

## Minutes of the Iowa MRPC Meeting March 21, 2013

Location: Bettendorf – The Lodge

Meeting opened at 10:15 a.m.

**Commission Board Members Present:** Chairman John Goodman; Patsy Ramacitti (Scott County); John Oberhaus (Muscatine County); Edith Pfeffer (Clinton County); M.J. Smith (Clayton County); Jane M. Regan (Allamakee County); **Liaisons:** Mary Stahlhut, Scenic Byways Program Manager Iowa DOT; Deb Arp, Iowa Dot; **Absent:** Larry Kruse (Lee County); Debbie Jochims (Des Moines County); Jay Schweitzer (Louisa County). Unrepresented: Jackson County due to no active appointee

Chairman John Goodman opened the meeting with discussion and planning for the Semi-Annual Meeting of the 10 State MRPC Commission which our Commission is hosting in Bettendorf, IA on April 26-28<sup>th</sup> at the Isle of Capri Hotel and Convention Center.

**Opening Reception and Dinner:** Discussion regarding attendees of our Dubuque Museum reception and what fee to charge for Non-member Guests that are not members. John suggested this is an appropriate time to invite transportation or local DOT commissioners that may want to attend the opening dinner. John will advise Suzanne to add \$5.00 to each meal at the Museum for Non Members.

Individual Names suggested by Board Members to send invitations to are: Debbie Duram, IDOT Commissioners, DNR, County Conservation Officers, County Engineers, City Council Members, Board of Supervisors, Local State Senators and Representatives, Regional Planning Commissions/Organization Executive Directors and Transportation Planners within the RPOs ( By-State Regional in Rock Island, East Central Intergovernmental Association , Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission, Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission) Lora Friest of Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission, recently formed Mississippi River Mayors group, Chamber Directors, Economic Development and Tourism Directors. John will do it electronically unless someone specifically asks him to send a mailed invitation to specified individuals. **Board Member Action: By next Friday at the latest each Board Member must provide John Goodman with a list of individuals from your County or Region you wish to have an invitation or feel it appropriate to invite to the Opening Reception and Dinner in Duque at the River Museum on April 25.**

Speakers for the Event: Mayor of Dubuque: Roy Buol will give a welcome, Jerry Enzler, Director of the Museum will speak and welcome everyone. M.J. Smith, being the longest serving commissioner of the Iowa MRPC will present facts on the dollars that have been received by MRPC recipients of grants and for the funding of the MRPC projects for the entire 10 States including its economic impact to the Great River Road. **MJ will check to see if there is a place at the Museum we could do a Laptop PowerPoint display of the sites along the 10 River States funded through MRPC. This should be available from the National Office.**

John mentioned the Dubuque Campus “if the snow has melted by end of April” has a separate building, the IMAX Center, where people can visit as well. Information sheets should be available to our guests of the hours of operation so that if they wish to visit them while on the campus they may.

Mary Stahlhut will provide the banner from the DOT that has all the Scenic Byways on it including our new Iowa Great River Road Sign so that everyone can see what we have done with signage throughout Iowa.

Margo McInnis from the Quad Cities CVB, present at 10:30. Margo came to ask what assistance we needed of them for the conference. She offered to put together our Welcome “bags” with Quad Cities information, maps, and itinerary for spouses for a Friday day trip with options to LeClaire or Muscatine, including highlights of must see sights in the area. Patsy requested that Margo be sure her information designates the Putnam Museum as a National MRPC Interpretive Center. Great River Road Maps should be included as well as the tear offs of our Iowa Interpretive Centers.

**Action: John will get the updates from each of us for the tear off GRR map (remove LeClaire add Camanche new center etc.) and have it reprinted as soon as possible so we have plenty available to stuff the “Welcome Bags” that Quad Cities CVB is providing.**

Bettendorf Mayor will do a Welcome at the General Session on Friday, April 26 at 9:00 a.m. Patsy will introduce the Mayor of Bettendorf. First presentation on Friday will be Lora Friest from RC&D of Northeast Iowa. Jane will introduce Lora. **Action: Jane will confirm if Lora was contacted by National Office staff and if she is available yet on Friday a.m. and will she speaks on fracking as well as the Scenic By-Ways.**

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of each State will be announced on Friday, April 26 as well. National Office staff will update the 10 States on the Great Race event which the National Board has approved \$5,000 of funds for marketing and promotion. This funding level makes us an official sponsor of The Great Race and will be paid to the event organizers of the Great Race. The entire Great River Road is NOT being travelled on for this event. Stops in Iowa are Dubuque and overnight in Davenport Éclair Park.

**Iowa Commissioners Note: As many of our commissioners that can attend the Great Race event on June 23 in the Quad Cities to man the booth must be there and in attendance. More details to follow after the April National Meeting and further direction is given from Suzanne and Lyn at the National Office.**

Edith commented that in Clinton for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the GRR the Art Gallery will be doing pictures through the summer of photography and paintings of the Mississippi River on display and asking the community to participate. The Historical Society will do a joint display honoring the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lincoln Highway and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GRR.

Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative (Bill Gluba, Mayor from Davenport) will speak at the Friday Noon luncheon. Someone that attended the meeting in DC in March should be there and present. Patsy will introduce Bill.

Next discussion was how the Iowa Commissioners will act as hosts for the “Dinner on Your Own” Friday evening. Edith suggested LeClaire being a destination that night with restaurants available such as the Faithful Pilot, The Crane and The Pelican, Sneaky Pete, The Blue Iguana, Stephenson’s. The Brew Pubs in LeClaire, Steeplegate Fish Fry in Davenport. Friday morning all members will receive a list of eating places we choose to offer as choices, and this will include a tear off at the bottom so that each registrant

can advise which restaurant they want to eat at that evening how many reservations they need. Commissioners will split up and act as hosts to the various eating places chosen.

**Action: John will send Margo an email today and ask for the suggestions on dining places.**

Hospitality Room: Jay Schweitzer is in charge of the Hospitality room. MJ's husband brewed a case of beer. Each member will bring something from their county locally made to share as an appetizer or drink in the hospitality room... Wines, salsa, olive salsa from Camanche, BoJees horseradish, Sterzings chips from Burlington, new bourbon from LeClaire, **ACTION: all commissioners let Jay know what you might be able to have donated from your County as food for the hospitality room. I.E. Wine, beer, chips, specialty dips made from specific products grown in your community, cheese curds and cheese made at a local dairy in your County, salsa, horseradish, bourbon from LeClaire.**

Our state meeting on Saturday, April 27 at 8:00 a.m. will be held at the Calypso Café in the Isle of Capri from 8:00 to 9:00. John will have all new tear off maps at that meeting ready to hand out to each commissioner to take back to our counties.

Deb Arp will make a presentation Friday during the General Session on Map 21 on behalf of Iowa DOT. Jay will introduce Deb on behalf of the Transportation Committee. Carol Zoff of MN DOT and MN MRPC commission will lead a discussion panel at this time also.

Lyn Pilch/National Office will lead discussion on the MRC update and the 10 State Partnership Program regarding Japanese Tourism. Update on the Commerce Department grant to the MRC for \$250,000 will be made at this time also.

John Goodman will give the State Report for Iowa as the final presentations from the States are made on Saturday morning during the General Session.

**Action: All Iowa MRPC commissioners will meet on April 25 at Noon in the Calypso Room in the South Tower at the Isle of Capri for a work session prior to the Opening of the Semi Annual 10 State MRPC that afternoon. (Patsy will make arrangements for a table to accommodate our group lunch)**

Discussion was held regarding the expense of the Iowa Facebook Contest winner that the 10 States Marketing Committee had given approval to the National Office staff to run on Facebook this past fall. It was a contest requesting entrants from Friends on Facebook of their favorite food they have eaten at restaurants along the GRR. Each State agreed to provide a gift basket for one of the 10 winners and the basket was to have a \$100 value. Patsy stated this was never approved by the National Board. Several of us advised Patsy that each State agreed to provide a \$100 gift basket whether that is by "free donations" or purchasing items to include in the basket. Edith Pfeffer had a bill to present for her items contributed to the basket. Jane and MJ reminded the board we are in the business to promote the GRR and this was a promotion of the GRR. Patsy moved/MJ seconded for authorization of up to \$150 for expenses of items and shipping costs for our participation in the marketing committees Facebook Contest and to have IDOT move that appropriation of dollars to the marketing line item in the budget. Motion Passed with all ayes.

John Goodman reported that the funding for the Iowa MRPC which was in great jeopardy in the transportation bill of the Iowa Senate will remain in the transportation budget. Brian Moore from Jackson County advised Edith that the Iowa MRPC needs to continue to educate legislators and provide

face to face updates to the State Senators and Representatives. The President of the Senate Pam Jochims assured Goodman they understand the purpose of the MRPC and we will remain funded. Edith restated we need to work both sides of House and Senate and discuss what we are about. Our own representatives on the GRR must be kept in the loop.

Patsy and Deb Arp led discussion on the Federal DOT dollars that will be funneled from IDOT to the Regional Planning Organizations. Deadline for application is April 15<sup>th</sup> for the small \$1,000,000 Statewide Program grant the Iowa DOT funds. The MPO's (municipal planning organizations) and RPO's (regional planning organizations) all handle their own deadlines for their money. This small Statewide Program would have been a perfect program for our signage. Is there something we need all along the GRR that is an eligible activity under transportation alternatives definitions? It will be too late for this year's deadline but keep this in mind for future funding from the Iowa DOT from this small Statewide Grant program. Deb Arp stated it is primarily for construction of such items as a pedestrian and bicycle facilities, conversion of abandoned RR to trails, outdoor advertising mgmt., rehab of historic transportation facilities, storm water mitigation or wildlife management related to highways, scenic turnouts and overlooks.

**ACTION STEP: MRPC Commissioners in each of the Regional Planning Organizations territories are to meet and discuss talking points with the Executive Directors and Transportation Directors of the RPOs, engaging in discussion of what the RPO's have in mind to use their money on and what their procedures will be for applying for the dollars. This is our opportunity to discuss with the RPOs our role on the MRPC Pkwy and ask how we can work together to promote the GRR. May we serve as advisors to their technical committee for their transportation funds? Jane and MJ will go to UERPC. Edith and John Goodman will meet and talk to Chandra the Transportation Sr. Planner at Eastern Iowa RPO. John Oberhaus and Patsy will go to Muscatine and Scott Co and The Bi-State Commission. Jay, Debbie and Larry will go to SE Iowa Regional Planning Commission. We need to ask who the decision makers are on each RPO Board and continue discussions with them.**

**ACTION: Make reports of our meetings with the RPO's and send our findings to John Goodman by April 19<sup>th</sup>. These must be done by this date. Make your contacts now.**

Deb Arp will send our members the summary of the changes from Safety Lu to Map 21 for each member to read and understand before attending the RPO. All contacts must be made with the RPOs before the April meeting. Personally invite these people to the SA mtg or at least to Dubuque Opening Dinner Reception. Advise them we will be talking about MAP21 on Saturday April 27 during the General Session. Carol Zoff could have someone from a RPO in Iowa to be on the panel on Saturday if any of our RPO Executive Directors would like to volunteer. If you get a volunteer contact John so that he can contact Carol Zoff.

RPA are Regional Planning Affiliations and MPOs are metropolitan Planning Organizations within the RPA.

John asked for a budget update from the Iowa DOT but they did not have it available for our meeting. Jane gave the following update on the fundraising to date by our Iowa MRPC for the match on the CMP grant. To date our checking account balance with all donations and a little interest earned is \$5,750.42. Total contributions to date have been \$6,652. One disbursement to Dahlquist and Associates. John commented that our State Budget of \$40,000 is appropriating dollars each year to our match as well.

**Reminder to Commissioners: continue to ask from your County's that we have not heard from yet. Those contributing to date are Dubuque, Clayton, Clinton, Louisa.**

**Adjournment: Motion MJ, Second Oberhaus. Carried.**

Respectfully Submitted:

Jane M. Regan  
Acting Secretary for Debbie Jochims