



Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

12/8/23

In attendance: Lisa – IA, Sherry – WI, Francis – Transportation, Norma – Pilot/KY, Lauren/Sharon – LA and Marketing, Edmond - TN, John – Pilot Pro Tem and Culture and Heritage, Sen. Karin Housley – MN, Holly – Secretary/ IL, Anne – Pilot Emeritus, Derrick – Treasurer/MS, Martin – IA, Sabrina - ERA

The Meeting was called to order by the Pilot at 9:03am pm on 12/8/23.

The Pilot called for review of the September meeting minutes. Motion to approve by WI and second by IL. Motion approved.

The financial reports were moved to later in the meeting.

The Transportation committee chair reviewed two major efforts around MRT. Picked up MRT file from KY, CMP from IL and updated the website. The chair requests that we look at virtual committee attendance during in-person meetings to keep everyone up to date. Interpretive Centers (IC) & MRT – working to develop online new pages, tables and help documents.

Specific to directional IC signage – State DOTs can create files and share the information. We are building toward public engagement next year. TN shared that MRT Inc is inactive status. The chair suggested we use US Bike route symbol. Seems like an easier path and there is very little difference. Avoids going through FHWA.

Motion by WI to seek legal to pursue the name and not the symbol but a new symbol that follows US Bike Route. Second by MN. Question by Pilot Emeritus, – understand ease and recognition of US Bike Route “Miss River” – what we lose by not using this “branded identity” -- --We still want to include MRT but shield plate is slightly different. It would include US Bike Route at the top and MRT at bottom. Motion approved. Sherry will explore legal avenues using budget up to \$1,5000.

The Transportation chair is requesting active DOT staff participation to join our committee. We need state technical expertise. Contact your DOT for participation. This request should come from state commissions.

Lisa from IA shared that their commission received \$40,000 through June, 2024 and they are in a state of limbo right now.

The treasurer reviewed all the final reports, and a motion was made by WI and second by IA to approve.

The Pilot referenced the future need to contact David Perkins and discuss a proposal and cost to produce an economic impact study of the Great River Road.

Additionally, the Pilot spoke of the need to look again at sponsorships and target certain organizations. For example, let's find an organization to help print maps.

The Marketing chair referenced the Q3 report shared by the National Office. She spoke of the "Drive" the byways program national campaigns as well as discussion of a three-year campaign. Right now we're focusing on music, food and festivals – and a direct push for participation in our co-op advertising. It's a great idea because this is where partnership comes into play.

The Culture and Heritage committee talked about the newest application and recommendation from the committee for approval – the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge Center in WI. Sherry and Sabrina provided an overview. This is the first application in our new system. A motion to approve this as our newest Interpretive Center by Pilot Pro Tem and second by WI. Motion approved. It's located between the Great River Road and the Mississippi River. June 22 will be a large event celebration of the 100th anniversary.

The committee requests each state to look at their ICs and confirm all are open and functioning and report back to national office.

Banking on Nature – Economic return from each National Wildlife Refuge Rec Visitation to Local Communities.

https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USFWS_Banking_on_Nature_2017.pdf

The ERA chair reported a new technical member present at their committee meeting. She also stressed always trying to increase technical member participation. Additionally, she talked about pollinator activities and the Mississippi River pollination partnership. Let's ask each state commission how they are/can support this effort within their state. Pollinator week again transcends all the work we do at the committee level "cross pollination" across the committees. Excited about new partnership – largest pollinator partnership in the world. Great Media coverage – more to come – we'll keep everyone engaged. The 100-year anniversary of the Refuge is huge and we will use this to increase the GRR's visibility.

The Pilot presented the 2024 draft budget. Motion to approve by LA and second by IL.
Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10am.