



**Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Meeting, 10:00 a.m January 20, 2023
Nahant Marsh 422 Wapello Ave
Phone: 563-336-3370**

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Martin Graber

Present: Lisa Walsh, Jim Janett, Roger Thomas, Jane Regan, Paul Carroll, Katie Hammond, Leslie Webster, Jerod McGovern, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Paula Mayer, excused

Others: Brian Ritter, Nahant Marsh; Dustin Joy, Muscatine Pearl Button Museum; Lora Friest, Iowa Economic Development; Rachell Kjellberg, Business Publications; and Emily Wahlen, Iowa DOT

Added to the Agenda was a discussion of the potential demolition of the Fort at Ft. Madison

Hammond moved to approve the October 17, 2022 minutes. Geiger amended and seconded the motion to include the November 4, 2022 called meeting. The motion carried.

Review of the Treasurer's Report

The Commission reviewed and approved the Treasurer's Report. Janett moved to approve the report. Walsh seconded the motion and it carried.

Budget discussion

The Commission discussed the allocation for current year for the National membership. Graber said he asked again for a letter in response to the letter the Iowa Commission sent to the national office last fall and has had no response as yet.

Based on the lack of response, Janett moved to allocate \$7,500 for the national dues. Carroll seconded the motion and it carried.

Walsh said National is looking at "ambassadors" to strengthen organization. Would be paying and support the group in each local area. She said the suggestion was to start with 4-5 and try to increase the group with time. Sharon from Louisiana is spearheading the project. Would strengthen organization. Walsh said there was a grant to update the web page. She said she thinks the board is afraid to leave Pilch and Barnett.



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National Scenic Byways. Geiger said she included the information in the packet just to remind the Commission of its membership. Dues were already approved and paid.

Kjellberg made a presentation about a camping ad in the Travel Iowa brochure. Last year the payment was broken up into two sections so it would be paid for over two budgets. The commission asked if that could be done again, and she said yes. It would be \$11,130 for this year's guide ad. The guide goes to the 14 welcome centers in Iowa and any of the public who request it. There are 45,000 hard copies and it can also be downloaded.

Motion to approve \$5,600 to pay ½ of ad for Travel Iowa fall camping ad and the balance to be paid from the next year's budget. Carroll moved to approve and Hammond seconded. The motion carried.

Radio ads final approval. Geiger said the prices have gone up and said she thought the original discussion underestimated the expense. Motion to add \$4,000 for May, June radio ads which would bring \$4,000 for both ads. Carroll moved the motion and Hammond seconded. The motion carried.

Iowa tourism has a grant which we could apply for. Friest will give a grant program to any of the ICenters who are interested. McGovern said he would like to see that for the ICenters. Discussion was held on advertising budgets. Thomas said advertising budget for Clayton County, for example, is \$47,000 for '23.

River Travel Media is a marketing company out of LaCrosse WI. Hammond suggested an allocation of \$10,000 and to call to see what can be done for the Pike project, or other advertising, such as TV, live media, etc. Hammond moved to allocate \$10,000 to for marketing and call River Travel Media. Geiger seconded the motion and it carried. Geiger said she would contact them.

Scenic ByWays is doing a passport for Legends and Scallewags idea. They would have trading cards. To become involved, you would not need to be an interpretive center. Applications are due by the end of February. The passports are on the front page of Iowa Travel.

A discussion was held about selfie stands. Hammond said all the Iowa county facilities have one, and suggested promoting the idea with the ICenters.

National committee appointments and Reports

Marketing Committee: No report

Transportation: No report



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Environment Recreation and Agriculture The Committee is working on promoting the pollinator initiative which was introduced at the national meeting in Memphis.

Heritage and Culture: The committee reviewed the annual review sheet which the commissioners complete when visiting the ICenters annually. It is now working on reviewing the application sheet to become an ICenter. Geiger said one of the suggestions was to identify who “owns” the ICenter – non-profit, state, county, etc. Makes an difference in the approach.

Comments from Interpretive Centers

Nahant Marsh had 23,000 programmed events, and 30,000 self-guided tours. It just closed on an additional 60 acres. There are 22 acres they are managing which belong to Davenport. The marsh has about 1.5 miles of trails and are planning for a future 7 mile loop of trail. Iowa State is designing 3 concepts from engineering students at Iowa State to expand the existing building. Davenport said they will close rail crossing which will divide the marsh, if the rail merger is approved. The majority of the marsh is under a non-profit. Davenport owns original 78 acres of property and building, and EICCD partners for education.

Old Fort Madison is at risk for being demolished. The Commission became aware of the situation a few days ago, and Graber is pursuing. There are conflicting reports regarding the issue, as cited in a newspaper article. Part of the Fort is in poor repair and considered not safe and subject to flooding. One of the suggestions is to put some kind of monument elsewhere to recognize it.

Thomas said the Motor Mill County Conservation Commission got a grant to rehab a house for a B&B at the site. Guttenburg just got \$1.5M for trails in the area. Thomas said he has some concerns about the visitation at the Hatchery in Clayton County. All printed material is being taken, but there is little accompanied tourism because the employees are in the basement working. He asked for some ideas to help. There will be further discussion.

Janett said Lansing has slowed and but visitors are beginning to increase. IT has a new 1,500 aquarium which will be delivered in the next few weeks which will be another enhancement.

Webster said the Sawmill will have its annual food and beverage fest in two weeks All the tickets have sold out. She said it is a big fund-raiser.

Reports and Updates



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The Pike project will discussed at the Foundation meeting.

Geiger said there is no news on the railroad merger. She said citizens are still working on the issue, but no decision from the Surface Transportation Board as yet.

She said the Wolf Pipeline is trying to purchase land and will cross Hwy67, and go under the Mississippi just south of Princeton. There are protests regarding having the pipeline because of the ramifications if it blows.

In addition the EPA is working on abatement of chemicals – PFA's - dumped since 1975 into the Mississippi by 3M. These are hazardous to humans and animals and are considered "forever" chemicals. The EIP is trying how to deal with the situation. The chemicals have leached into the water systems in nearby towns. Princeton has a minimum amount from one of its wells and the second well is being checked. Webster said 3M is drilling 3 news wells in Camanche because the water is so polluted.

The next meeting will be March 24, in Burlington.