

Minutes

**The Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas
Springhill Suites by Marriott
21 North Main Street
Memphis, Tennessee
April 18, 2009**

Commissioners Present

Garland Hayes
Bobby Kennedy
Eva Hollowell
Taralou Dunklin
Molly Houseworth Jackson
Terri Austin McCullough
Phyllis Stinson
Carole Bulloch

Commissioners Absent

James Banks
Joe St. Columbia

Technical Advisors/ Department Staff/Guests Present

Nancy Clark, Great River Road Division Director
Ruth Hawkins, Technical Advisor, Arkansas Delta Byways Regional Tourism Association
Julia Hart, Technical Advisor, Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department
Jay Robinson, Technical Advisor, Arkansas Economic Development Commission
Paula Miles, Arkansas Delta Byways Regional Tourism Association
Louis Intres, Arkansas State University Graduate Student

Call to Order

Chairman Garland Hayes called the meeting to order, welcomed and introduced the guests and thanked everyone for taking time from their busy schedules to participate in both the national meeting of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) as well as the Arkansas meeting. Chairman Hayes recognized new commissioners, Phyllis Stinson from Clarendon in Monroe County, Carole Bulloch from Monticello in Drew County, and Dr. Terri Austin McCullough from Eudora in Chicot County.

Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Eva Hollowell moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Bobby Kennedy seconded and the motion carried.

Resolution for Alvin Meyer

Chairman Hayes said Alvin Meyer resigned from the Commission due to health reasons, and he offered the following resolution for Mr. Meyer's dedication to the Commission.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Alvin Meyer has provided dedicated and invaluable service and leadership to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, Alvin Meyer gave unfailingly and unselfishly of his time to the Commission in the furtherance of its goals; and

WHEREAS, Alvin Meyer has made a lasting contribution to the activities of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas express their deep and continued appreciation for the numerous contributions of Alvin Meyer to the success of its programs.

This RESOLUTION adopted by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission on this 18th day of April 2009, in the City of Memphis, Tennessee.

Terri Austin McCullough moved to approve the resolution for Alvin Meyer. Carol Bulloch seconded and the motion carried.

Per Diem Rates for 2009

Nancy Clark explained Arkansas Act 67 of 2007 sets the per diem rate for the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas at \$60.00 per meeting day. Ms. Clark said a vote must be taken at the first meeting in the calendar year to re-establish the per diem rate for each commission meeting for 2009, and to authorize travel reimbursement not to exceed the rates established for state employees. Ms. Clark said the Commission could vote to lower the rate of per diem, but not to raise it.

Eva Hollowell moved to approve the per diem rates for 2009. Terri McCullough seconded and the motion carried.

Geocaching Project for Great River Road Update

Nancy Clark reported the Arkansas portion of the Great River Road 70th Anniversary geocaching celebration has concluded. Caches were placed at Lake Village, Jerome, St. Charles, Arkansas City, Helena-West Helena, Brinkley, Wilson, Forrest City and Horseshoe Lake. The caches will remain in place to draw more visitors. As of April 13, 2009, the caches have been found 302 times. Many of the cachers stated in their logs they made a special trip to find the caches, and they participated in the 10-state Great River Road geocache project. The National Commission Marketing Committee voted to continue with a geocaching contest beginning in June and concluding at the annual meeting in September with a drawing for the winners. Each Great River Road State will provide an overnight stay package valued at least \$100 and a basket of Great River Road items.

Delta Byways Update

Dr. Ruth Hawkins announced the Delta Byways annual banquet was cancelled earlier due to inclement weather and the resulting damage. It has been rescheduled for May 29 at the Paragould Community Center. The evening will begin with a silent auction followed by the banquet and awards program. Ten awards will be presented: Media Support, Hospitality,

Entrepreneur, Festival/Event of the Year, Boot Strap, Promotional, Outstanding Member, Cultural Heritage and Tourism Person of the Year. Dr. Hawkins said the Mississippi River Parkway Commissioners were nominated for Tourism Person of the year award, and that all had been sent invitations to attend the banquet and awards ceremonies.

Great River Road Upcoming Grant Projects

Dr. Ruth Hawkins said a grant from National Scenic Byways will begin in July for a coordinated marketing and interpretative program for the region served by both National Scenic Byways. The grant includes monies for Beth Wiedower's position at Rural Heritage Development Initiative (RHDI) for two more years, funds her travel, her technical support to communities, and implementation of various projects. It also includes funds to assist the national MRPC Culture and Heritage Committee in gathering oral histories, developing themed itineraries, and upgrading Interpretive Center signage as well as funding a cemetery trail brochure.

Dr. Hawkins asked each of the Commissioners to collect information in their respective counties by identifying cemeteries more than one hundred years old with the cemetery name, address or directions to the location and who is buried there of interest to the public. Web sites which are helpful are www.geonames@usgs.gov and www.findagrave.com which may be searched by criteria.

Dr. Hawkins gave an update on the current status of the national scenic byway Arkansas Great River Road grant. The Great River Road Arkansas brochure has been printed and distributed, the double-sided signage for the interpretive centers has been designed, the agricultural crops brochure has been printed, the cooperative effort with Audubon for the Great River Birding Trail Web site (www.greatriverbirdingtrail.org) is complete, the loop signage project should be complete within the next six months, photos for the old town exhibit are being gathered, a children's activity book for each county is in progress, and a Crowley's Ridge Parkway hiking/biking trail is being developed in Jonesboro.

Arkansas Scenic Byways Brochure

Julia Hart, Technical Advisor with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department reported (AHTD) placed an advertisement in the Fall Newspaper Insert which the Department of Parks and Tourism runs in all the state newspapers, and several out-of-state papers. This ad generated over 3,000 inquires for the new scenic byways brochure which includes information on all the national and state scenic byways in Arkansas.

Miscellaneous

Chairman Garland Hayes reminded Commissioners to be return their TR1s to Nancy Clark for processing. A discussion ensued as to the next meeting date, and it was decided that a meeting would be held on May 29 in conjunction with the Delta Byways Banquet at the Paragould Community Center. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Garland Hayes, Chairman
Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Nancy Clark, Director
Great River Road Division