



Mississippi River Parkway Commission Culture & Heritage Committee Minutes

July 18, 2023

Attendees: John A – MN, Pat A – AR, James J – IA, James L – MO, Chris M – MN, Sherry Q – WI, Adam L – AR, Dave K – MN, Mark K – MO, Anne L – MN, Cindy L – KY, National Office (NO)

- I. There was much discussion of the updated Interpretive Center (IC) application for Discovery Park in Tennessee. Their updated application made a strong connection to the Mississippi River, including fishing, flyway, lumber industry, earthquake (Pat). John thinks we can use this as a model application and ask them to be more specific in their details. It could improve. (Pat) All ICs do not have the resources to complete an application to the level of this one. (James) We can set the bar high but that doesn't mean all applications must reach it. (Anne) Perhaps, our directions/guidance is not clear. We can't send applications back multiple times nor can we raise the bar for applications that have more resources than others. (John) We should talk with them about being a model application and not that we're trying to be overly demanding.
- II. We need to find what is reasonable (John) for an application. (James) We want our examples to be something they can learn from. You can follow one theme if you do it well. John will discuss with Edwin (TN) and Scott (at Discovery Park). Can we send this application to the Cold War Museum to get them to think about how to improve their application for the fall review.
- III. We should set a higher bar to get other applicants to reach for it. We will vote at the fall meeting, and we will ask Edwin to present it to the committee.
- IV. During the fall meeting we should review the IC checklist. For example, let's remove mentions of Covid.
- V. Let's talk about future projects. We helped to complete a model IC application. We're in the process of collecting signage information to order as a group. We will look to update the checklist during our next meeting. What as a committee do we want to work on next?



- VI. (Sherry) LaCrosse, WI lost their IC, River Museum in LaCrosse, several years ago. The historical society was concerned so some individuals talked about what they could do to assist the museum and historical society. They came up with a concept - the LaCrosse Discovery Center. They have a brief overview put together. They want to create a GRR Center and have a connection across the river to the Dahl Auto Museum. The walkway would be covered/ protected, and the floor would be the actual Great River Road so it would be experiential. You would hear audio of what you are looking at so you can explore further. Bird and pollinator habitat, canoe and kayak launch would also be included so you can experience all around. It's a proposed multimillion dollar project that is currently fundraising and looking for support. They want people to be informed. WI MRPC signed a letter of support last spring. They're asking national MRPC for input and want it to represent more than just WI but the whole 10-state GRR. Can we sign a letter of support if they're looking at going for grant dollars? "What ways can our committee help ICs" (John asked).
- VII. (Mark) The Transportation Research Board in DC is another group he volunteers with. The program for 120 years - identifies blue ribbon committees. Following that thought, Blue Ribbon IC program could recognize an IC that really stands out. Could we try what they've done. Perhaps an idea to discuss at the fall meeting.
- VIII. Send your ideas to John and Pat and we can add them to our agenda in the fall.
- IX. Things committees could do together? Pollinators (how many have a garden or habitat) ICs that we can promote . Maybe add to the checklist. The homepage of the mrpcmembers site contains a survey asking for public pollinator information along the GRR. There was mention of Roz (WI) working with Rotary International on pollinator collection along the GRR. Let's discuss an official resolution to work with them on habitat education.