



Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Meeting, 10:00 a.m. June 14, 2024
National Pearl Button Museum
117 West 2nd, Muscatine Iowa 52761

DRAFT

Chairman Martin Graber called the meeting to order.

Present: Lisa Walsh, Paul Carroll, Paula Mayer, Katie Hammond, and Ann Geiger

Absent: Jim Janett, Roger Thomas, and Lesley Webster

Others Present: Emily Whaley, DOT; Dustin Joy, Museum Director; Rebecca Paulson, Muscatine Tourism; Lora Friese, Economic Development; Kathy Aders, Sales and Marketing for Merrill Hotel

Paulson talked about their learning center. They have constructed a 16,000 pound statue of a watermelon slice made of steel which they are working Guinness Book to get a category.

Joy thanked everyone for coming to the museum and said many visitors coming through the GRR. The Commission complemented him on the appearance and opportunities which had expanded greatly since the last time it was there.

Ader gave a presentation for a possible conference in Iowa.

Fries gave an update on possible grants and the timeline for them. The Commission's meetings are a out of sinc for applications for some grants, but she will work with it to see what is available.

Items to add to the Agenda

Hammond said she would like to nominate the Environmental Learning Center at Discovery Park in Muscatine as an Interpretive Center. It is in a 100-acre park, ¼ mile from H61 and 2-3 miles from the Mississippi. There is an historic barn on site, home of an arboretum with live animals, snakes, raptors. There is an old hunter/trappers lodge. The facility is owned by the county and funded by tax dollars. Very hands-on place for animals and the environment along the Mississippi. July 16th is next Heritage and Culture meeting to present.

Carroll is building an educational pavilion at the Fairport Fish Hatchery. Walsh suggested we wait a year to consider that as an ICenter. Put the learning Center forward this year or attach the hatchery to the Button Museum info.

Mayer is collecting bids for 20,000 passports. The DOT is not printing them any more because the state can't print them in the correct size. Friese said there is a



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grant opportunity in August for printing. The Commission decided to do a small printing of 20,000 now from the state and apply for the grant in August for a full printing. Friese suggested a few changes to the passport regarding photos, and Mayer will be sure all the contact information is updated. In addition, if the Muscatine Discovery Center is approved as an ICenter, it can be included.

Motion by Mayer to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2024 meeting, seconded by Hammond and the motion carried.

Motion by Geiger to approve the Treasurers Report, seconded by Mayer and the motion carried.

Graber reviewed the budget to see what is still outstanding. There was a long discussion regarding the balance left in the budget. The outstanding issue is with the radio ads from LA Communications. Geiger called them and got any outstanding balance. Whaley will check with the DOT to see the final amount.

At the October meeting the Commission approved \$278.00 each for two large metal pole signs destroyed by storms in Ft. Madison and Keokuk. Both signs have been received and delivered. A bill on behalf of Lang Sign from the National office for \$398.68 for each sign. No notice has been given to the Commission by the National Office regarding the amount change, and Geiger discussed the issue with Lang.

Motion by Mayer to pay the original \$278.00 per sign totaling \$556, seconded by Carroll and the motion carried.

Canadian Heritage organization was briefly discussed with regard to moving forward with future inclusion of Canada in our activities. Geiger explained Firnstahl applied to the organization when he was City Clerk in Dubuque on behalf of its international program, but the city did was not interested. However, he is still included as an individual. Graber said the Canadians used to come to meetings and it would be good to reach out to them again.

Graber gave the Chairman's Report and said the road on the way to Montrose has fallen in again. Graber said, in his opinion, it was not properly previously repaired. The estimate is \$700,000 and the DOT said it would put \$500,000 to help fix, but \$200,000 needs to be raised. Walsh said there is money to be had. She said Sen. Miller helped getting funding for the Burlington airport. With further discussion it was decided the Commission might be able to help with funding.

Old Ft. Madison has the walls knocked down. There is a new 501(3)c organized to reactivate the fort with some updated changes.



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Geiger said there is a new director at the Buffalo Bill Museum. Rita Farro recently started, because the prior director resigned because of his health.

A photo op sponsored by the university with pre-loaded questions being answered and a photo taken. Hammond said some of the county conservation sites have a board up with a photo opportunity. Something to look into.

Discussion to approve the 2025 budget to remain basically the same as this year to reduce the radio ads and include \$2,500 for a possible grant match. Moving \$100 from administration to travel. Funding for the annual meeting travel was discussed and whether or not restrictions will be placed to determine who will be funded to go. Hammond moved to approve the changes, Carroll seconded the motion and it carried.

The next meeting will be held in Princeton on July 26th.

Meeting was adjourned.