Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Culture and Heritage Committee Meeting

September 19, 2013

The Culture and Heritage Committee met at 2:30 p.m. in the Parkview Room, Renaissance Grand Hotel, St. Louis, MO. The meeting was chaired by Sheronne Mulry.

Present: Sheronne Mulry, co-chair, Minnesota; Ruth Hawkins, co-chair, Arkansas; Alma Blair, Kentucky; Mark Davis, Kentucky; Terri McCullough, Arkansas; Frank Nickell, Missouri; Edith Pfeiffer, Iowa; Lori Roling, Iowa; Joe St. Columbia, Arkansas; Ann Ventress, Mississippi. Faye Wilkinson, Mississippi; Staff: Suzanne Thiede-Barnet.

Suzanne presented cost information on interpretive signage, based on the low bid from Lange Sign Co. in Illinois, who produced the original signage. A survey of interpretive centers indicates that we need 57 new overlays to update existing signage at a cost of $200 per sign, or $11,400. We also need 17 new signs, plus three additional signs for the Interpretive Centers likely to be approved at this meeting, for a total of 20 new signs at $700 each for a total of $14,000. That brings the total needed to $25,400, plus whatever is needed for shipping costs, which brings costs to roughly $30,000.

Ruth Hawkins reported that Arkansas has a grant of $10,000 that can be applied to these costs, but that this grant must be spent by June 30, 2014. It was also reported that the Culture and Heritage Committee has had $1,500 budgeted each year, but has not spent any of this money for the past eight years which, if spent, would have totaled $12,000.

Edith Pfeiffer moved that the Board be asked to commit the $20,000 needed to bring all signage up to date and that this be done as soon as possible in order to take advantage of the additional $10,000 in grant funds. Motion seconded by Ruth Hawkins. Motion carried unanimously.

Suzanne also reported that if the company did the installation of the signs, it would be an additional $150 for the overlays and $500 for the installation of new signs. The committee determined that each state and/or interpretive center should take care of its own installation, as was the case the first time they were installed.

To handle signage in the future, the committee agreed that as a provision of becoming a center, the facility would be required to purchase its signage. This provision is already in the guidelines but has not been enforced to date. Alma Blair moved that this provision be amended to state that sites must purchase the “officially approved” signage in order to ensure consistency among all center. Seconded by Terri McCullough. Motion carried unanimously.

The revised checklist for annual visits to interpretive centers by commissioners was distributed, which incorporates changes recommended at the last meeting. Edith Pfeiffer moved that the checklist be approved. Seconded by Faye Wilkinson. Motion carried unanimously. The checklist will be distributed to state commissions, and state commissions will be asked to ensure that a member of their commission visits each of their interpretive centers once a year to gather information and determine if the MRPC is being appropriately represented by the interpretive center. A copy of the information compiled by each state should be submitted annually to the National Office for distribution and review by the Culture and Heritage Committee.

Three new interpretive centers were approved by the committee for recommendation to the board:

The Mississippi River State Park in Marianna, Arkansas

The Lower Mississippi River Museum and Interpretive Center in Vicksburg, Mississippi

The Sawmill Museum in Clinton, Iowa.

Edith Pfeiffer moved that once approved, these and any other interpretive centers that have not been notified of their approval should receive an official letter from the National Office notifying them of their approval and welcoming them to the Interpretive Center network. Seconded by Frank Nickell. Motion carried unanimously.

Ann Ventress raised a question about why the Woodville Museum request to become an interpretive center was not approved at the Louisville, Kentucky meeting in September 2012. She was asked to go back to them to ensure that all required information is completed and that they have an official letter of endorsement from the Mississippi River. The committee agreed that this could be taken up at the next teleconference meeting, provided the application is submitted to all committee members prior to the meeting.

The committee voted to maintain the ongoing aspects of the 2013 Work Plan for 2014, with the addition of the specific action step: Signage for all Interpretive Centers will be updated, fabricated, installed and completed. The committee also discussed that it will be important for the Culture and Heritage Committee to assist in carrying out any involvement of the MRPC in the National Geographic Geo-Tourism Project. This can be discussed further at the next teleconference meeting.

The next meeting was set as a teleconference for Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2013, at 3 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.