



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Monday, July 15, 2019
The Sawmill Museum
231 Grant Street
Clinton, Iowa 52733

MRPC Call to order by Chair, Martin Graber

Present: Lisa Walsh, Jay Schweitzer, Jenna Pollock, Clyde Bradley, Barb Besch, and Ann Geiger

Technical Advisor: Craig Markley, DOT Office of Systems Planning

Others Present:

LuAnn Reinders, Iowa Tourism Office, Jane Regan, MRPC Foundation, Inc.

Guests: Matt Parps, Sawmill Museum; Bob Shiffke, Executive Director Buffalo Bill Museum; and Paula Mayer, Mayer Marketing

Welcome and introductions

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the April 22, 2019 minutes by Schweitzer and seconded by Walsh.
Motion carried.

Review and approval of Treasurer's report

During discussion it was be noted that the commission was not filled to capacity. We were missing two commissioners which did not allow for the 2019 budget to be fully used. Also, advertising was reduced because of the spring 2019 flooding.

Motion to approve the 2020 budget by Schweitzer. Pollock seconded the motion to amend the motion to table the discussion until later in the meeting. Amended motion carried.

Graber suggested we start looking for opportunities to raise awareness of the MRPC to extend from the state legislators to local businesses and other organizations which are favorably impacted by the GRR. Walsh said she has had calls as a result of the Iowa Arts Council posting information about the MRPC.

Mayer said we should think about integrating beyond Facebook and the other social media. Parps said the City of Clinton has a company which handles the media – Fourge from Dubuque – and the Sawmill uses that for their information. He said Travel Iowa does a lot of what the Sawmill wants to do and we need to communicate more with them. The Website is the key thing. Reinders said if the tourism office has, it they post it. Someone from the Commission to feed them information. There is a need to educate ICenters about sending things to Travel Iowa for posting.



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Buffalo Bill Museum does their marketing through City of LeClaire which recently hired a firm to handle its marketing from Peoria. Is about \$90K for marketing – mostly media. It includes social media and TV, TV being the most expensive. Schiffke is contacting the same organization to focus on the museum alone. The museum spends \$900 annually to join another organization for marketing.

Markely said the MRPC would be wise to organize the ICenters and get them to use the Travel Iowa site.

Budget

Discussion of priorities and goals for next fiscal year and adoption of new budget.

Schweitzer said getting a full board would be nice. Needs to be sex and party balanced.

Look at how to support Young Museum.

Have a coordinator for social media and research how to pay for it. Need a state brand. Pollock will put together a list of priorities and start to look at what the Commission may want. She will send it to Geiger who will distribute for additions or deletions. Pollock will work with DOT for parameters.

Review the reserved buys process for the IEDA CO-OP media. The Commission voted to work with Madden Media to get specific words and get a price. Madden Media would charge about \$1,500. Schweitzer moved to approve up to \$2,000 on Madden Media for marketing and Walsh seconded. The motion was approved.

The Commission discussed the membership dues for the National organization of \$15,000. It is still not pleased with the service from the national office. Marley suggested paying \$7,200 in January.

Schweitzer moved to approve the budget. Pollock seconded the motion and it was approved.

Interpretive Center Reports:

Buffalo Bill Museum: Schiffke said business is off because of the flooding. The media also made it sound like the City of LeClaire was under water. Museum gets about 20K members a year. It has approximately 25 volunteers. Maps are used a lot and each day of late they have been out of maps. People do look at the maps in addition to their phones. The passports are very popular. Last September the museum built an old fashioned schoolhouse room. Did it as accurately as possible. It cannot grow any more physically. It has added



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three additions to the museum since it moved to this location. The museum has linked with the Pickers. It has two large classrooms in an empty school with items. Pickers will be picking in Iowa in the fall and they have hopes some of the items will be picked. The museum has the only intact steamboat – and oldest – in the U.S. next to it encased in glass.

Sawmill Museum: Parps welcomed everyone. The building used to be an old car dealership. Kiwanis had the idea of making it a museum in 2001-2003. It was the first Iowa Great Places and with gaming money the building was rehabbed and Parps was hired in 2013. There were 13,500 last year and are on pace for 15,000 in 2019. The riverboats have canceled two of their trips this year which will effect attendance. It has summer camps and lots of parties which they host. Just did a 1.3M expansion which was a fund-raiser.

Pearl Button Museum changed its name March 1 from the Muscatine History and Industry Center home of the Pearl Button Museum to The National Pearl Button Museum at the History and Industry Center. The attendance has increased greatly since the name change. It is under reorganization since one of the last of the three button factories has closed and much of the equipment has been donated to the museum.

Eco Center at Camanche was closed for four months because of the flooding. It has a steady stream of visitors which include buses of students and wedding receptions due to the space and available parking. It has a kitchen which has a steady lunch trade.

Nahant Marsh was closed for about four days because of the flood. Last fall it had a fund-raiser to which the MRPC Foundation donated mugs, and it raised over \$20,000.

Putnam Museum. Geiger visited the museum and again found little involving the Great River Road. The banner was not displayed; there were few pieces of information which were displayed behind other information; and no maps. She recommended removing it from and ICenter. Parps suggested the decision be delayed, because there was going to be a new director. Walsh suggested Graber, Geiger, and herself visit the museum and meet with the new director.

Burlington Business Director – Robin Sneiderman is very excited. Entry price is \$6, children \$3. It plans to incorporate more of the Great River Road into their webpage. They are restructuring. Hopefully RAGBRAE will give them more visitors. They display the signage. They are particularly aware of the Great River Road because of the activity regarding the Cascade Bridge. A new director coming in because of death of prior director.

Toolesboro has a new display of the Littleton family (6) which were killed during the civil war and they are slowly expanding. The Old Fort Madison and George M Verity museums are still cleaning up from the flood. The roads are torn up and they are not available for visiting. RAGBRAE will be arriving on the "east coast" first in Burlington then going to



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Keokuk. Both suffered significant damage from the flood and are trying to clean up for the bikers.

National and State Committee Reports

National

Marketing Committee - Met in May and June and always ask about passports. Still discussing a national sponsor, but no action. The Flavors (6.12-8.7) are being promoted again. The branding of the GRR is another and donated Relay of Voices \$5,000.

Environment – Angie Yo said the Asian Coop is going international and will start working on a mulching plant. The MRT is gone, and their records are in litigation. If we want its inventory, will have to take it and put it in the MRPC inventory. Must keep information on our records as recreation or trails. MRPC is not promoting Relay of Voices because of possible injury to runners or riders. Want to make a list of all scenic overlooks, bike trails, and national parks to put online.



Iowa:

The Commission again discussed a flyer for the ICenters. Previously there was a large blue tear sheet which people could take and read. The ICenters requested a smaller black and white tear sheet which had not been reproduced for several years. Geiger rewrote the verbiage, reduced the size of sheet and updated the information. A map ran down the side which she could not update. Mayer said she would update the map. Pollock said she would like to take some to the State Fair if they could be done in time, and the two ICenter managers said they would like to have this particular tear sheet instead of the blue one. Schweitzer moved to reprint the black and white map. Walsh seconded the motion and it carried. Mayer will update and send to the DOT to print. It was suggested they print approximately 5,000.

Reinders said it is restructuring, and a new media representative has been hired. She said the department is a getting higher quality people visiting the sites and bounce was down because some of the key words were changed. People staying longer than most people stay on a website.

Coop advertising is still open. Banner ads come to the top of the page. Schweitzer moved to do three-month listing of banner ads August, September, and October of 2019, and again for April, May, and June of 2020 for \$450 with Travel Iowa. Pollock seconded the motion and it carried.



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Transportation – Bike lane accommodation can be put in as long as it doesn't exceed 20% of the overall cost from the state. Markley said the project needs to meet 3 of 5 conditions and conditions are different for rural then urban.

Recreation - none

Heritage – Regan said Sawmill signage is not up. There is no way for people to find where the Sawmill is located. Parps was told to do in-town signage first then contact the DOT for out-of-town signage. The signs have been ordered and the city has contacted the DOT several times. Markley will follow up.

Chairman's Report

National officers has a task force to find out who has paid and who has not and if the dues are current. Illinois, Missouri, and Tennessee are states the board wants to get to rejoin. Dubuque has a foundation what can be applied for money.

MRC is looking at a website and they have the funding.

The rack cards were sent to National twice were damaged. It is looking through them to see what is not damaged.

Election of officers: Geiger moved to keep same officers. Pollock seconded the motion and it was approved.

Appointment of commissioners to Iowa Byways: The position involves a monthly conference call. Pollock said she would attend the Byways because she already attends.

Appointment to the national committees: Pollock said she would attend National Marketing.

Graber said he would assign the rest of the committees at the next meeting when some of the activities of the National Board have moved forward.

Reminder to register for fall Semi-Annual meeting in LaCrosse, WI. September 17-19

Ex-Official Member Reports

Markley asked about the metal signs for outside the buildings. Walsh said one was needed in Burlington.

Discussion

Future meeting schedule: October 14, 2019 at the Buffalo Bill Museum, LeClaire.