



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
4th Quarter Meeting – November 17, 2022
Historic Fort Snelling/Zoom Hybrid
MINUTES – Draft

Commissioners Present

Megan Christianson – Grand Rapids to Brainerd
Karl Samp – Brainerd to Elk River
Jennifer Weaver – Hastings to Iowa Border
Sen. David Senjem
Sen. Patricia Torres Ray
Paul Hugunin – Agriculture Appointee
David Kelliher – Historical Society Appointee
Grant Wilson – Natural Resources Appointee
Lisa Havelka – Tourism Appointee
Anne Lewis – At Large Member

Technical Advisors/Staff Present

Kelli Bruns – Natural Resources
Carol Zoff – Transportation

Diane Henry Wangensteen – LCC
Carol Bisbee - LCC
Chris Miller – MN-MRPC Staff

Members Absent

Sally Fineday – Lake Itasca to Grand Rapids
John Anfinson – Elk River to Hastings
Rep. Emma Greenman
Rep. Kristin Robbins
Marni Karnowski - Transportation Appointee
Tucker Blythe – National Park Service

Speakers & Guests Present

Nicole Bartelt, Department of Transportation
Christina Iliev, Department of Agriculture

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair Senjem. A quorum was present. Special thanks to Historic Fort Snelling and the Minnesota Historical Society for hosting today's meeting and providing a tour.

Approve Minutes from 8/11/22 Meeting: Motion by Anne Lewis and seconded by Megan Christianson to approve the August 11, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Budget Report: The budget report in the meeting packet was referenced by Chris Miller and Anne Lewis. The report includes columns identifying the FY 23 base allocation along with carry forward funds remaining from FY 22. Report approved by consensus.

Regional Meetings/Elections: Regional Meetings and elections of Regional Commissioners are coming up on November 30 (Metro Region) and December 1 (Bluffs Region). Meetings will be held via Zoom and MN-MRPC members are always welcome.

2023 Quarterly Meetings: Quarterly meeting dates for 2023 are to be determined and will be announced in December. Meetings will likely be in a hybrid format with the in-person location being somewhere within the Capitol Complex. Due to high demand for hybrid rooms during the legislative session, the first quarter meeting could be scheduled on a Friday instead of the usual Thursday. Legislative appointments to the MN-MRPC will be made in early 2023, sometime prior to the first meeting.

Election of At-Large Member: The At-Large Member of the MN-MRPC is appointed by the other 14 members every two years. Nominations for the position were requested by email. Chair Senjem announced that three nominations for Anne Lewis were received and called for any additional nominations with none noted. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by Grant Wilson to close nominations and elect Anne Lewis as At-Large Member for a new two-year term. Motion carried.

Member Updates: Member updates were included in the meeting packet.

National MRPC Annual Meeting and Updates: Anne Lewis noted the handout in the meeting packet, a summary prepared by the National MRPC Office. She congratulated John Anfinson on his election as Pilot Pro Tem (Vice Chair) of the MRPC and congratulated Sen. Senjem on receiving the MRPC Distinguished Service Award. Technical committee work was the main focus of the meeting, the first in-person ten state meeting since 2019. Sen. Senjem reported that the meeting also involved some joint activities with the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators, who were meeting in the same venue. Karl Samp asked about future national meetings and locations, including if Bemidji is still being

considered as a possible location. The MRPC Board will be discussing future meeting formats soon and will be deciding on whether there will be one or two in-person meetings annually.

Drive the Great River Road Month 2022 Report: Christina Iliev from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture reported on results of the Fall Harvest promotion for Drive the Great River Road Month 2022. She provided a recap of the campaign components including the State Fair kick-off event, webpage, itineraries, Pick of the Month newsletter, traveler kits with survey, photo contest and social media. Thanks were expressed to all Commission members and agencies that assisted with information, kit items and communications. Chair Senjem and members applauded the enthusiasm and leadership of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Grown Program and thanked them for the outstanding promotion. A request was made for a copy of today's presentation. It will be emailed to members and is also available at <https://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/mrpc/Meetings22-23.html> with other November 17 meeting materials.

Transportation Alternatives Projects – Letters of Support: Chris Miller provided background on the process the Commission has used in recent years to consider letters of support for this funding source. The Commission considers information from letters of intent to apply for the funding, and then if the Commission approves support letters, staff reaches out to project applicants to offer letters if they move forward with the full application. This process allows the Commission to act at a regularly scheduled meeting and still meet the application deadline. Carol Zoff shared information on the letters of intent received by the Department of Transportation and referenced the summary of projects from Great River Road communities she provided for the meeting packet. 10 projects are from Great River Road communities and five of the projects have direct benefit to the byway and byway traveler and help implement the MN Great River Road Corridor Management Plan. The applicant organizations for those projects are Cuyuna Lakes Trail Association, City of Rice, City of Little Falls, City of Red Wing and City of Brainerd. Motion by Karl Samp and seconded by David Kelliher to authorize letters of support for the five projects as recommended. Motion carried.

Lower St. Anthony Falls/Lock & Dam #1 Disposition Study – Scoping Comments: John Anfinson provided a draft letter for Commission consideration, included in the meeting packet. The letter asks that byway intrinsic qualities and the MN-MRPC mission be considered as part of the scoping process for the Lower St. Anthony Falls/Lock & Dam #1 disposition study that will be completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A public comment period for this purpose is now open. Members discussed the letter and suggested an addition clarifying that byway intrinsic qualities are defined by the Federal Highway Administration. Motion by Megan Christianson and seconded by Anne Lewis to authorize the letter as amended, for submittal to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Motion carried.

Other Business: Megan Christianson shared an update from the MRPC Marketing Committee. The National Great River Road website has had a surge in visitors recently. Itineraries are important, popular, and allow people to make them their own. Enewsletter and Facebook likes are also up. The committee is looking into new opportunities for local entities to place digital ads/banners on the National Great River Road platform.

Closing Comments: Sen. Senjem recognized departing members Jennifer Weaver and Sen. Torres Ray. Both shared comments with their fellow members. Sen. Torres Ray encouraged the Commission to consider partnering with the MSP Film Society and local theaters in river communities. Sen. Senjem shared parting comments with the Commission. He chose this group when he was first elected to the Senate and stayed with it for 20 years, not wanting to give it up because of the unique partnerships and nature of the work. David Kelliher thanked the MN-MRPC for coming to Historic Fort Snelling, expressed thanks to outgoing members and presented a plaque to outgoing Chair Senjem in honor of his outstanding service. Discussion and good wishes followed.

Next Meeting: 2023 meeting dates have not yet been set.

Adjournment: There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.