



Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Executive Committee Meeting
September 2, 2020 • 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Zoom

DRAFT AGENDA

- Welcome & Review of Agenda
- MN-MRPC Operations
 - FY 21 Budget
 - MN-MRPC Regional Meetings/Elections – Develop Plan for Fall/Winter 2020
- Ambassador Development
 - Review Plan and Discuss Modifications to Process & Timelines
- Improving Access and Welcoming Environment along the Mississippi River
 - Discuss Feedback from Quarterly Meeting & Next Steps
- MRPC 2021 Annual Meeting – Bemidji
 - Discuss Planning Process & Timeline
- U of M Tourism Center
 - Consider as Future MN-MRPC Quarterly Meeting Agenda Item
- General Updates/Other
- Adjourn



**Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Executive Committee – February 10, 2020
State Office Building, St. Paul MN
MINUTES - Draft**

Members Present: Sen. David Senjem, Anne Lewis, Lisa Havelka

Technical Advisors & Staff Present: Carol Zoff, Diane Henry-Wangensteen, Chris Miller

Members Absent: Cordelia Pierson

Meeting began with welcomes and a review of the agenda. Several members participated by phone.

MN-MRPC Roster Status: David Kelliher was recently appointed as voting member from the Minnesota Historical Society, filling the vacancy that had existed for that agency. There was discussion on meeting absences and lack of representation for the Bluffs Region. Executive Committee members concurred with the recommendation from the February 6 MN-MRPC meeting that Sen. Senjem send a letter to the current member noting the absences and that a vacancy will be declared if no response is received by March 2. Executive Committee then discussed possible process for filling the vacancy if needed until the end of the current term in later fall of 2020 including whether Sen. Senjem could appoint in the interim. Lisa Havelka offered to contact potential candidates in the region. A suggestion was made to restructure regional committees into more focused working groups rather than broad stakeholder lists. Parameters and qualifications for applicants were discussed – including seeking representation from groups related to the work of the MN-MRPC such as tourism, watershed districts, historical societies, transportation, planning, byway intrinsic resources. Another option would be to connect to the mission of the MN-MRPC, either “preserve”, “promote”, or “enhance.” MN-MRPC statute change recommendations were also discussed including clarification on the appointment process of regional members (appointed by the MN-MRPC after recommendation by regional committees) and term length.

LCC Harassment Policy: In January, the Legislative Coordinating Commission adopted a new Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment. The policy applies to all staff and non-legislative members of the joint offices and commissions under LCC. An email was sent to public members of the MN-MRPC (regional and at-large) with links to the policy information and a memo providing reporting procedures. Executive Committee felt this was sufficient but if training is necessary, recommended an online approach that members could view on their own.

Staffing Agreement: Process was discussed as follow up to Quarterly Meeting. LCC will draft an amendment to the current agreement for a two-year extension and will circulate to all necessary parties for signatures.

All American Road Application: Application for All American Road status is a big task and will take priority until May. The application is due to FHWA on May 15 but will likely be due to the Mn Scenic Byways Office sooner (confirmed after the Executive Committee meeting to be May 1). Final review of the application by the Executive Committee may be requested prior to submission. Important upcoming dates include the online portal for applications to be open on February 13 and an informational webinar planned by FHWA for February 26. Carol and Chris both plan to be on the webinar. Carol has distributed a preliminary list of 17 intrinsic resource features to MN-MRPC members to begin discussion. A final list of 16 features with supporting information and photographs will be needed and will be a critical portion of the application. Letters of support will be needed from member agencies and others. Lisa Havelka offered to search EMT photo files for those that may help with the application. Details on needs for photos, letters and other information will be provided to members after the FHWA webinar.

MN-MRPC 2020 Quarterly Meetings: Meeting changes that have been made recently based on Executive Committee recommendation include an earlier start time, written member reports with verbal reports limited unless Commission action is requested, and informational presentations from partners. Committee members recommended continuing with these approaches.

Quarterly Meeting Field Trip: Committee recommended proceeding with plans for a field trip meeting in August. Rep. Jurgens has offered Hastings as a location and the committee encouraged moving forward with plans. There is also interest in possible GRR Interpretive Center nominations from the Hastings area and visits or presentations may be a good fit with the meeting. Lisa noted the concept of EMT's affiliate welcome centers as something that could be applicable for sites considering Interpretive Center nominations. Committee member suggestions for the field trip meeting included providing a pre-session to showcase local topics, notifying local partners that the MN-MRPC will be meeting in the area, and including information about Drive the Great River Road Month (September).

MRPC 2020 Annual Meeting – Bemidji: The planning team will be meeting again via conference call on February 20. Requests for assistance from MN-MRPC members are likely to follow as the agenda topics and structure are confirmed. Anne Lewis and Sen. Senjem also have a planning call with National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL) representatives soon to discuss possible coordination during the Sept. 15 – 17 timeframe. Staff will plan for overall costs related to hosting the MRPC Annual Meeting when the FY21 budget is developed.

Print Map Update: Proposals from printing/shipping vendors will be reviewed by a team on February 11 and a selection recommendation will be made to Sen. Senjem. The shipping/quantity list will be reviewed and finalized. Committee recommended printing all we can, including planning for a quantity to be used during the MRPC 2020 Annual Meeting/MRCTI Annual Meeting.

Website Project Update: Staff will receive training from website developer soon on the administrative side of the site. A recommendation was made to add State Parks story map under Photos and Videos tab.

Ambassador Development Update: Carol Zoff and Chris Miller reviewed the two-year plan. The first training workshops will be scheduled for early summer and will focus on Interpretive Centers. Suggestions were made to align the workshops with other events if/when possible such as the MRPC Annual Meeting and August MN-MRPC Quarterly Meeting Field Trip. Purchasing and inventory of equipment included in the budget was discussed. A goal is to have a tablet or laptop with appropriate software available in the field for real time updates of resources in the Plan Your Trip mapping and guides.

Topics for Future Consideration – House/Senate Committee Presentations; Agency Leaders Event: Committee members agreed that these topics should stay on agendas for future consideration and encouraged looking for ways to align with other opportunities and projects. Presentations and events such as these might fit well after the first round of Ambassador training workshops. Timing should be outside the legislative session and should also consider budget process/biennial schedule. If opportunities come up during the session for informational presentations, a request for speakers could be sent out to MN-MRPC members.

The committee also recommended creation of annual or biennial work plans to better document the priorities, projects and accomplishments of the Commission. The plan should define when we expect things to happen. The four initial implementation projects identified in the Corridor Management Plan have served as a general workplan recently and as they are being completed, additional tasks from the CMP will be identified. A work plan should focus on a 12 – 18 month timeline and should be updated to include accomplishments and future needs. Having plans on paper with a timeline would be helpful for Commission decision making as things come up. Carol, Diane and Chris will develop a draft for consideration at a future meeting.

Other Discussion: Needs and budget for interpretive panels were discussed – both to replace those no longer sound and to develop and place other panels as defined in the interpretive plan and CMP.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.

MN-MRPC FY21 Activity/Project Budget

Draft 7-30-20

<u>Activity/Item</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
<u>MN-MRPC Operating Budget</u>	
Quarterly Meetings	\$4,600.00
Other Commissioner meetings travel & per diem	\$1,200.00
Executive Committee Meetings (2 @ \$300)	\$600.00
MRPC Dues	\$15,000.00
Admin Contract	\$26,400.00
Website & phone basic costs (incl. 450 website + 300 phone + 204 Constant Contact)	\$2,000.00
Map Shipping & Storage	\$3,000.00
National Meetings	\$2,000.00
Regional Meetings/Elections	\$900.00
Additional Staff Hours for CMP Implementation Activities with Partners & Stakeholders including letters of support/comment, investment inventory, regional mtgs and elections, ambassador program mgmt	\$15,000.00
Website Edits and Updates	\$2,000.00
Drive the Great River Road Month Promotional Campaign	\$4,500.00
General Material Printing & Supplies	\$800.00
Total Operating Budget	\$78,000.00
<u>Special Projects - Funding for implementation during FY20 and FY21</u>	
Website Updates for Map Tools, Mobile Devices	Carry forward TBD
Ambassador Development	Carry forward TBD
New Print Map	Carry forward TBD
Total Special Projects	
FY21 Operating Budget Allocation	\$78,000.00



MN Great River Road Ambassador Program **Implementation Discussion**

As Recommended in the *MN Great River Road Corridor Management Plan 2016*
July 30, 2019 – MN-MRPC Executive Committee

The objective of the Ambassador Program is to provide resources, materials and training for MN-MRPC member facility managers, local road and attraction managers, and local businesses and residents to improve corridor management, better serve tourists and encourage economic development.

Program Objectives

1. Strengthen local partnerships for the MN-MRPC: GRR Network of Interpretive Centers, MN GRR Traveler Resources, CVBs, transportation agencies, local to state government officials, Minnesota Grown members, etc.
2. Practice using MN GRR Plan Your Trip/Plan Your Project, Regional Travel Guides (Story Maps) and MN GRR print map; and confirm/revise site information using Collector App/Confirmation Form.
3. Engage local partners to help MN-MRPC promote Great River Road amenities, events, and locally grown foods and to better understand byway traveler needs.
4. Listen to advice on how to improve byway traveler experiences through local partner activities and MN-MRPC website, online/print maps, give-away item and promotion refinements.
5. Build local community appreciation for the Great River Road as a state and national tourism and development asset in their midst.
6. Build MN-MRPC appreciation for challenges/opportunities individual sites and agencies have that could be addressed/leveraged by the GRR.
7. Develop an Ambassador Toolkit for ongoing Ambassador activities.

Two Year Approach

1. Year One: Start "Ambassador" program with an initial phase of 2 hour workshops at the 12 MN GRR Interpretive Centers, including their local CVB.
2. Produce a "test" Toolkit for use by and with first year Ambassadors.
3. Year Two: Refine the Toolkit and Ambassador Development workshop based upon advice received.
4. Conduct 2 hour workshops with the 12 MN GRR Interpretive Centers and their local CVBs. Conduct 12 additional 2 hour workshops with select GRR CVBs, transportation agencies, local to state gov't officials, and Minnesota Grown members.

Potential Ambassador Toolkit Contents

1. Updated ten state and MN Great River Road information packets
2. MN Great River Road and ten state print maps
3. CMP brochure and 2019 update
4. Sample promotional items, possibly window clings, key rings, pins, luggage tags, business cards, etc.
5. 100-word & 200-word Great River Road descriptions for insertion in local tourist publications
6. Elevator speech – 250 words on the benefits of becoming a Great River Road Ambassador
7. GRR Ambassador Toolkit (thumb drive or online resource page): MN Great River Road and ten state print map files, MN and ten-state paddlewheel graphics/permission forms, MN GRR CMP, CMP info graphics, CMP brochure and 2019 update sheet, 10-state CMP, MN-MRPC IC Ambassador Development PowerPoint, Byway Traveler Resource Data Confirmation form for Resources to update data and submit site images, Ambassador Development video or other guidance.