



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
10:00 a.m. July 19, 2021
Sawmill Museum,
2231 Grant St, Clinton, Iowa 52732

MRPC Call to order and roll call

The meeting was called to order by Martin, Graber, Chair.

Present: Martin Graber, Chair; Lisa Walsh, Vice-Chair; Paula Meyer; Jim Janett, Paul Carroll, Leslie Webster; Jared McGovern; Jane Regan, and Ann Geiger

Others: Emily Whaley, DOT; Matt Parbs, Clinton Sawmill Leslie Klipsch, Putnam Museum; Jim Elias, Pike Project; Brian Ritter, Nahant Marsh; LuAnn Reinders, Amy Ziegler

Welcome and introductions

Approval of April 19, 2021 and May 4, 2021 Minutes

Janett moved to approve the minutes of April 19 and May 4, 2021 meetings. Meyer seconded the motion and it carried.

Review and approval of Treasurer's report

Carroll, moved to amend the budget report to \$35,963.10. Seconded by Walsh. Meyer moved to approve the amended report. Carroll seconded the motion and it carried.

Budget discussion

Byways Foundation Membership is due. Regan said the MRPC basically gave them a donation, because it is not an Iowa byway, per se. Meyer suggested paying the \$250 membership. Meyer moved to pay the Iowa Byway Foundation dues. Walsh seconded and the motion carried.

Janett moved to budget \$4,500 for national meetings. Meyer seconded the motion and it carried.

National and Committee Reports

Marketing Committee. No Report. Changing away from monthly meetings.

Transportation. Helped direct how committee reports are to be housed on web. Committee is co-chaired. It was instrumental in speakers for last spring's meeting and helping with fall meeting. Regan asked about signage for AAR, and it was discussed that possible addition to existing GGR signs and that would be at the DOT's expense.

Environment, Recreation and Agriculture. No report.



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Heritage and Culture. Reviewing the ICenters and how they relate to the GRR. Meetings are changing from annual or bi-annual meetings to every two months. Next one scheduled for the end of the month.

Chairman's Report

Annual meeting will be October 5, virtually. Martin said any award nominations are due in September. He also said the road to Montrose north of Ft. Madison was washed out, but it has one lane open now. He said the road may wash out again, but for now it is open.

Election of Officers

Walsh moved to approve the existing slate. Meyer seconded the motion and it carried. Meyer moved to appoint Carroll as treasurer. Webster seconded the motion and it carried.

Comments from Interpretive Centers and Others:

Lansing – Janett said the center was open and said the number of visitors coming down the river is increasing and they have gotten visitors from 37-38 countries and all 50 states.

Nahant - The Center was closed until May 1st except for small groups and special events. The Center is discussing expanding its hours. Will be building another building and expanding walking and bike trails. Seeing more and more bikers. They have acquired another piece of land and are cleaning it up now. The piece will allow them to hook up to the MRT along the river. Signing is very important and when the sign went up on I-280 it made a huge difference. Have 10 research interns at the moment.

National Aquarium – The Aquarium hosted the first excursion vessels last week. It just opened a new 9,000 square foot exhibition building. It has a working a belt-driven machine shop. They are overseeing a greenhouse and working with mussel reproduction.

Sawmill - Parbs said the Sawmill has 10th anniversary in October and will have blacksmiths, woodcrafts, chainsaw artists and more. GRR and Lincoln traffic is increasing, and they are working with local firefighters to create an exhibit on the history of fire in Clinton.

Putnam – Klipsch said the museum is open now and is doing great. It opened in May and traffic is increasing. The riverboats have started their cruises which brings visitors. There are over 1,000 kids signed up for camp. he giant screen movie opened with limited capacity. The director has redone the floor plan and is looking for a way to make some of the 240,000 archived items in some way more accessible.

Pinecreek Gristmill just reopened. Carroll said the Button Museum is still transitioning with new staff. Going through a formal strategic plan by fall. Fairport Fish Hatchery is revived.



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The history of the hatchery is to be reviewed and determined how to best be presented. 1st USDA facility west of the Mississippi to study the mussels. Excelon is funding a reestablishment of mussels.

Mines of Spain is undergoing transition and may be run by the city from this time forward and will be starting from scratch.

Hurstville's numbers are coming up and the Eco Tourism Center in Camanche has a new indoor shooting range in the basement which just started up.

Walsh said the Burlington center is still on limited hours.

Toolesboro is reporting lots of visitors, according to Geiger, and they have had positive comments about the facility and the visitors are taking lots of information.

National committee appointments

Marketing – Meyer and Webster

Environment, Recreation and Agriculture (ERA) – Carroll

Culture and Heritage - Graber, Geiger, Janett

Transportation – Walsh

Iowa ByWays – Webster, Meyer

Tourism Department – Reinders introduced Ziegler to the Commission and said the Scenic Byways is offering passports for specific activities. Gift cards were offered to help build a road trip and were gone in about 2 days.

Update on Activities

There is no access to the Young House. Walsh said the national office is sending a note to the board of directors to inquire about acquiring the original documents and digitizing them for public use. Geiger said she is very concerned about the material which is sitting in open archive boxes on the floor of the building. Deterioration is inevitable and the manager has denied any attempts to copy the material. Inquiries with legal counsel indicated it could take a year to make any progress. Graber said he would like to see the national office move to the site. The Commission discussed the possibility of All American Road funding to help preserve the material. McGovern said there is money coming to the Governor's office which might be available for some projects. Walsh talked about possible funds coming through Scenic America.

The Cascade Bridge in Burlington is being discussed by a new city manager who may be coming up with new ideas. Still no movement.



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Zebulon Pike project Jim Elias. Lewis and Clark historically stole the publicity. Each of the ICenters have some relation to Pike. The concept is to use Pike in his own words as to what he saw as he came up river. The project would be used for radio, billboards, etc. using his journals for the verbiage. Should have it ready for next tourism season. Webster said it sounds good to link all the interpretive centers. McGovern thought the time frame was too aggressive for the river museum.

Geiger asked if this program is something that can be rolled out slowly working its way up river. Geiger moved to approve NTE \$3,000 to have Elias begin to put together a program to roll out the project for the Pike project for further discussion at the Foundation meeting. Seconded by Weber. Motion carried. Geiger moved to amend the motion to \$1,500. Janett seconded the motion and it carried.

Regan said some of the counties allow UTV's to travel the highway and are very busy. She also said the campgrounds and river parking areas are full of vehicles.

Increasing public awareness

Meyer took over the Facebook page and tried to tag on sites like Ragbrai and cross post and tag on Facebook. She wants to keep the same facebook page and add banners to make people aware of other things. She is also tagging national. She is going to request another 2000 passports be printed. Graber asked if something can be added to note the All American Road designation. Maybe a small sign on the GRR logo. Meyer said she would look into it. Webster and McGovern asked for a couple of changes and Meyer will look into it.

The radio ads once again were very effective. Geiger said she heard from some of the Wisconsin members they hear them several times a day.

Iowa Great River Road domain is owned until November 1 and will need to be purchased. The exact annual price needs to be determined. Meyer moved to continue to the Iowa Great River Road and domain name and move to MRPC budget. Webster seconded the motion and it carried.

Future meeting schedule will be October 18. The site to be announced.

Adjourn for Foundation meeting