



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Meeting, 10:00 a.m. April 12, 2024
Minutes

Chairman Martin Graber called the meeting to order.

Present: Lisa Walsh, Paul Carroll, Paula Mayer, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Jim Janett, Roger Thomas, Katie Hammond, and Lesley Webster

Others Present: Emily Whaley, DOT; Kevin Firnstahl; Jason Duba Dubuque Economic Development; Jennifer Tiggis Mines of Spain; Kurt Strand, Dubuque Historical Society; and the Museum; and Ann Carroll

Geiger introduced Firnstahl who acted as host and arranged for the meeting. He is the former clerk at the City of Dubuque, and since retirement he is active in organizations such as Dubuque's international sister city relationships, theater, economic development, and he hosts and gives tours for the Viking cruises. Firnstahl has applied for a position on the commission.

Tiggis said she is the president of the Mines and is a volunteer. The interpretive center was doubled in size in 2010. She volunteers one day a week. It was originally a DNR project, they stepped away and came back, and they have a 28E agreement with the Bellevue organization. The Mines gets \$5,000 annually. They are updating information and focusing more on Native Americans. It is slow because they are checking to be sure everything is being done correctly. The friends group has about 200 members and has a small membership fee to support the budget.

Strand gave a history of the Museum, its growth and how it has grown. They have 50 full time and 60 part-time employees. About 200,000 visitors visit a year. The museum focuses on the river history, Dubuque history, and conservation. There are 900 people from the Marshall Islands who are moving here because their lands are disappearing. 70-80% of Viking cruise passengers visit while docked. Lots of school groups visit. The museum has approximately 20,000 species and 2,000 artifacts. They work with the Great Plains AEA to help with the museum's all-inclusive opportunity for everyone.

Duba told about the City of Dubuque. He thanked the last fall letter of support which helped get the award for funding. It is currently working on a new bike path, some of which is on the GRR.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Walsh to approve the minutes of the January 26th meeting, seconded by Mayer and the motion carried. Motion by Mayer to approve the minutes of the March 1st meeting, seconded by Walsh and motion carried



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Approval of Treasurer's report

Motion by Carroll to approve the Treasurers Report, seconded by Walsh and the motion carried.

Discussion of budgets and ideas for FY '25 projects

Graber said the next annual meeting will be in Winona MN.

Mayer said there are \$250 Spotify ads which we might be able to use. She is investigating and talking with PBS for use of their publicity.

Walsh talked about Redbud and possible use of their shirts during RAGBRAI for publicity. She said she had good results with them for the Grant publicity. Geiger suggested using the All American Road logo on them to raise awareness. She said many people travel to visit the All American Roads. U.S. citizens look at California's Big Sur and the Appalachian Trail, but international Visitors come to the Great River Road. Firnstahl agreed. She suggested putting information things in camp grounds and airports. Geiger said maybe we could advertise places to touch the river. Visitors don't necessarily just want to look.

Walsh said we need to meet individually with the ICenters. Graber suggested having a zoom meeting for part of a quarterly meeting for training for ICenters in the area, dividing the state into thirds which is the logical division.

Carroll suggested getting some more programs for home-schooling.

Geiger said the Corps printed a large book it distributed to schools which were on slick paper with tearout sheets which could be copied and replaced for reuse. The book taught about the river. She said it would be nice if we could get it done again. Both Mayer and Geiger have a copy. Graber said he thinks it is still done and will ask.

Chairman's report

Graber said the national is focusing on the annual meeting and looking for sponsorships. He also said this upcoming week the legislature will be discussing boards and commissions.

National Committee Reports

Marketing Committee No report

Transportation No report

Environment, Recreation and Agriculture No report

Heritage and Culture No report

Mayer said there are no current minutes on the website for any of the committees.

Next meeting June 14 in Muscatine.

Adjourn for Foundation meeting