



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Meeting, 10:00 a.m. January 31, 2025  
Connection Bank 636 Avenue G  
Ft. Madison, Iowa**

Vice-Chair Lisa Walsh called the meeting to order

Present: Roger Thomas; Ann Geiger; and Katie Hammond, and Paula Mayer by phone

Others Present: Kevin Firstahl; Chi Easton, Ft. Madison Convention and Tourism; and Kirk Bandenberger, Keokuk Convention and Tourism

Welcome and introductions

Easton, said the Fort is obsolete and in disrepair and the city wants to move the location to the tourism bureau at the Santa Fe tracks for approximately two years while they rebuild. The Fort Madison Santa Fe Depot Complex is home to the historic 1898 CB&Q Depot and the 1910 Santa Fe Depot, which houses the North Lee County Historical Society. It also serves as the Fort Madison Amtrak Station, a stop along the Southwest Chief route from Chicago to Los Angeles. Geiger said she would check with the National Office to see if there would be any opposition to the move. Easton said they are also working with Keokuk and three Illinois counties to develop the "Lake Cooper Loop" which is a 50 mile radius as a tourism destination

Bandenberger said Keokuk, as a whole, is having a development period. He is also working on the "Lake Cooper Loop" which will help with visitors. The Verity is doing very well and has added more retail. It is staffed from April to October from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It gets a fair amount of visitors but the location is kind of out of the way. Geiger said the National organization is having discussions regarding wayfinding signs for some less obvious locations. The Verity is going to be repainted both inside and outside. He said they have a grant to paint the paddlewheel. They are also going to work on signage for the river side to attract passing boaters.

Motion to approve of October 18, 2024 minutes by Thomas with a second by Mayer and the motion carried.

Motion to approve the Expense Report by Geiger with a second by Mayer and the motion carried.

Discuss funding for upcoming year. Mayer said the July 24, 2024 approved a NTE of \$8,000 for 20,000 passports. The approval was never acted on. She will reactivate the bid.

The Commission as a whole agreed to have a called meeting to discuss the remaining budget for this fiscal year.



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Thomas said he was recently at a meeting and learned influencers are the new advertisers. He suggested looking at using influencers instead of the radio ads. Geiger suggested continuing to use the radio ads because they have been working and suggested using one radio company this year instead of two. She said IHeart covers a larger area. The sticking point would be the voice-overs which would have to be redone. Mayer said to look at IHeart for streaming. She said they could do voice-overs. She suggested calling them with the Commission's interests and have them give ideas and a price. Geiger and Mayer will pursue and will have results at the called meeting.

Motion to approve \$150.00 to print MRPC historical newspaper documents by Mayer with a second by Geiger and the motion carried.

Tour of temporary Ft. Madison potential ICenter venue was postponed.

Discussion regarding additional metal signs with from National Office. Walsh said the DOT will mail plots of Iowa. Mayer said all the information was in the application for the All American Road. Walsh will talk with the Transportation Committee look at the All American Road apps because longitude and latitude are listed there. Fernstahl asked about the parcels and where legally can the ICenters put signs.

Verify commissioner contact information with Centers. Geiger said she saw on television the Putnam Museum had a new director and called for a meeting but has had no response.

Young Museum: Fernstahl said articles kept saying talk to town council and George Dougherty. Walsh talked with Michelle Beck from Ernst's office to see if she can get information on getting to the board. More information to come at another meeting.

Chairman's report - None

Recap of Symposium Walsh attended- postponed

National committee appointments and Reports

*Marketing Committee* - None

*Transportation* - the committee is discussing wayfinding signs for the more difficult to find locations.

*Environment, Recreation and Agriculture* - None



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*Heritage and Culture* - Along with Transportation, it wants to review signage for directions to various ICenters. Also, it wants to know who is participating in America 250. Geiger said she asked who would pay for the signs. There was no response. In an attempt to have more interaction with the ICenters, there is discussion of having two identical zoom meetings for ICenters at different times this spring.

Geiger said Adam Long will be coming to Davenport to pick up the signs for the ICenters in Arkansas which have been in storage. Geiger will help coordinate.

Next regular meeting date to be set at call in meeting.