

**MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION QUARTERLY MEETING  
OSCEOLA CITY HALL  
OSCEOLA, ARKANSAS  
MONDAY, MAY 14, 2018**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Joe St. Columbia, chair  
Carole Bulloch  
Jim Craig  
Tyler Dunegan  
Anna Grizzle  
Bobby Kennedy  
Dr. Terri Austin McCullough  
Kem Merrell

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Pat Audrisch  
Sarah Dunklin

**TECHNICAL ADVISORS**

Kim Williams, director, Arkansas's Great River Road  
Dr. Ruth Hawkins, ASU Heritage Sites & co-chair, MRPC Culture & Heritage Committee  
Jeff Ingram, Arkansas Department of Transportation & MRPC Transportation Committee

**GUESTS**

Cliff Chitwood, director, Mississippi County Economic Development  
Jim Dailey, tourism director, Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism  
Kirk Kennedy, son of Bobby Kennedy  
Dickie Kennemore, mayor of Osceola  
Will McCullough, spouse of Dr. Terri Austin McCullough  
Paula Miles, assistant director, Arkansas Delta Byways  
Mary Osteen, public information technician, Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism  
Glynda Thompson, Mississippi County Museum (Great River Road interpretive center)  
Ammi Tucker, executive director, Osceola/South Mississippi County Chamber of Commerce

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Joe St. Columbia called the meeting to order at 10:39 a.m. on Monday, May 14, 2018.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Dr. Terri Austin McCullough and Jim Craig presented corrections to the minutes from the February 2018 meeting. Craig moved to approve the minutes as amended. McCullough seconded. The motion carried.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### MRPC NATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING

- The 2018 MRPC National Annual Meeting will take place Oct. 22-25, 2018 in West Memphis. Our quarterly meeting will take place Oct. 22.
- All Arkansas Delta attractions and interpretive centers are invited to come and set up informational booths at the meeting. It was suggested that James Hayes set up a pop-up glass blowing shop.
- Hayes will also provide us with favors at a discounted rate. Other favors suggested included rice from Riceland and Producer's and Arkansas cotton (Glynda Thompson and Ammi Tucker offered their connections for the cotton). Quantity for favors was decided at 120-150.
- Door prizes were also suggested – Jim Craig mentioned Rich-N-Tone duck calls.
- It was mentioned that the last meeting Arkansas hosted in Little Rock has been one of the best-attended MRPC meetings in history.
- Lakeport Plantation has decorations we could use.
- Nancy Clark plans on attending; it was mentioned that we might honor her during the meeting for all she's done for the MRPC.
- The host hotel will be the Comfort Inn & Suites. National Office has already contacted the hotel about a room block, however it is recommended to call now and attempt to reserve your room at the state rate.
- The hospitality room is planned to be located at the Comfort Inn & Suites.
- Hospitality room items will be donated and meals will be secured by National Office.
- We will work over the next several weeks to set up planning committees. Arkansas State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission commissioners Weston Lewey and Cindy Smith have also offered their assistance with planning and hosting. Tourism Communications staff, including graphic artist Jennifer Hoornstra, are also on board to help.
- Jim Jackson with West Memphis Tourism is hosting the pilot's banquet at the chamber facilities.
- We plan to contact Governor Asa Hutchinson after the primaries (May 22) per his request.
- At the October meeting, McCullough will be crowned pilot, and we will need to crown the previous pilot, Karl Samp. Think on creative ideas for this – a Razorback hat, King Biscuit Blues Festival biscuit hat, etc.
- Kim Williams is traveling to IPW in Denver and plans to connect with Lyn Pilch to discuss more.
- Stay tuned for planning meeting/conference call invites.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Williams took Harrison Maddox from the ADPT Central Office to Jones Bar-B-Que in preparation for his attendance at the Atlanta Food & Wine Festival in late May.

During her trip to Jones Bar-B-Que and during National Travel & Tourism Week at the Helena Welcome Center, Williams came into contact with several people enjoying the Great River Road. One couple was geocaching the entire length of the Great River Road, from Lake Itasca down to the Gulf of Mexico. Williams also met a French motorcycle tour operator who hosts rides from New Orleans to Chicago and had never collaborated with the Great River Road before.

We are collaborating with LA Rider, a motorcycling TV show out of Louisiana, which will air a special on the Great River Road and Arkansas Delta in September 2019 (during Drive the Great River Road month). We are looking to host them at Village Creek State Park and tour them throughout the region.

Williams is attending IPW in Denver to represent the Great River Road later this week. Last year's attendance was over 6,600 people. She is working with Dr. Ruth Hawkins and Paula Miles on developing itineraries to promote.

#### INTERPRETIVE CENTER VISITS

Joe St. Columbia distributed the Interpretive Center Checklist forms to the commissioners. These are to be completed for all centers in the respective commissioner's area. This involves checking for correct signage and information present, but also if the location is still a viable interpretive center and if it may need to be de-designated. This is done yearly. Send these to Williams by Aug. 1, 2018.

#### NEW INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

The deadline for interpretive center applications is Sept. 1. Jim Craig has submitted one for the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie in Stuttgart and Williams will submit one for the Sultana Disaster Museum in Marion (in addition to applying, we will also include the museum in the mobile sessions during the October Annual Meeting).

Hawkins has ordered three new interpretive center signs: one for the WWII Japanese American Internment Museum in McGehee, one for the Sultana Disaster Museum and one for the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie.

#### ARKANSAS GREAT RIVER ROAD PASSPORT

Williams reported that work has begun on a Great River Road passport, to feature all of the state's interpretive centers as well as a points-of-interest list for each one. Details are still being developed but ADPT graphic artist Jennifer Hoornstra has come up with a cover design. A day trips section featuring itineraries was also suggested.

#### RELAY OF VOICES PROJECT

Victoria Bradford of Relay of Voices, a project to gather stories from communities along the Great River Road while running to each city, plans to have three planning meetings in Arkansas this month – West Memphis, Marianna and Helena. Williams plans to attend at least two of these meetings. Bradford presented this idea originally at the Semi-Annual Meeting in Quincy this past April. While Bradford has Anthonyville planned as an overnight stay, it was discussed that we could possibly host the group on Horseshoe Lake at a guest house. The dates of the 2019 event will be announced no later than August, and McCullough heard they are planning for March 2019.

#### **MISSISSIPPI RIVER CONNECTIONS COLLABORATIVE**

McCullough, as member of the MRCC, mentioned the group is interested in attending the National Annual Meeting in West Memphis this October. This group of approximately 20 represents the core team members of the MRCC – employees from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Park Service, the U.S. Wildlife & Fisheries, etc.

**Dr. Terri Austin McCullough motions to invite the core team of the MRCC to attend the National Annual Meeting in West Memphis. Carole Bulloch seconded. The motion carried.**

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

The Hampson Archeological Museum State Park exhibits will likely be installed by July of this year, with a dedication planned during the November SPRTC Commission Meeting (Nov. 14-15, 2018). The museum is currently planned to open before this dedication.

Arkansas Tourism Director Jim Dailey described his new "Every City Has A Story" project, where he plans to get into contact with each of the state's mayors to learn the unique stories each town has to offer, and eventually compile these into a PR piece for the state. He is also available for speaking engagements as his schedule allows.

McCullough is attending the Association of Arkansas Counties Conference in Rogers this August, and will present the state's Drive the Great River Road Month proclamation for Governor Asa Hutchinson's signature.

If any interpretive centers need more Great River Road maps, let Williams know and she can place the order.

Jim Craig shared the sales tax lottery concept – sales tax is being collected and not reported, with receipts not being printed. Every time you get a receipt, there is an alpha-numerical code that is electronically sent to DFA every day a midnight; one person is randomly chosen each month to win \$10,000. This also shows DFA who is not reporting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Tyler Dunegan moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:53 a.m. Carole Bulloch seconded. The motion carried.**

## **UPCOMING MEETING DATES & LOCATIONS**

- Aug. 21, 2018 at 10:30 a.m.: Pillow-Thompson House, 718 Perry Street, Helena, Arkansas 72342.
- Oct. 22, 2018: West Memphis (day before annual meeting)
- Future location possibilities: Arkansas Post, Dale Bumpers National Wildlife Refuge, Hampson Archeological Museum State Park, Mississippi County Museum, Little Rock.