



Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Board of Directors Meeting
February 10, 2017

Participants:

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| -Karl Samp - Pilot | - Norma Pruitt - (KY-MRPC) |
| -Holly Cain - Treasurer | -Carol Zoff - (MN-MRPC) |
| -Derek Biglane (MS-MRPC) | -Edith Pfeffer - (IA-MRPC) |
| -Frank Nickell - (MO-MRPC) | -Doug Bourgeois - (LA-MRPC) |
| -Craig Mitckes - (IL-MRPC) | -Diana Threadgill - (TN-MRPC) |
| -Al Lorenz - (WI-MRPC) | -Ruth Hawkins - Culture & Heritage |
| -Terri McCullough - Pilot Pro Tem (AR-MRPC) | -Lyn Pilch – National Office (NO) |

Pilot called the meeting to order at 9:01am and there was a quorum present.

- **Approval of Agenda.** Motion to approve by IL. Second by AR. Motion carried.
- **Approval of Minutes from 12/14/16.** Motion to approve by AR. Second by IL. Motion carried.
- **Financial Report as of 12/31/16 and 1/31/17.** Cain reviewed the financial report. AR asked about projected deficit and whether Chris Miller has a timeline on grants submissions. NO explained the budget was approved with the deficit due to the capital investments of the printed map and navigational app. NO stated Marketing Committee has finding sources of revenue such as sponsorships, advertising, and grants on their agenda for over a year and continue to discuss possibilities. Pilot explained Chris Miller was contracted to research available grant options. Grant writing will be done by the NO. Pilot gave example of the types of grants available. TN discussed the viability of some endowments for MRPC related projects. NO noted the Marketing Committee will be reviewing the list compiled by Miller at their next meeting. MS asked about write-offs vs. map collection. Cain explained some of the states don't pay their dues and the amount shows as a write-off at the end of the year. TN is working on collecting dues for 2017. AR asked for a deadline to work on covering the deficit. Pilot asked for a Marketing Committee update at the next Board meeting. NO agreed to add it to the agenda. Motion to approve by KY. Second by MO. Motion carried.
- **National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure.** TN reported on the activities of the newly formed committee. TN thanked Board for the opportunity to serve. She is working on a strategy to get all 10 states involved. The committee's first meeting was December 8-9. She explained it's a committee under the Department of Transportation. The committee includes many government departments such as Department of Transportation and Department of Commerce. There has been a 10 year gap without a transportation bill and they are operating under the "Fixing America's Surface Information Act." There are many segments of the industry represented such as airports, car rentals and tourism organizations to create a very diverse committee.

TN provided the committee's mission is to determine what can be done to make tourism/travel and infrastructure related to those categories more of an integral part of the transportation plan. There is understanding that tourism has been an ignored industry although it's a huge economic driver. Agriculture is the top national industry and tourism is second. The organization is beginning to address the tourism industry as it relates to infrastructure by creating tourism corridors like the Great River Road which gives them a name in government language. TN sees it as an opportunity to get funding back for National Scenic Byway Program. Colorado Tourism Director, Cathy Ritter, who

was the IL Tourism Director, is on the committee. Colorado has more scenic byways than any other state in the US and TN is hopeful she will also advocate for the return of the National Scenic Byway program. Another committee focus is uniform signage for an integrated feel when traveling the US.

TN noted the lack of intermodal travel packages is an area of concern for the committee. Additional topics include the future of travel and transportation such as automated vehicles and what that means for the roads—such driverless vehicles, alternative ride share options like Uber and Lyft for travelers, and addressing the transportation gap for travelers. New technologies like traffic lights that monitor the flow of traffic are also discussed. MI is really committed to manufacturing and new car business. Las Vegas, MI and UT have formed partnership with car companies and manufacturers to research new transportation options, change how transportation works and reviewing different modes of connectivity throughout the US. Las Vegas Tourism Authority is the chair of the committee. They are leading the way in transportation and energy conservation related to travel.

TN explained the committee views their mission as both important and with a sense of urgency. President Trump has said building infrastructure is a priority and the committee wants to assist in informing the administration on possible projects. There is understanding among the committee that infrastructure projects will be fast tracked for approval. Chair wants a list of projects to submit to the administration under the three criteria:

1. National security or public safety emergency
2. Shovel ready (30% of design and engineering complete)
3. Creates and sustains jobs and has a focus on US manufacturing

Public buildings, broadband, inland waterways are all eligible projects.

TN attended a summit in Las Vegas for the committee.

During the Board call, TN learned the committee's next meeting was canceled. She will report when a new date is scheduled. TN asked the Board if there were questions and projects to consider.

Pilot asked for materials to be sent to the Board when available. Pilot asked if TN and MN could present something together at the Semi-Annual meeting. MN is unable to attend in KY but they will discuss options. MN said that TN will be talking at the next Transportation meeting.

TN stated she is the only one representing 10 states and has a focused agenda. TN serves on two committees: innovation and technology, and intermodalism and connectivity. TN's new email address: diana@msrivertn.org. TN thanked MN and Anne Lewis for finding the committee and nominating her.

- **National Geographic Geo-Tourism Update.** Pilot Pro Tem and IL provided an update on the most recent meeting. Pilot Pro Tem will distribute links related to the conference held January 31-February 2 in New Orleans. The organization was originally calling 2017 the "Year of Hiking" but decided to change it to the "Year of Trails." 2018 has been determined to be the "Year of Arts, Culture and Music." Pilot Pro Tem was honored to announce 2019 will be the "Year of the Great River Road (GRR)." The organization plans to use the designation cycle for the remaining years, which mean 2027 would be the "Year of the GRR" again. Pilot asked how organization plans to sustain its activities. Pilot Pro Tem announced they are currently planning to sell banner advertising on the website and approaching people for financial support. Terry Easton is leading this effort. Pilot Pro Tem provided clarification there will be no mobile phone application however, the website is designed to be mobile friendly. Additionally, a slogan of "10 states, one river, 100 events" has been

used for the last few promotions for the “Year of” campaigns. Pilot Pro Tem will share a summary of the materials and the marketing plan from MRCC’s Communication Committee. IL agreed. The MRCC’s next meeting is scheduled for July 11-14, 2017 in La Crosse WI.

- **2017 National Meetings.** April 19-21 - Paducah, KY. KY gave an update on the Semi-Annual Meeting in Paducah, KY. April 19 will be a tour through all four counties along the GRR. Dinner will be held at the River Discovery Center with a presentation and facility tour. Friday’s programming will consist of speakers such as the State Tourism Director of Outdoor Adventure presenting about trail development and promotion. KY welcomed everyone to the state and looks forward to seeing everyone in KY in April.

September 19-21 - Marquette, IA. IA welcomed everyone to attend the Annual meeting which will take place in the Driftless region of IA. IA is working on creating the program. A tour will take everyone 17 miles to the new building at the Lansing National Parks Effigy Mounds.

- **Technical Committee Updates: Culture & Heritage.** Hawkins reported they have a few more interpretive center training set up and flash drives available for distribution.

Environment, Recreation, Agriculture. NO reminded the Board that the Stewardship Award nominations are due June 1st which is earlier than other award nominations.

Transportation. No update was given.

Marketing: NO provided information on statistics from the annual report. A full report will be distributed soon.

MRC: IA asked if the MDCP grant was approved and if the MRC has decided to focus on China as a market. NO responded that the grant was not approved on this application cycle but they are reapplying. They did the last time they received the grant. MRC does not have plans to enter the China market as some states are in the market independently or through other regional partnerships.

- **Other Business.** MRT: IA asked that MRT be invited in our Semi-Annual meeting. IA asked about signage maintenance along the MRT. NO reported to be in conversation with Todd for more information on their status.

Pilot provided information on his conversation with Shore Excursions, a bus company that travels alongside the American Queen. They did two trips to Lake Itasca and Pilot provided step-on tour service. Pilot discussed setting up GRR bus tours using the empty bus that follows the American Queen. Logistically, the bus could arrive at port cities prior to the cruise allowing time to take care of the cruise travelers. They are continuing those conversations.

WI informed the Board of Pilot Emeritus Bob Miller’s resignation to the committee. He will be moving back to Ohio to be near family. Pilot asked the NO to find an opportunity to honor Miller for his service, such as a Stewardship Award nomination.

IA requested the Board meeting be moved to 3pm during the Annual meeting so attendees don’t have to travel in the dark. AR asked if the decision could be approved. IA was asked where attendees will fly in and IA reported the nearest airports are in Dubuque, IA or La Crosse, WI. NO will change the meeting time to 3pm for the Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:21am.

2017 Meeting Schedule:

- Wednesday, April 19, 4:00pm in Paducah, Kentucky
- Friday, July 14, 9:00am (teleconference)
- Tuesday, September 19, 3:00pm in Marquette, Iowa
- Friday, December 8, 9:00am (teleconference)