

**Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas
Arkansas Hospitality Association
Little Rock, Arkansas
November 7, 2012**

Commissioners Present

Joe St. Columbia, Chairman
Melanie Baden
Carole Bulloch
Bobby Kennedy
Terri Austin McCullough
Phyllis Stinson
Bob Ware

Commissioners Absent

Lois Boyd
Molly Houseworth Jackson
Ron Killingsworth

Technical Advisors/Department Staff/Guests Present

Marla Crider, Great River Road Division Director
Dr. Ruth Hawkins, Executive Director, Delta Byways Regional Tourism Association
Paula Miles, Delta Byway Regional Tourism Association
Jay Robison, Arkansas Department of Economic Development
Julia Hart, Technical Advisor, Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department
Gip Robertson, Environmental Committee
Dottie Boyles, Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism
Dorreta George, Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism
Garland Hayes
Nancy Clark
Patsy Robertson
Betty Kennedy

Call to Order

Chairman Joe St. Columbia called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. on Thursday, November 7, 2012.

Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Carole Bulloch moved to accept the Minutes from the August 2012 meeting. Terri Austin McCullough seconded and the motion carried.

Special order of business: Resolution/Clark

The Commission approved a resolution honoring former MRPC Director Nancy Clark for her many years of dedication, service, and leadership to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas. Ms. Clark served as the director for 18 years.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Nancy Clark has provided dedicated and invaluable service and leadership to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas as its Director; and

WHEREAS, Nancy Clark has contributed her time, energy and expertise serving on the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission's marketing committee, as well as representing Arkansas's Great River Road on the Mississippi River Country advisory committee; and

WHEREAS, Nancy Clark has served the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas unfailingly and unselfishly for more than 18 years, while tirelessly furthering its goals; and

WHEREAS, Nancy Clark has made a lasting contribution to the achievements of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas, and the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission;

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 Nancy Clark to the success of its programs.

This **RESOLUTION** adopted by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas on this 7th day of November, 2012, in the City of Little Rock, Arkansas.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION

/s/ Joe St. Columbia, Chairman

GREAT RIVER ROAD DIVISION

/s/ Marla Crider, Director

Special Presentations

The Commission presented former MRPC Director Nancy Clark with a resolution in honor of her many years of service to the MRPC. Ms. Clark was also presented with an honorary membership from the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

The Commission presented Garland Hayes with a resolution in recognition for his many years of service and dedication as a Commissioner with the MRPC. Mr. Hayes was also presented with an honorary membership from the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Garland Hayes has provided dedicated and invaluable service and leadership to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas serving in numerous Board capacities, including Chairman; and

WHEREAS, Garland Hayes has contributed time, energy and his expertise serving on the Executive Committee of the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission, as well as sharing his Arkansas humor and “can-do” spirit at national conferences; and,

WHEREAS, Garland Hayes has served the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas unfailingly and unselfishly for more than 10 years, while tirelessly furthering its goals; and

WHEREAS, Garland Hayes has made a lasting contribution to the achievements of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas, and the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission;

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 Garland Hayes to the success of its programs.

This **RESOLUTION** adopted by the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas on this 7th day of November, 2012, in the City of Little Rock, Arkansas.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARKWAY COMMISSION

/s/ Joe St. Columbia, Chairman

GREAT RIVER ROAD DIVISION

/s/ Marla Crider, Director

Pilot's Award

Marla Crider reported the Mississippi River Parkway Commission of Arkansas was bestowed with the prestigious Pilot's Award from the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission at the organization's annual meeting held September 27-29, in Louisville, KY. The Pilot's Award is presented annually to a state or province commission in recognition of outstanding achievements in pursuing the goals and objectives of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. The award will be on display in the ADPT office until next year.

Reports

Arkansas Delta Media FAM Tour

Marla Crider reported on the Arkansas Delta FAM tour. The Department contracted with Geiger and Associates, a public relations firm, to bring journalists into the Arkansas Delta the first week of October. The tour involved twenty writers who were escorted through the region. The first journalists arrived on October 1, with the bulk of the writers arriving on October 3. Most of the media left on October 7, with two writers remaining through October 10.

While on tour, most of the group attended the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena-West Helena, as well as the Johnny Cash Music Festival in Jonesboro. Johnny Cash festival organizer, Bill Carter, set aside time not only to talk to the writers but introduced country music artist Rosanne Cash to the group.

The journalists toured Arkansas through several tracks – including fishing, golf, music, and highway travel. Many were impressed with what the Arkansas Delta had to offer. Response from industry partners has been positive. At several locations community leaders joined the tour and shared information about their area.

Arkansas Delta Byways

Dr. Ruth Hawkins distributed the Arkansas Delta Byways *Tombstone Trail, Final Destinations*. The brochure features 32 cemeteries along the Delta from Piggott in the north to Jennie in the south.

November 16, 2012 is the deadline for Arkansas Delta Award nominations to be turned in. The Delta Awards Banquet will be held February 1, 2013 in Helena-West Helena. The banquet is to be held at the Phillips Community College /University of Arkansas College Campus. There will be local vendors and a silent auction will be held.

Highway and Transportation Department

Julia Hart reported that there are still some federal highway funds available; however, that is subject to change. There has been no decision as to how those funds in Arkansas will be spent. The decision will probably depend on what happens in the 2013 legislative session. The federal Scenic Byways funding was eliminated by Congress and will take effect in 2013.

Marla Crider stated she is considering asking Scott Bennett, the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department's Director, to be a guest speaker at the Governor's Conference and discuss how the bond issue funds will be spent.

MRPC Appointments

Commissioners Molly Houseworth Jackson and Ron Killingsworth have resigned from the commission. Governor Mike Beebe's office is looking for replacements. A nomination has been sent to the Governor's office for review to replace Commissioner Jackson. Commissioners Jackson and Killingsworth will remain on the commission until a replacement has been found.

Old Business

Garland Hayes mentioned that he still has not been receiving information from the national MRPC office and requests that we follow up and ask that he and Nancy Clark be included on the newsletter distribution list.

Commissioner Terry Austin McCullough reminded the commission that the Rohwer Experience will open in McGeehee in a few months and she hopes everyone will attend the dedication. Dr. Ruth Hawkins and Commissioner Bob Ware has agreed to assist with the project.

Also, the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home project in Dyess is scheduled to open the week of September 10-14. More info will be coming our way.

New Business

National MRPC and King Biscuit Blues Festival-2013.

Craig Mitckes from the Illinois MRPC expressed that several people are interested in attending the King Biscuit Blues Festival-2013, and wanted to encourage the entire National MRPC members to have a social gathering at the event, since it is on the Mississippi River.

Chairman St. Columbia reported that the festival budget is about \$1 million annually, which mainly covers the performers' fees. Usually 80,000 to 100,000 people attend. This would be a social event, not an official meeting. The festival organizers might offer a discount on tickets, invitation to VIP tent, etc. The first step would be for the MRPC to consider being the host group for the National members sometime during Oct 10-12. The Delta Cultural Center would probably be willing to host. Several suggestions to be looked into are to tour civil war places, Freedom Park, and the new Helena Welcome Center will be open in August. Folks could gather at the chamber and use the meeting room, then go to DCC for socializing or some sort of entertainment. Commissioner Bulloch asked about accommodations. Do some emailing & investigating of the community's interest in participation. Marla Crider commented that we have very few funds for hosting any events. We can check on van service and rooms

(block/reserve). Since state funds aren't to be used, a block of rooms could be reserved across the river.

Chairman Joe St. Columbia distributed the *Helena World Newspaper* featuring the article "River History Display Arrives at the Museum" about the addition to the Helena Museum of Phillips County.

GRR 75th Anniversary

What can Arkansas do to promote the 75th Anniversary of the Great River Road? Should we have a special event? Dr. Hawkins reported that she serves on the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) committee and 2013 has been declared the year of cycling and would like to promote biking events. She also noted that a group in Minnesota coordinated a service project that involved cleaning headstones in historic cemeteries. Should we consider something like that? We might suggest this idea to include a cemetery clean-up in all 10 MRPC states. We might ask scouting groups or other service clubs to assist. It would be a good way to promote GRR and MRPC. Commissioner McCullough mentioned that the U.S. Geological Service has a link on its website that shows/tells people how to properly clean headstones. Gip Robertson, of the Environmental Committee, stated the state archeological society might be able to assist.

Marla Crider mentioned that at the marketing meeting during the national conference she was asked about the possibility of MRPC organizing a civil war trail ride for motorcycles that has proven to be successful in Arkansas. National is very interested in pursuing this along the GRR. The national office would create a patch for those who participated in the GRR trail ride. To get the patch, participants would have to submit photos taken in the various states along the GRR and send them to the national MRPC Facebook page.

Announcements

Chairman Joe St. Columbia announced that the Tour de Delta would be held in Helena this weekend. Approximately 10-12 states will be represented. The Helena A&P commission has given money to sponsor it.

Next meeting date will be held after the Governor's Conference in Hot Springs on March 6 at the Hot Springs Convention Center.

TR-1s were distributed to commissioners for their signatures.

Chairman Joe St. Columbia moved to adjourn the meeting.

Without any further business the Mississippi River Parkway Commission meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m. on November 7, 2012, at 603 South Pulaski Street, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Respectfully submitted:

Joe St. Columbia, Chairman
Mississippi River Parkway Commission

Marla Crider, Director
Great River Road Division