



Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Board of Directors Meeting
April 22-23, 2015
Minutes (draft)

Participants:

Bob Miller - Pilot

Terri McCullough - Secretary

Craig Mitckes - (IL-MRPC)

Faye Wilkinson - (MS-MRPC)

Sherry Quamme - (WI-MRPC)

John Goodmann - (IA-MRPC)

Joe St. Columbia - (AR-MRPC)

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

Norma Pruitt - Marketing

Greg Pruitt - (KY-MRPC proxy)

Mark McAdoo - (TN-MRPC)

Carol Zoff - Transportation

Nani Bhowmik - ERA

Lyn Pilch – National Office

Pilot Bob Miller called the meeting to order at 4:15pm on Wednesday, April 22, 2015. A quorum was present.

- **Past Meeting Minutes from 2/13/15** Motion to approve by Secretary. Second by Treasurer. Motion carried.
- **Financial Report as of 3/31/14** Motion to approve by Illinois. Second by Mississippi. Motion carried.
- **National Geographic Geotourism Project** Pilot Miller explained that there was a different vibe at each regional meeting. The Core Team meeting followed and Miller and Craig Mitckes, Illinois, represented MRPC. Nominations are underway. Miller indicated he is encouraged and asked that all interpretive centers enter their data. Starting in June there will be community meetings through August, visiting up and down the river. People are invited to participate and learn about it, starting in Memphis in June. They're asking for nominations to get initial website going. They want 600 nominations by summer, the minimum to get the site going. The site will be completed in June 2016. There will be time to add more data later. We aren't the only organization adding data.

How do we manage the program? Look at the email with suggested information on post-management. \$5000 annual fee will be paid for 5 years by Big River Strategic Initiative. Miller thinks sponsorship or advertising on web are better ideas for long-term sustainability. Miller said the group has been very cooperative and we need to be involved. There's open communication. Mitckes agreed with Miller 110% and said we will be left behind if we don't get involved now. We can deal with concerns as they come up.

It was opened up for questions. Carol Zoff, Transportation, asked now that you have a better understanding of the website, how does it differ from experiencemississippiriver.com? Is the goal to develop two websites and two apps? Miller said they are developing on a different platform.

John Goodmann, Iowa, shared concerns about raising \$45,000 as a group to sustain. Miller said there's about \$550,000 raised.

Mitckes said the Core Committee decided Lake Itasca to the Delta one county wide and below that they would take the whole Delta, meaning there will be situations where you can go one or two counties beyond the River. They will also consider other sites, beyond the River.

It was asked if you had to contribute financially to be a partner. Miller indicated we are using MRT's

status and they are not contributing any cash.

Recessed at 5:03pm.

The meeting reconvened at 5:13pm on April 23.

- **2015 Annual Meeting** The National office provided dates and a location for the upcoming fall Annual Meeting, October 6-8 in New Orleans.
- **Logo Usage** The National office provided an overview of the recommendation brought forward by the Marketing Committee to approve separation of America's Byways logo from MRPC paddlewheel logo for use in some marketing materials. Motion made by Arkansas and second by Kentucky. Motion carried.

The national office then provided an overview of the recommendation brought forward by the Marketing Committee to approve a logo usage policy with a \$50 fee for non-profits and a \$100 fee for for-profit business usage as approved by the National office and home state as long as the intended use stays within the mission of the MRPC.

Illinois asked if we are going to charge per item or one cost for all items. The National Office said that the Marketing Committee doesn't want to get in the way of merchandise and helping to promote the Great River Road. For example, if the Bass Pro Shop is interested and they pay a one-time fee, they're doing the work we can't do. We are not doing this for monetary revenue.

Illinois said based on the financial situation we discussed yesterday we have money problems and can't we use this to generate some income.

Minnesota asked if we looked at an annual fee instead of a one-time fee and if the business is making money they may find value.

Mississippi said we can't afford this kind of marketing on our own.

National office indicated that the Marketing Committee discussed all of these options before reaching their recommendation to the Board.

Motion was made to create a new usage policy based on the Marketing Committee's recommendation and for the national office to communicate with the state chair and copy them on all communications with the requesting business. Motion made by Kentucky and second by Mississippi. Motion carried.

- Culture and Heritage Chair said no board action is required but they are asking each state to visit their interpretive centers and conduct center surveys, checking their websites and signage and to schedule a training with their frontline personnel using the Powerpoint presentation on the flash drives provided. She also reminded states to add their own state information to the template section at the end of the Powerpoint presentation. Miller said thanks to Ruth for the flash drives and presentation.
- ERA Chair asked for feedback on the survey. He indicated the last survey was conducted in 2002. He's trying to keep it to one page and would like it distributed to the interpretive centers. Suggestions are to go to the National Office.

- Illinois said at a recent Geo-Tourism meeting, they discussed Heart of the Continent project that takes place in Minnesota and Canada. He requested that we approach the two provinces in Canada to become part of this group again. He said it has been some years since we tried to have them join us. Kentucky provided some history from when Ontario and Manitoba were part of the MRPC. The Pilot asked what the process is. Kentucky provided a past contact name of Keith Surensen. He said past pilots Bernhagen, Frerichs or Golfis might now his whereabouts. He said Don Hammonds from Tennessee was his closest MRPC friend. Miller said we as a board can explore this. We can find contacts and then make a sub-committee. Greg from Kentucky volunteered to help. Tennessee questioned the economic reason to add Canada to this group? Illinois referenced watershed and charter members. Tennessee asked if it is our objective to promote the corridor and do we care if there is economic development in Canada? Zoff said when MRPC-MN did their CMP in 1999 and 2000, they looked at Canada and concluded that they are nowhere near water and it detracts from goal of attracting and staying along the River. It's hard enough to work with a 10 state route. Illinois said he sees her point but why do we have from Canada to the Gulf and 12 handles on our logo. The Pilot said he accepts the offer to explore. Kentucky said back in the day one or both paid dues.
- Illinois also suggested that we have more free time to participate in events while at the 2016 Annual Meeting in Natchez. Mississippi said there will be activities before and possibly after to choose from. She suggested coming down early or staying longer to participate and drive the GRR or Natchez Trail. She suggested flying into Jackson or Baton Rouge.

Adjournment Motion to adjourn by AR. Second by MS. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm.