



Mississippi River Parkway Commission  
Board of Directors Meeting  
February 13, 2015  
Minutes (draft)

**Participants:**

Bob Miller - Pilot

Terri McCullough - Secretary

Craig Mitckes - (IL-MRPC)

Carol Buelow - (MS-MRPC proxy)

Sherry Quamme - (WI-MRPC)

Karl Samp - Pilot Pro Tem (MN-MRPC proxy)

Norma Pruitt - Marketing (KY-MRPC proxy)

John Sheahan - (TN-MRPC)

Carol Zoff - Transportation

Nani Bhowmik - ERA

Lyn Pilch – National Office

Pilot Bob Miller called the meeting to order at 9:03am on Friday, February 13, 2015. A quorum was present.

- **Past Meeting Minutes from 12/12/14** Motion to approve by Wisconsin with edits noted under Other Business of “Amtrack” corrected to “Amtrak” and “even of year giving.” to “end of year giving.” Second by AR. Motion carried.
- **Financial Report as of 12/31/14** National Office presented the financial report as of 12/31/14. Pilot asked NO to confirm tax status to transfer the investments. ERA Chair asked where they used their committee budget. NO said Stewardship Award and Pilot said Agritourism grant. TN confirmed that they have paid their dues since the last meeting minutes.
- **National Geographic Geotourism Project** Miller explained that the \$40,000 for the National Geographic Project has not been added to the 2015 budget yet, based on the Board’s requests for data and special caveats. A vote to include the line item in the budget will be included on the Board agenda for the Semi-Annual meeting.

Miller requested confirmation on states attending a Project Planning and Orientation (PPO) meeting for the project. WI, IL, MN, TN, KY, Pilot, Transportation, and ERA are all planning on attending at least one meeting, some are attending multiple meetings. AR is unable to attend the Memphis meeting. Pilot ask NO to survey MO, LA and IA about attending a meeting. NO agreed.

MS asked for more information on the meetings to take back to the state. MS said she did not receive an invitation to the meetings, although she is serving as proxy and thought the current Board representative might have received it. KY didn’t receive the email either. NO will follow-up by sending the email.

MN asked if these are the meetings the states should invite CVBs and other stakeholders to attend. Pilot affirmed that states should invite all stakeholders to these meeting, especially CVB partners. Pilot cautioned there will not be a lot of time for questions as the focus is on planning, nominating people, project timeline, and contributions needed for the next year and a half.

Pilot explained that he has attended the in-person planning meetings with the core participants: US Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, and Mississippi River Trails as well as conference calls. Rory from National Park Service has kept the group on target and on task.

Pilot reminded states to keep track of time for in-kind donations and that all the items will be

discussed at the meetings.

Good attendance is anticipated at the PPOs. The meeting in St Louis is expected to bring in over 100 participants. Pilot stressed that the MRPC has an important role at the meetings, but is not the only entity involved with the process and we are a cooperative partner.

ERA asked if the agenda was the same for each of the regional meetings. Pilot confirmed that it is the same agenda.

IL informed the group that the hotel rates at Union Station in St. Louis are fairly expensive, but rates are much cheaper at the Drury Inn which is across the street. Pilot requested the NO send out these rates to the Board.

Transportation asked what the boundaries are referring to in the meeting announcement regarding nominations for the regions. Pilot said the project spans a one county region on each side of the Mississippi River from Lake Itasca to New Orleans except in the Delta region. Based on the infrastructure, there were concerns that too many amenities would be missed if the scope was limited to one county in that area. Pilot said the meetings are regional but the project comprised these areas. The nominations will come from this area.

- **2015 Semi-Annual Meeting** MN-MRPC updated the group on the plans for the Semi-Annual Meeting, April 22-14 with the Board strategic planning session taking place on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The program starts on Thursday and the meeting's theme is "Planning on the River" with the focus on planning efforts along three river towns: St. Cloud, St. Paul and Brainerd/Baxter. The goal is to draw from people from the planning community to attend with a track for them during the meeting. Additionally, CVB and other DMOs are encouraged to attend the CVB track. These tracks will run concurrent with the technical committee meetings. A day rate has been established for these profession tracks. Friday's program includes information on representing regional Native cultures. There are also two field sessions available to attend. MN Corridor Management Plan will be discussed with the firm providing their plan attending the meeting and attending technical committee meetings to share their recommendations and draft strategies. MN welcomed everyone to Minnesota for the Semi-Annual Meeting.

AR requested information on taking a train to the meeting. NO was directed to get costs and a negotiated group rate on it.

MN encouraged everyone to register early for a riverside room at the hotel. April 8<sup>th</sup> is the hotel registration deadline. MN confirmed the river should be flowing nicely in April.

AR inquired on the availability of a bus to take a separate tour on Saturday up to Lake Itasca for a tour. NO was directed to get costs and interest in a Saturday add-on.

- **Other Business** WI asked about the process to book the location for the 2016 meeting. NO said they work with the state and obtain the bids. WI expressed concern in getting the location booked soon. NO will follow-up with WI
- ERA Chair informed the Board that the committee would like to do a survey which would serve as a follow-up to the last survey it completed in 2002. ERA Chair requested that the Board add it to the

next agenda. Chair alerted the Board that they will need assistance in collecting surveys. They will update the old forms and have them available in MN.

- AR asked when the meeting location will be released for the 2015 Annual Meeting. NO reported that LA is working on a determining what city to host it. Vidalia, New Orleans and Baton Rouge have all been discussed and all have their pros and cons. MS is concerned that Vidalia is too close to Natchez, the site of a 2015 meeting. NO will share the concern.
- MS announced that they were very pleased and excited to have four new commissioners appointed to the MS Commission. The new commissioners have renewed everyone's spirit. Board asked to pass along their welcome to the organization.
- Pilot commented to the Board how great it is to have TN back involved in the Board activities. All agreed.
- AR announced that a new Department of Tourism Deputy Director, Ron Maxwell had been hired. NO said they have been in contact with him and are happy to have him in the organization.
- Transportation Chair asked if a survey would be sent out prior to the strategic planning session. NO said there would be materials distributed before the event. Transportation Chair said they will plan their standing meeting conference call around the survey to give them time to complete it and discuss everyone's input prior to the Board planning session. NO will plan accordingly.

**Adjournment** Motion to adjourn by AR. Second by KY. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:57am.