



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

MINUTES

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC) BIMONTHLY MEETING

10:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Altra Federal Credit Union Operations Building, 1700 Oak Forest Drive, Onalaska, WI 54650

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: Erin Duffer, La Crosse County MPO, Rebecca Giroux, WHEDA, Gregg Wavrunek, Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin, and Roxie Anderson, Monroe County Land Use Planner. The attendance roster is attached.

Minutes of April 10, 2024, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the April 10, 2024, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the April 10, 2024, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brandt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report

Secretary Burke reported that on April 1, 2024, the balance in all accounts was \$564,848.30 and the May 31, 2024, the ending balance in all accounts was \$478,559.69. She reported the beginning balance on April 1, 2024, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,160,939.93 and the ending balance in all accounts on May 31, 2024, was \$1,166,112.04. Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

Presentation on MRRPC 2023 – 2024 Year in Review

Mr. Harwood and Ms. Ofte gave a presentation about the activities of the MRRPC during the past year. The topics included Economic Development Activities for example assisting with the Monroe County Economic Development Conference, the Vernon County Economic Development Strategy, the Grain Belt Port Statistical Area, and the commission's revolving loan fund programs. In the areas of transportation Mr. Harwood discussed the SMRT Bus program, the Human Transit Plans for our nine-county region, MRRPC Regional Freight Study, and the Mississippi River Parkway Commission asset project on the Great River Road. The Community Development Plans for municipalities in our region were also shared, for example the Comprehensive Plans and Outdoor Recreation Plans which assist communities in creating goals and a vision for the future.

Presentation on Hazard Mitigation Planning

Mr. Fichter presented the planning process for the county Hazard Mitigation Plans. He discussed the reason for developing a plan, what is included in the plan, for example the hazards to be mitigated, and how having a plan benefits those communities affected by natural disasters. He also reviewed the progress of the four stages of a plan and where each of the 4 plans are in the planning process. The 4 stages of planning are as follows: stage 1 is organizing the planning process and resources, stage 2 is assessing risks and capabilities, stage 3 is developing a mitigation strategy, and stage 4 is adopting and implementing the plan. The Ho-Chunk Nation Hazard Mitigation Plan is between stages 1 and 2. The Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan is in Stage 2. The Pierce County Hazard Mitigation is between stages 2 and 3. The Trempealeau County Hazard Mitigation Plan is in Stage 2. All Hazard Mitigation Plans need to be updated every 5 years.

Providing Planning and Economic Development Services to Improve the Environment, Economy and Quality of Life

•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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Presentation of River Projects

Mr. Harwood discussed the Mississippi River Parkway Commission Assets project where members of the parkway commission were exploring the parks and places of interest along the Great River Road and this information was being placed in a database. He also showed the online map that was created to aid tourists in finding things to see and do along the Great River Road and how easy it is for tourists to access the site on their cellphones, mrrpc.com/grr. He also discussed the benefits of being designated a Port Statistical Area to be able to apply for grants now that the freight data is now being collected.

Decision on contract for the Town of Martell Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Bingol reported that the Town of Martell in Pierce County is asking the MRRPC to work with them to update their Comprehensive Plan. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell to approve the \$9,500 contract between the Town of Martell and the MRRPC to complete a comprehensive plan. The motion carried unanimously.

Decision on Participation with City of Black River Falls for a Transportation Study and Bike Trail Connector Grant

Mr. Bingol reported that the City of Black River Falls has contacted the commission to be the agent to be able to apply for a grant to complete a transportation study. He said that the city is also looking at creating a bike trail connector and they have applied for a \$75,000 grant for that project. The trail connector will require some engineering. A motion was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Carney to approve the MRRPC to participate in a Transportation Study and a Bike Trail Connector Grant with the City of Black River Falls. The motion carried unanimously

Update on the BUILD Grant Freight Study

Mr. Bingol reported that the amendment for the BUILD Grant has been approved and all the invoices have been paid.

Update on RPN 8 County Project

Mr. Bingol reported that he has been working with the Rural Partners Network (RPN) through the USDA. There are six states around the nation that have these groups. The counties in Wisconsin in this group include Buffalo, Trempealeau, and Pepin Counties in our region and Dunn, Eau Claire, Clark and Chippewa Counties in the West Central RPC which makes it seven and then Jackson has been added into this project to make eight counties. He said that this project is working on creating an Outdoor Recreation Plan for these eight counties to capitalize on destinations within the region. He said that there has been an effort to connect bike trails across county lines. He said that West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) was the applicant for the grant and the MRRPC was listed as a consultant.

Staff Update

Mr. Bingol introduced the new planner, Simon Fichter, and the new summer intern, Chase Jones, a student who is attending the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse.

Decision...Nominating Committee – Election of Officers

Mr. Bingol introduced the nominating committee Commissioner Seipel, Commissioner Krachey, and Phil Borreson who reviewed the Bylaws for the commission. Commissioner Seipel brought forth the candidates James Kuhn for Chairman, Bill Schroeder as Vice Chairman, and Vicki Burke as Secretary / Treasurer. A motion was made by Commissioner Krachey and seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell to accept the slate of candidates to elect James Kuhn, Chairman, Bill Schroeder, Vice Chairman, and Vicki Burk, Secretary / Treasurer as officers of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. The motion was unanimously approved.

Reports from Commissioners

Commissioner Brandt reported that the new administrator in Trempealeau County is interested in planning. Chairman Kuhn and Mr. Bingol reported that they had attended the annual meeting of the Association of Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (AWRPC) in New Glarus, WI. The Executive Directors for this organization meet quarterly. The annual meeting of the AWRPC allowed the planners, GIS specialists, and the financial managers to break up into groups and share knowledge and network.

Director's Report

Mr. Bingol reported on projects he's been involved in around the region. These include working with Prosperity Southwest, which is an economic development organization in Crawford County, and the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) to explore a housing study to look at Crawford County's inventory of housing, potential locations for development, and future housing needs. He also said that WHEDA is looking at changing the requirement for their housing program to require a full revision of a municipality's comprehensive plan rather than just the housing portion. He is also involved in the Rural Entrepreneur Ventures which is a pilot program in Hillsboro. He also talked about his work with the Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC) and the Workforce Development Board.

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 Schroeder. The motion was unanimously approved.

Vicki Burke,
Secretary/ Treasurer

Date

MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Attendees	
Name	Representing
Del Twidt	Buffalo County
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County
Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo County
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
Craig Anderson	Crawford County
Bruce Strnad	Crawford County
Ron Carney	Jackson County
Tom Cooper	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
Sharon Hampson	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County
George Brandt	Trempealeau County
Jo Ann Nickelatti	Vernon County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff
Simon Fichter	MRRPC Staff
Roxie Anderson	Monroe County Land Use Planner
Erin Duffer	Transportation Planner - La Crosse County MPO
Rebecca Giroux	WHEDA
Gregg Wavrunek	Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin