwest Wisconsin, southeast Minnesota and portions of northwest Illinois.”

<https://www.waukonstandard.com/articles/2015/11/11/groundbreaking-ceremony-held-driftless-area-education-and-visitor-center-project>

Economic Impact Report – Jane Regan

Regan reported the Domestic Travel Impact on the 10 Mississippi River Counties. The impact is staggering and it will be helpful for legislators and the CAT (Community Attraction and Tourism Grant (CAT Grant.) Economic Authority grant application for the Driftless. The Mississippi River is the third most sought-after destination in the world.

2015 MRPC Annual Meeting Reports in New Orleans

Pfeffer reported that the Annual MRPC meeting was held October 6-8 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Reports from the event are on the National Web site. The Motor Mills site in Elkader and Skypton were accepted as a new GRR interpretive center. Financial discussions have been refreshed on what funds should be used and what reasons there may be for keeping unutilized funds. The next MRPC meetings are scheduled:

- Semiannual MRPC meeting April 27-29, 2016, La Crosse, Wis.
- Annual MRPC meeting Sept. 14-16, 2016, Natchez, Miss.

Committee Reports: <http://mrpcmembers.com/>

Culture and Heritage Committee: Edith Pfeffer

Edith reported the minutes are online and they have requested a budget.

Edith also reminded commissioners to complete the interpretive center surveys and return them to her as soon as possible.

Communications and Marketing: Jane Regan

2016 is the year of birding, biking and driving. Continue to have your local interpretive centers make their entries online. Jane will email the link to commissioners

AG- Jay requested that each commissioner provide natural and agricultural events and sites for national to do. Email your nominations to Jay. The Drive the Great River Road campaign resulted in an Iowa couple winning the sweepstakes. Updates for the web.

New decals that are the more distinctive dark green. Requesting that they contact \$15,000 budget request for marketing activities this year. Contact Meredith about a travel book. Casey's pump-toppers.

Environment, Recreation & Agriculture (ERA): Graber and Peterson:

The committee proposed to national to have a documentary film developed. Active committee including a white paper to better discuss the impact of these resources and the opportunities ahead.

Transportation: Walsh and Stahlhut

The committee is worked through the new Strategic Plan to prioritize implementation elements this committee should address, including better records of the Infrastructure needs along the route. The first step will be to compile a GIS records from all the states. The other states are interested in how Iowa is planning to use GIS to inventory and coordinate signing installation on the Iowa GRR in 2016.

General

Edith encouraged all commissioners to read the annual meeting report. Nat. Geo. GeoTourism project – Meetings / workshops to be held in MN week of the 26th -30th. Bob M. will continue to be involved and plans on attending the MRCC meeting in NOLA on Nov. 17-18. There was consensus that all of the committee and states should be encouraged to contact their unique Agri-Tourism (and Rec.) sites and encourage them to attend a NG workshop and/or submit their nomination in for inclusion on the site.

All committees were asked to discuss the Mississippi River Train (MRT) organization's request to join with MRPC. Committees mostly agreed that this is not something to rush into.

Great River Road Logo

Edith reported that Iowa DOT is confirming all approved uses of the State logos and has asked MRPC to provide a letter to document permissions. Edith has prepared a letter for MRPC to approve. Moved to approve DOT's limited use of the GRR logo and Edith's letter. Regan Second: Tunncliff

*Approved

Other Actions

Support the 2018 Annual Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiatives (MRCTI) in the Quad Cities Moved Dan, Second Martin

*Approved

MRPC participation with a booth in the Henry Farnum Dinner March 18th. Members will pay their own tickets. Edith will coordinate filling a table. Moved Regan, Second Walsh

*Approved

Review of Workshop CMP Implementation priorities from the August meeting.

Budget request of \$301,435 was forwarded through DOT and shared with Gov. Branstad.

Jane History of contributions \$2/ capita for economic development. Commissioners reported on their progress in delivering CMP Materials and making presentations to local stakeholders.

Members discussed this would include the county supervisors, city councils and other entities.

Iowa DOT Report

Mary provided a printed list of the National Scenic Byways grant projects still underway on the Iowa GRR.

Meeting with the Governor

Jane and Edith reported on their visit with Governor Branstad. Discussed the economic impact and opportunities on the Great River Road. Reported on the Viking Cruise Line. 55 minutes and discussion of commission activities. Governor was surprised with the implementation Continue to discuss with staff for funding. Staff person will follow up about sources. CMAQ funds.

Followed up with DOT and MRPC would not qualify. Governor will re-assign someone from parks.

Assignments:

Edith reminded commissioners that Interpretive Center visits are needed for all in order to get the survey completed and turned in. Flash drive distribution and training on the sites should be accomplished. Contact Edith with any questions or more flash drives.

Future Commission Meetings

2nd Mondays

February 8th next meeting in Commanche on East 15th near Bishop's house.

Dec 1 or 3 Jane and Edith will meet with a Governor's. Staffer

Adjournment

The business meeting was adjourned

Networking Lunch

Informal Meeting with Stakeholder Legislators

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Pfeffer welcomed all attendees and described the reasons for the meeting, including the Iowa GRR 2015 Corridor Management Plan and Implementation and collaboration expectations for the GRR communities.

Guests

- Tom Sands
- Dave Heaton- Lee, Henry, Washington and Jefferson (Mt. Pleasant)
- Norman Mumson #97 Clinton and
- Gary Carlson- Rural Muscatine, Fruitland
- Cindy Winkler – Davenport Scott County
- Mary Wiefe- #98 Clinton and NE Clinton Co.
- Rita Hart – Clinton, n. rural Scott

MRPC Presentation to Invited Guests

Edith Pfeffer and Jane Regan Presented information in the printed materials shared.

Location: The place is the Great River Road. East Coast of Iowa. Introduction via the Iowa Byways Travel Guide. West Coast Loess Hills and Iowa Great River Road national scenic byways. With 328 miles of GRR along the Mississippi River, Iowa is the only state with 2 national byways.

MRPC Founding

In 1939 the president commissioned the Secretary of the Interior to establish the 10-state Great River Road and directed states to send appointees to the 10-state MRPC. Jane explained the 2 annual meetings and additional. \$40,000 annual budget: \$15,000 dues from Iowa for every year. Each commissioner serves on a committee at the national level.

Iowa GRR Corridor Management Plan

MRPC lead the effort to complete the GRR CMP and now as individuals have taken the report to each county, conservation and city in their county. CMP described including GIS, maps and sign inventory and the six intrinsic values located items. CMP covers the corridor as a county-wide corridor. Jane highlighted the visitor and resident survey results as an illustration of the draw of the Mississippi River and related historic and national. More maps. More restrooms, better direct signs.

Resources

Iowa Tear sheets, 10-state maps.

Handouts

GRR Economic Impact Study sheet with the GRR county facts pulled out. Using the Economic development approach- attributing dollars spent, employees in travel industry etc. Scott County is one of the largest river counties and ranks #3 in the state. Most remarkable is the impact of visitors in the smaller population counties. Allamakee is #1 in the state in per capita of travel-related income. These numbers illustrate the huge impact of the Mississippi River on visitors. 2 countries over \$4 and Allamakee \$40 million.

The Challenge

Many local organizations on the river fail to recognize the Mississippi River and its influence. Education tool: Our Mississippi River. Example Maiden Voyage Excursions Viking cruise ships have committed to building a new 300 capacity ship per year to ply the Mississippi River from New Orleans to St. Paul. National Geographic for a new geo-tourism web site. Iowa GRR, www.experiencemississippiriver.com and nat geo. Preserve, promote, protect

Budget

The Iowa GRR is the only byway that does not have an RC&D supporting it. Jane shared the budget letter sent to Craig Markley, Office of Systems Planning, Iowa DOT. Jane and Edith visited with Governor Branstad, requesting a higher appropriation. This is a beginning. No one has come before.

Request

This Iowa MRPC is asking for your help in how to implement this CMP. (Refer to the CMP, P 67- 68 description of support services needed.)

Q&A

- Question: what are the other byway budgets? Rep Dale
- What was the Governor's response?
He was surprised about the Viking Cruises and now the counties are needing to build new dock facilities. US Dept of Commerce grant of <\$200,000 for the Japanese traveler APP. The request is already in for a Chinese version.
- Viking cruise impact after the ships, there is a bounce return of interested travelers. MRPC doesn't feel the river communities are ready. Each city is negotiating their own deal.
- Rita Hart : Carrie with Eastern Iowa Tourism- are they collecting data? Yes.
- Dave Heaton - Who's addressing the boats and the new docks. American Queen
- Dave Heaton - Montrose broken riverfront link. Pursuing federal funds should be not be an issue. State and federal funds should be available. Senator Grassley's staff has been contacted.
- Kurt Hanlon with a family member previously on the Clinton Admin. Lives near the Montrose washout.
- Mary Wiefe- May need discussion related to the proposed flat tax on the Governor's agenda.
- Dave Heaton Strategy? DH where will you go for the funding? Economic development? That should be DOT.
- MS asserted that in the DOT Scenic Byways Program role by statute DOT duties do not include economic development and tourism.

- Appropriation Committee?.
- Cindy Winkler -Schedule a meeting and invite the key legislators on a Monday?
 - 29 legislators represent the GRR.
 - Present to the Transportation Committee? Joint Transportation budget sub Committee. Or another
 - Meet with the Governor's liaison for the committee you need.
- Muscatine will have a Chinese interpretive Center in Muscatine.