



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Meeting, 10:00 a.m. March 24, 2023
Burlington Heritage Center Museum
501 N. Fourth St.
Phone: 319.752.7449

The meeting was called to order by Martin Graber, Chair

Present: Lisa Walsh, Paul Carroll, Paula Mayer, Leslie Webster, Katie Hammond, Jim Janett, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Jared McGovern, Roger Thomas

Others Present: Emily Whaley; Garrett Petersen, Office Director; Hector Torrorez, District Manager District 5 Transportation Manager; Colton Neely, Burlington Heritage Center Museum Director

On motion by Janett with a second by Mayer the January 10th minutes were approved.

The Commission reviewed the budget report. On motion by Walsh with a second by Hammond the budget report was approved.

The prior approval amount of \$4,000 for the radio ads for May and June was amended to read \$3,000. On motion by Geiger with a second by Mayer the motion was amended.

National committee appointments and Reports

Marketing Committee Geiger suggested developing a list to give to ICenters with regard to posting on the website and giving it to them in a hard copy and on the web. Hammond said maybe ask them for the top 3-5 things they do every year so we can post them.

Transportation Good meeting. Still working on electric cars. Talking about banners on the highways. Walsh said the committee is really cleaning up its membership list and they hope to have more DOT's attend meetings because of easing of restrictions. She said there is great benefit in having them there.

Environment Still talking about pollinators. Carroll said the fish hatchery could have a pollinator garden and in looking to have it for an ICenter in the future.

Recreation and Agriculture No report.

Heritage and Culture No report. Discussion on value of the committee. Lots of spillover with marketing, but there is a future for the committee if it can get organized.



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Graber attended the national board meeting and said more states are paying dues and paying more. He said the meeting was more upbeat. Norma Pruitt is now pilot. Lewis did not respond to the committee's comments made last fall, but Pruitt did. Walsh said the response from Pruitt was typical boiler plate response. The commission will move forward with Iowa's plans and continue to pay half dues for now. Louisiana is trying to start an ambassador program to help offset some of the membership dues from some of the states. Geiger said the maps are not accurate and should not look like road maps for people to follow if they are "tourism suggestions." Mayer said there is an accurate way of creating maps. Space is available if you change the fonts. A five-year contract the Pilch and Barnett is not the usual industry standard. It is three years. Mayer said she has seen no improvements on the website. Hammond said she thinks we should just do our own thing and move forward. Mayer does the facebook page and has asked for input from the ICenters, but she has had little response. She pulls things over and adds them.

Spring webinars at 11:00 on Tuesdays in April. Information on the national website. The annual meeting will be in Alton, IL will be Sept 20-22 will be the hosting.

Discussion about hosting a future national meeting. Geiger said a discussion was held to have one in Bellevue if we can get access to the Young house. Hammond said Muscatine would be a great host place for a meeting also. Further discussion will occur.

Graber said he is discontinuing the zoom meetings. He said he does not feel the communication and discussions are as good over zoom. Previously the meetings were up and down the east coast and it is a chance for everyone to visit the various ICenters. Hammond suggested the ICenters in the county be invited to the meeting held in its county to make a presentation. Geiger said the agenda is sent to them each time, and most of the time they do not respond.

Comments from Interpretive Centers

Burlington museum. The new Burlington director said the museum has not been updated in several years, and he is going to tear the building apart redo it. He is already doing outreach for a presence in various locations in the city to raise awareness. Burlington Heritage Center has the third largest collection of fossils (carnoids) in the U.S. Lots of history on Native Americans.



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Button museum did a book review on all the prisoner of war camps during WWII and how the hatchery had some German prisoners that worked at the Heintz plant.

Grist Mill is getting ready to open for the season.

Fish Hatchery (not an ICenter) has been working on the history of the site with a grant received last year. Hatchery is getting more fish from other parts of the state for the hatchery. Working in hiking trails and Community Foundation granted money for a foot bridge.

Lansing has been very busy. Allamakee County has been visited from France, Australia, and Germany. The visitors got information from GRR and some drive-bys. They have \$75,000 of \$85,000 for an aquarium. Today is the last official day of his employment at the center and he will be retiring and there will be a retirement party on April 14th.

Sawmill had wine and beverage event. The event is very popular and sells out almost immediately. The event provides money to see them through the winter.

Eco Center Has an artist who is working with the naturalist and is showing how to do paints, etc. out of natural growth. Feb will be the art install in Camanche so you see natural panels inside and during the summer they will be moved to the trails to hang outside.

The Buffalo Bill Museum is moving toward spring with the visitors in LeClaire.

The Putnam Museum's representative Leslie Kliptsch has taken a new job, and Mullins said as soon as things settle down, it will be sending a new representative to the meetings.

Reports and Updates

Railroad Merger – Geiger said the merger was approved, and there will be 14 more trains running down the east third of Iowa next to the Great River Road. However, there will be a 7-year oversight period, and that is something which has not been done before.

Wolf Pipeline – The pipeline, which is determined to be just south of Princeton and run across the Mississippi, is having some problems getting land sales/easements. The Iowa legislature has a bill before it saying that 90% of the owners on the land desired by a pipeline must be secured before it would consider using eminent domain.



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River pollution – Geiger said 3M has been dumping Perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate, or PFOS into the Mississippi River since approximately 1976, and the DNR has just become aware of it. The chemical is non-dissolvable and is used for everything from clothing to food carry-out boxes. It is harmful to humans, and 3M has been ordered to stop and water supplies within 10 miles of the plant are being tested. Camanche is having two new wells drilled for the community, and all farms within the radius are having their wells tested and redrilled if necessary.

National Scenic Byway Program through the Federal Highway Administration has had money allocated. It lowered the match to \$500,000. The 2022 have not announced the recipients, however the new grants are open for application.

Old Ft. Madison – project is on hold.

George M. Verity is still there and is affected by floods

Iowa Scenic Byways Are looking for campgrounds and greenhouses along the GRR. Also any events. Send to Weber.

Future Meeting Friday, June 23 in Lansing