**Culture and Heritage Committee Minutes**

**Collinsville, Illinois**

**Sept. 21, 2024**

Co-Chair John Anfinson opened the meeting by introducing several key topics for discussion and action. These included consideration of more frequent processing of IC applications and criteria for the IC checklist. The question of whether we should have the MRPC board act on nominations after a recommendation from the Culture and Heritage Committee.

Interpretive Center Nominations:

1. The Discovery Park of America, Tennessee: Joe St. Columbia (AR) moved the acceptance of the nomination. Sherry Quamme (WI) seconded. The nomination was accepted unanimously.
2. Cold War Center, Arkansas: The application had been put on hold at a previous meeting pending conversations with the Center to strengthen the connection between the stories they interpret and the Mississippi River. John followed up with the Center proponent, who said he would get to him once they had something more.
3. Wildlife Heritage Center, Mississippi: The initial application lacked enough substance to support being added as an IC. The committee plans to work with the applicant to bring the application up to standards as set by the Discovery Park application. John Anfinson (MN) moved the action. James Lundgren (MO) seconded.

Change in annual IC application acceptance: Sherry Quamme (WI) moved the adoption of a rolling schedule for consideration of applications by the committee for recommendation to the MRPC board for final approval at its next available meeting. The committee will now review applications as they come in. If received soon enough before each quarterly meeting, the committee will review and either accept the application and forward it to the MRPC Board for approval, or return it to the applicant with comments about how to improve it. Approved.

Application Revisions: Ann Geiger (IA) moved that the current application be removed from the web site until it is modified by the committee, but that an email contact should be listed on the website for questions. James Lundgren (MO) seconded. Passed. Ann Geiger (Iowa) agreed to make some initial edits to the Checklist for consideration at the November Culture & Heritage Committee meeting. Finalizing the application for clarity on our expectations will be a focus of the next C&H Committee meeting.

IC Check List: Remove the last page on Covid. Discussion of whether to leave it annual or biannual and decision was made to make it annual. (?) Add a new question on pollinator gardens. Add a new question on how the IC is funded and whether it has staff or is all volunteer. The Check List should be an automated on-line document for ease of submitting. Finalizing a new Checklist will be another focus of next C&H Committee meeting.

Next Agenda Item: How to engage IC’s with each other.

John added that one of his IC interviews elicited the question, “Help us understand MRPC’s goals and how they relate to our goals.”

Co-Chair Pat Audirsch informed the committee that the Sultana Museum in Arkansas had been successful in raising the money it needed to move into a larger building and to upgrade its exhibits. It was discussed that a letter of congratulations should be sent from MRPC. Pat volunteered to draft this letter for John’s and her signatures as co-chairs of the MRPC Culture and Heritage Committee.

Sherry Quamme gave an update on the new Great River Road IC being planned for La Crosse, Wisconsin. It will include materials from the closed Riverside Museum and the Dahl Auto Museum. Proponents are moving ahead with acquiring a former Xcel Energy property. She may come to the national MRPC for a letter of support.

The meeting adjourned upon completion of the agenda items.