



Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Board of Directors Meeting
December 12, 2014
Minutes (draft)

Participants:

Bob Miller - Pilot

Terri McCullough - Secretary

Holly Cain - Treasurer

Craig Mitckes - (IL-MRPC)

Faye Wilkinson - (MS-MRPC)

John Goodmann - (IA-MRPC)

Sherry Quamme - (WI-MRPC)

Doug Bourgeois - (LA-MRPC)

Karl Samp - Pilot Pro Tem

Sheldon Johnson - (MN-MRPC)

John Sheahan - (TN-MRPC)

Frank Nickell - (MO-MRPC)

Carol Zoff - Transportation

Susanne Barnet – National Office

Pilot Bob Miller called the meeting to order at 9:02am on Friday, December 12, 2014. A quorum was present.

- **Past Meeting Minutes from 9/17/14**

Motion to approve by Secretary with edit noted to include last name Easton when referring to Terry Easton under National Geographic Project. Second by MS. Motion carried.

- **Financial Report from 11/30/14**

National Office presented the financial report as of 11/30/14. Motion to approve by Secretary and second by Illinois. Motion carried.

- **National Geographic Geotourism Project**

Pilot asked Doug Bourgeois to provide a few updates to the Gulf States Geotourism project launched earlier this year.

Doug indicated that the platform is being revised and that National Geographic is working with Old Towne Creative to redo their website by June 30, 2015.

Carol Zoff asked if the site will now be responsive and if the Android version of the app will be updated too?

Sherry Quamme asked for the time table on that and if moving forward the Mississippi River project will be on the new platform?

Doug responded yes on the website but was uncertain about the app. He's not sure what they're going to do with the app right now.

Pilot asked about maintenance and the long-term nature of the Gulf States project.

Doug said every project is different and that cost is \$5000 for the Gulf States.

Pilot indicated that the Mississippi project is \$10,000. He asked Doug about the ease of updating and how it's done.

Doug replied that the Gulf States hired an outside group to do this.

Pilot stated that Jim Dion with National Geographic said enthusiastic volunteers can do the updating. He said that Jane Regan from Iowa suggested using community colleges, which the group is looking into.

Sherry said it's hard to know how to speak to the issue with so many unknowns.

Doug said there are 2600 points of interest on the Gulf States site and growing.

Karl Samp suggested we learn from other groups who have done this.

Pilot asked that you consider groups from your states that you want added to the PPO invite list.

John Goodman commented that he wants to understand the expectation of each state, what is our in kind contributions and how it will be monitored or met.

Pilot said the MRT will be handling all of the financials, including the in kind. This is a goal, not an absolute for each state.

Frank Nickell asked who is attending the PPO meetings?

Pilot answered attendees will be NPS, Fish & Wildlife, Tourism, CVBs, MRPC, and other invited people. He said the invite is to make sure we don't miss anyone. He indicated that Dale Chapman from Lewis and Clark Community College will try to have one community college person at each meeting.

Sheldon Johnson asked if the person involved in this project is Rory Robinson from NPS?

Pilot confirmed it is and that he efficiently runs these meetings.

Sheldon shared that MN has lists, email and mailing, to encourage participation.

Pilot asked Craig Mitckes for comments, since he attended the meeting in Alton.

Craig commented that initially he didn't know what the project would entail but at the meeting people in attendance changed his opinion significantly. He said he believes this project could help our organization in the future. He said he's excited and nervous, but positive in the long run.

Pilot reminded the board that we aren't alone in this.

John asked for someone to explain how this website will sustain itself.

Pilot said the Consortium group and the Geo-Tourism Council working with a tourism council from each state will update the information. Someone has to identify and add the information. The Geo-Tourism Council is ultimately responsible.

Doug said the project is about building a website, an app and a marketing plan. He made it clear that's all you get. He said we are licensing the National Geographic name and that's it. It is up to us to sustain and maintain the site. There's no ongoing marketing or partnership. It's a good site to identify authentic places and experiences. If you nominate a place you need to update/ maintain it. We

struggled with sustainability. We hired a management company to remove ourselves. We are looking at organizing a non-profit to work on it. Each state put in \$20,000 toward ads and social media to market the site.

Carol said if it's a challenge for the Gulf states, how would you look at supporting another project?

Doug said we can import out sites from one to the other. This one is just a corridor and not the whole state. It would have been a great project for the MRPC and MRC to do together, just us.

Pilot said he's asking for \$40,000 for skin in the game. We can wait until our February meeting or approve today. We need to attend the PPO meetings. He said he's proud of the participation already from Doug, Jane and Craig.

Sherry asked to go back to John's question about who is in charge?

Pilot said it's the Core group from the Consortium. We are not the only group involved. He said this is our responsibility. The chair from each state should get an invite list to Rory for the PPO meetings.

Doug stated that the tourism offices in each state will also play a role. He said there's a strong Core team in place. This project is going to happen. Personally, he thinks it's good for us to be involved.

Sherry said Wisconsin Tourism is not in the know and thinks there is probably variation of involvement from state to state.

Pilot said the Core group is making this happen and he has a great deal of confidence in them.

Sheldon asked who is directing the project and what is the timeline and benefits?

The Pilot said the chair of the Core group is Rory and more information will be made available during the PPO meetings.

Karl said there was a motion at the last meeting for a memorandum and that the Board must look at that motion. We need a plan on maintenance.

The Pilot said we have a big role to play but we're not alone. We must get in the game soon, by February; not much later. We must have state participation at the PPO meetings. He said he's attending a Core group meeting in Memphis on January 7 and 8. He said he's not going to ask for any vote on funding today.

- **2015 Budget**

The national office provided a draft of the 2015 budget for review. She noted that money from reserves would cover the difference. A motion to approve without the \$40,000 was made by the Secretary and a second by the Treasurer.

- **Resolution on Excessive use of roadway**

The Pilot outlined the current situation in Buffalo County, Wisconsin and asked that the Board approve a resolution draft via email in time for the resolution to be read and distributed at an upcoming County Board meeting.

- **Other Business**

The secretary spoke of an option to travel by Amtrack to the spring semi-annual meeting in St Cloud, MN.

The secretary also reported that Marla Crider with the Arkansas Tourism office and director of the Arkansas Great River Road lost her battle to cancer. It was requested that the national office send her family a card.

Pilot noted that board members should keep in mind donations to the Foundation during their even of year giving. He also thanked everyone for a good meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20am.