



## Mississippi River Corridor – Tennessee, Inc.

### Board of Directors and Advisory Council Meeting

#### Minutes

Thursday – September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

**Askew Nixon Ferguson Architects**

1500 Union Avenue

Memphis, TN 38104

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**Board of Directors in Attendance:** Chairman-Lee Hinson, Vice Chair-Karen Bowyer, Secretary-Tom Dyer, Treasurer-Ward Archer, John Gary, Amy Turnage, Danny Walden, Denny Johnson, Jimmy Ogle and Mark McAdoo

**Advisory Council:** Lee Askew, Jon Crisp, Nelia Dempsey, Cheryl Goudie, Taylor Gray, Andy Hays, Patrick McIntyre, Mark Norris, Gary Patterson, Cort Percer, Jane Polansky, Steve Stapleton, Jim Stark, John Threadgill and Mark White

**Guests:** Scott Blake

**Staff & Consultants:** Diana Threadgill, Karen Thornton, Judi Blalock, Tom Harrison, and Kathy Kelley

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Chairman Lee Hinson called the Meeting to Order at 11:15 am. After welcoming the attendees, he introduced and thanked Lee Askew for allowing the MRCT to meet in the ANF Boardroom. Introductions were made by each of the Board Directors, Advisory Council members, staff and guests.

#### Minutes

Minutes for the Board of Directors and Advisory Council Meeting held on Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> in Dyersburg were presented to the Board. Chairman Lee Hinson requested a member review, comments and a *Motion for Approval of the Minutes*:

- Motion was made by Karen Bowyer
  - Seconded by Danny Walden
- The Motion passed unanimously*

## Financial Statements

Tom Harrison, accountant for the MRCT, presented the current Financial Statement through the end of June 30, 2015 and reported that all accounts are in good standing. The cash position is up but so are the expenses as current Corridor projects begin their implementation phase.

Treasurer Ward Archer requested a forecast/budget be prepared with line item designations. Diana Threadgill explained that she and Tom Harrison had just begun the budget work and will meet with Archer prior to the next Board presentation for discussion and review. Our 990 Tax Form (2014) should be completed in a couple of weeks.

After the Board members reviewed the financials, Chairman Lee Hinson requested a *Motion for Approval to approve the financials as submitted*:

- Motion was made by Denny Johnson
- *Seconded by Lee Askew*  
*The Motion passed unanimously*

## HUD National Disaster Resiliency Competition Grant – Round 2

Diana Threadgill reported about this significant grant opportunity for our six Corridor counties and West Tennessee. The total grant award of \$2Billion dollars is a new partnership initiative between the Rockefeller Foundation and HUD, with each contributing \$500Million for the Competition. Tennessee was very fortunate to have two applications accepted into Round 2: Shelby County Government (Greenprint Plan) and the Corridor counties north of Memphis (*Rural By Design*). The grant addresses the serious damage received by communities from the Mississippi River flood in 2011 which affected our entire Tennessee Corridor network.

The MRCT has submitted three projects for consideration by the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development (ECD) in Nashville: 1) the recently completed *Lauderdale County Environmental & Economic Plan*, 2) a Boardwalk & Trail Plan for the northern basin at Reelfoot Lake - completed in 2011, and 3) additional sustainability enhancement/projects for the new Interpretive Visitors Center at Reelfoot Lake State Park. The final grant awards are expected to be announced in early December.

## Proposed MRCT Exhibit at TDOT Visitors Center – Riverside Drive at I-40 – Memphis

A proposed exhibit in the TDOT Visitors Center was brought up for discussion by Diana Threadgill. The idea for a marketing kiosk was not accepted by the new General Manager at the Bass Pro/Pyramid. After several trips to the Bass Pro retail store, it was decided that the Bass Pro customers were not receptive to information about outdoor recreation or cultural assets in the region.

Scott Blake, Creative Director at Design 500, made a Power Point presentation for a concept exhibit design at the Visitors Center. A visitor registration kiosk will also be included in the exhibit so visitors can sign up for more information and their contact information will be captured for additional marketing efforts. Currently, only cars are counted as they drive into the Visitors Center which doesn't accurately account for individual visitors.

The exhibit will feature the **Great River Road** – National Scenic Byway, the Tennessee Tourism Trail and a multitude of outdoor recreational and cultural amenities in the region.

### **Randolph Bluff Property**

Senator Mark Norris made a presentation about the very scenic and historic property for sale which is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chickasaw Bluff at Randolph in Tipton County. The 746 acre property contains 2,000 feet on the Mississippi River bluff, a 25-acre lake, forest and farm land. Norris was able to include its purchase in the State budget but the property will still need to be scored by the Land Acquisition Committee for TDEC. The Tennessee Parks & Greenways Foundation is heading up the effort to conserve the property and the MRCT will keep members posted on any acquisition progress. Everyone agreed this would be an excellent addition to the Mississippi River Corridor & Great River Road NSB.

### **More – MidSouth Outdoor Recreation & Education Program and 1-Mississippi Campaign**

Karen Thornton, MRCT Public Outreach & Education Coordinator, updated the members about our partnership with the University of Memphis staff Professors and the new 2015/16 MORE program format. We will be working with the entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Westside Middle School and additional students from Soulsville Academy. Thanks to a *Strengthening Communities* grant the MRCT received from the Community Foundation of Memphis, we'll be able to professionally test the students prior to their participation in the program, and then again at the end of the semester to determine their academic progress after participating in the MORE program.

The Mississippi River Network's *1 Mississippi* campaign is in full gear and we've attended dozens of events and meetings promoting its environmental messages to the public. Diana Threadgill and Karen Thornton will be attending the MRN annual meeting in New Orleans in October.

### **Ride to Randolph**

Ward Archer, R2R Chairman, reminded the members about the upcoming **Ride to Randolph**, an annual fundraiser for MRCT that will be held on Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. This is a partnership event with the Hightailers bike club and they handle all the rider registrations for us. We anticipate another great group of participants as we travel the one-way 24 mile trip from Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park to Randolph in Tipton County for lunch. We will also provide shuttle service for riders that don't want to cycle the full route. We're hopeful the weather will be good this year and Ward invited everyone to ride the R2R or join us for lunch.

### **John Patrick Sheahan - Commemorative**

Danny Walden then spoke about the passing of our Chairman Emeritus, John Sheahan. He was a true champion for our work in the Corridor and a long time mentor to Diana Threadgill. He will be greatly missed by all and Danny Walden encouraged the members to think about a special Commemorative marker we could create to honor his extraordinary patronage and support for the MRCT. The staff will make recommendations at the next Board meeting to be held on **Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at DSCC in Covington.**

The Meeting was adjourned by Chairman Lee Hinson at 1:15 pm and a tour of MRCT's new office space followed.

