



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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*James Kuhn, Cashton, WI  
Chairman*  
*Bill E. Schroeder, Hager City, WI  
Vice Chairman*  
*Vicki Burke, Onalaska, WI  
Secretary & Treasurer*  
*Jon Bingol, La Crosse, WI  
Executive Director*

## **MINUTES**

### **MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC) BIMONTHLY MEETING**

**10:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 9, 2023**

**Family and Children's Center Building, 1707 Main Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601**

#### **Call to Order at 10:00 am**

Chairman Kuhn called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the roll call. A quorum was present. There were several guests in attendance: David Schmitz, Matthew Jansen, Representing Representative Oldenburg, Francis Schelfout, WI DOT, LeAnna Kavanaugh, Pepin County Economic Development Coordinator, Erin Duffer, La Crosse County MPO. The attendance roster is attached.

#### **Adding a new agenda item.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Nickelatti to modify the agenda and add agenda item 5.5 to approve the contract between the MRRPC and the Village of Merilla to complete an Outdoor Recreation Plan. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **Minutes of June 14, 2023, Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the June 14, 2023, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the June 14, 2023, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cooper. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were approved.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Secretary Burke reported that the June 30, 2023, ending balance in all accounts was \$435,361.87 and the July 31, 2023, ending balance in all accounts was \$429,178.64. She reported the beginning balance on June 1, 2023, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,022,826.12 and the ending balance on July 31, 2023, was \$1,059,330.00. Commissioner Schmidt made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brandt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, hearing none the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

#### **Presentation by Staff: Ken, Jamie and Jon on Placer.ai, Qualtrics and MRRPC News**

Mr. Harwood gave a demonstration of the survey generating software called Qualtrics. He demonstrated how Qualtrics can be used to create surveys and analyze and correlate the survey responses. He said the tool will increase the number and quality of responses from our communities. Surveys of plans currently being updated will be posted on our website. Mr. Harwood also briefly presented the new online newsletter that will be sent monthly to commissioners and interested parties in the region. The content will consist of articles taken from local media outlets, some original content, and links to every county website, economic development entities in the region, and tourism outlets. Ms. Schoen gave a demonstration of the Placer.ai software recently purchased by MRRPC. This software allows demographic analysis and real-time data tracking from individual cellphone data. Placer.ai also works to use these data streams to analyze migration trends, event performance, seasonal customer trends, routes usage, and the study of retail, grocery, and dining recovery. Ms. Schoen used a real-life example of mapping the traffic patterns created by the recent addition of Hyvee in the Valley View Mall area.

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***• Land Use Planning and Zoning Assistance • Transportation Planning • Economic Development Planning • Recreation Planning • Business Lending • Grant Writing • Economic Data Dissemination • Assisting Local Interests in Responding to State, Federal and Private Programs • Advisory Services on Planning and Development Issues • Coordinator for Programs and Activities • Advocate on Issues Affecting the Region***

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### **Update on Outdoor Recreation Plan for the Village of Merrillan and possible Comprehensive Plan Update.**

Mr. Bingol reported that the Village of Merrillan is looking at completing an Outdoor Recreation Plan and a Comprehensive Plan. He said that they had contacted him that morning and would like to move forward with completing an Outdoor Recreation Plan which was the reason for adding the additional agenda item to the meeting today. Commissioner Cooper added that he had been in contact with the Village of Merrillan board and confirmed that the contract for the MRRPC to complete an Outdoor Recreation Plan had been approved at their board meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke to approve the contract between the MRRPC and the Village of Merrillan to complete an Outdoor Recreation Plan update seconded by Commissioner Schnitzler. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions. The motion was approved.

### **Update on the Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Oakdale**

Mr. Bingol reported that the Village of Oakdale had contacted him about updating their comprehensive plan. He explained to the commission that the contract costs vary per municipality due to the size of the municipality and the amount of assistance they can provide to help reduce the overall cost of the plan.

### **Update on the Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Coon Valley**

Mr. Bingol reported that the Village of Coon Valley contacted him to update their comprehensive plan. To offset the cost to the village the Vernon Economic Development Association (VEDA) has some funds and possible grants to help the village finance this comprehensive plan revision. He said that he is going to meet with the Village of Coon Valley.

### **Update on Comprehensive Plan for Pepin County**

Mr. Bingol reported that he had met with Pepin County and was joined by Commissioner Seipel to discuss the reason and the process for completing a comprehensive plan. He also reviewed their other county plans, Outdoor Recreation and Hazard Mitigation to verify that they were up to date.

### **Update on BUILD Grant...Regional Freight Study**

Mr. Bingol reported the main focus is to get the Freight Study out into the communities and expand on the work that the consultants had done by using Placer.ai and other tools to add an appendix with regional analytics and be able to share the completed study by the beginning of November.

### **Update on Public Service Commission (PSC) Broadband Grants**

Mr. Bingol reported that all the counties in our region are very active. He said that the Public Service Commission contracted with the Boston Scientific Group to do marketing and surveys. All of the counties have been working with this company to get this WISER survey out which surveys the cost of service, their connectivity, and speed testing. He said all 72 counties in the state are using this survey and Pepin County has been the leader in getting responses back. Pepin County has been partnering with the schools to send out this survey to parents and families. He has said that he has been communicating with regional service providers and the information gleaned from these broadband plans will be additional information to include in the plans we are working on.

### **Update on Commissioner Changes Vernon County**

Mr. Bingol reported that John Pedretti will be the new commissioner representing the County on the commission board. Jo Ann Nickelatti had been the previous county representative and now that Herb Cornell has retired as the Governor representative the Governor appointed Jo Ann as the Governor appointee to the commission board.

### **Update on RLFs**

Mr. Bingol reported that there has been some activity in the CMV Growth Development Fund. He said that there is a special project with the Village of Oakdale where they have received a DNR grant and need to spend the money for the project before they can be reimbursed. They would borrow the money from the CMV Growth Development Fund and pay it back when they receive their reimbursement for the grant. He said that the MRRPC is officially administering the Vernon County Revolving Loan Fund and a bank account has been opened and businesses have been contacting us about the fund and steering businesses to additional help through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

### **MRRPC staffing update**

Mr. Bingol reported that we are posting the planner position since Aurora is no longer with us. He said that we are working with UW-La Crosse to have more interns and one of our interns from last semester is coming back in the fall.

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### Reports from Commissioners

Commissioner Gulbranson reported that in the Village of Ellsworth there is a company from Denmark trying to build a biogas digester for the Ellsworth Creamery. Commissioner Brandt reported that the state roads in Trempealeau are being torn up and replaced at an amazing rate. Commissioner Borreson reported that Ashley for the Arts will be in Arcadia this weekend. Commissioner Anderson asked about the Hazard Mitigation plan for Crawford County. Mr. Bingol Responded that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is on track and is 80 plus percent completed. He said that we need more risk assessment surveys from the Towns. He reported that he had attended the Land and Soil committee meeting in Crawford County and the committee members offered to help promote the surveys as well.

### Director's Report

Mr. Bingol reported that the Vernon County Hazard Mitigation Plan is 95-97 percent completed. The plan will be presented to the board at the end of the month. The contract has been signed for the Vernon County Economic Development Strategy. He reported that we will be working with Place Dynamics to create the Economic Development Strategy for Vernon County. There are active surveys being sent out into communities and staff are working on pulling and analyzing the data and working with focus groups. The City of Hillsboro is also looking at developing an economic development strategy for their city. Mr. Bingol also reported that he attended the Rural Partners Network through the USDA in Osseo. He said that they a several speakers from all the government agencies and he was made aware of programs from USDA that he was previously not familiar with which would apply to businesses in our region.

### New Business

None to report.

### Adjourn at 11:45 am

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any other new business. Hearing none, a motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Twidt and seconded by Commissioner Anderson. The motion was unanimously approved.

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Vicki Burke,  
Secretary/ Treasurer

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Date

<b>MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Attendees</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Del Twidt	Buffalo County
Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo County
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
Craig Anderson	Crawford County
Ron Carney	Jackson County
Tom Cooper	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
Robin Schmidt	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
George Brandt	Trempealeau County
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jo Ann Nickelatti	Vernon County
John Pedretti	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Jamie Schoen	MRRPC Staff
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff
Cole Remack	MRRPC Staff
LeAnna Kavanaugh	Pepin County – Economic Development
Francis Schelfhout	WI DOT
David Schmitz	
Matthew Jansen	Representing Representative Oldenburg
Erin Duffer	Transportation Planner – La Crosse County MPO