**CHESTER BEAUTIFICATION/TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES**

January 20, 2022

Meeting called to order at 6:28 PM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Brenda Owen, Linda Rader, JoAnn Simmons, Cynthia Lawder, Ray Allison, Bob Lockhart, Melissa Gross, Linda Schafer

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Members stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** Motion to approve was made by Bob Lockhart, seconded by Linda Rader. Motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Balance on hand $26,995.67, non-tax income $26,175.89, 2021 total hotel/motel tax income $5,975.64, 2020 total hotel/motel tax income $6,387.10, Stone Cottage $737.17. Penny Machine fund $140.00. Brenda explained that the Reppert Publications in the amount of $225.00 was for the Scout Ad. The Take Pride Awards in the amount of $101.22 was reimbursement for the pictures that Joann Simmons takes for the award and presents to the recipients. The Christmas Pots to Brenda Owen was for the ribbon. The report will be set aside for audit.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:** No report.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Hometown Proud:** There was a discussion about a campaign to raise the

interest of local residents.

**Take Pride Award:** The awards run from May through November. So the next awards will start in May. Brenda Owen thanked Linda Rader and JoAnn Simmons for all of their work with this award. Linda and JoAnn asked for others to assist by volunteering. They write a letter and give pictures to the winners as well as submit the information to the newspaper.

**Planters:** The planters were decorated prior to Christmas on the River. Volunteers met at the Gazebo on November 20. Donated artificial Christmas trees provided the greenery, with handmade bows and decorative sticks. There was discussion about taking the greenery out and getting the planters ready for the spring. It was decided to leave the greenery until a later date. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting along with further discussion as to where to store the supplies. Ray will check with the CIty to see if there is room at the pool house to store the bags. Melissa has some more artificial Christmas trees to donate. Hopefully these can be stored with the other supplies to use for the 2022 Christmas season.

**Riverboat/Tour Programming:** Brenda met with Patti Carter. Brenda distributed a Riverboat schedule for 2022. There are 14 scheduled boat dockings for the 2022 season. The American Duchess will arrive on June 11 and again on June 13, 2022. American Melody will dock June 20-21, 2022. The American Countess is scheduled for July 10, 2022. The American Duchess will return again on July 22, 2022. The American Queen arrives on July 23 and July 26, 2022. The American Splendor will be here July 30-31, 2022. The American Duchess comes back on August 9, 2022. The American Countess returns on August 24, 2022. The American Duchess arrives on September 2, 2022. The American Symphony will disembark on September 20-21, 2022. Rounding out the season, the American Queen will return on October 8, 2022 and October 26, 2022.

Volunteers are needed for The Welcome Center, the Cohen Home, Tour Guides, Characters and Taxis. Brenda will contact Patti and schedule some more training for these various volunteer positions. More Tour Guide shirts are needed. There was also a discussion about expanding the tours offered at our stop, and suggestions for those new tours.

**Tourism:** The Penny Press Machine is working at the Welcome Center $140.00 has been collected to date. Bob Lockhart has a key and empties the machine and delivers the funds to Bethany Berner.

Brenda contacted the Community Navigator in Monroe County. Brenda will be contacting her again. The funding discussed in November is already done for this funding year. There are not grant funds available at this time. We will keep looking for other grant funding opportunities.

**Historic Preservation:** During Christmas on the River, Brenda hosted Nathan Cooper, a U of I graduate student working in historic preservation. He is interested in a project to add properties to the National Register and suggest ways for the properties to be used to enhance the town’s economy. Nathan has found a caveat that a building could be placed on the Historic Register even though it had been moved if it was still historically significant. He thinks he can make the case for the museum to be on the Historic Register. Brenda emailed Marc Kiehna and Emily Lyons about this possibility. She has not had a response from Marc Kiehna. There was further discussion about the building and how Mr. Cole donated the money for the building to be built. Nathan Cole was interested in the swimming pool building; however, it is not eligible with the current roof. If the roof is replaced with a flat roof similar to the original, then it could possibly be eligible.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Riverfront Improvement:** Mayor Page has given approval for JoAnn’s plan of

placing large decorative blocks as a backdrop, planting flowers and placing the

anchor. Ray Allison has also given approval. $2,962.00 for the blocks is within

the budget. Steve Renner will act as liaison with the block manufacturer. The block should arrive later this month or in February. Steve Renner will let Ray Rock know where to put the rock.

**State and Swanwick Green Space:** Cynthia reported that three artists have

expressed interest in painting the mural. Cynthia met with each of the artists and the prices were several thousand dollars. This is above the projected budget. There was some discussion about how to perhaps work with members of the Art Guild on various ideas.

**COMMISSION FUNCTION REPORTS:**

**Public Relations:** Christy Orr let us know that it is time to place ads for next

year in the Illinois South Tourism Guide. Christy helped us with design work and Brenda will submit the final design for placement.

**City Council Update:** Ray reported that he had no additional information to report.

**Welcome Center Update:** Linda Sympson has retired. Dave Randall is now in charge. Bob reported that the observation deck repair project is still stalled. There was some discussion and questions being asked about the new bridge. Brenda referred the discussion to the MoDot website for further information. Currently we have no drawings on file to show folks about the new bridge plans.

**Randolph County Tourism:** It was suggested that we start looking at other ideas for advertising. It was suggested that we use local photographers for ideas.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Commission Openings:** Openings still remain. Deb Rust was contacted but indicated she was not able at this time. Deb suggested Jody Springer and Donella contacted her, but she was not interested. There are three openings and Brenda asked the members present to think about possible people who would make good members.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Christmas on the River** took place this past year in December. It was successful. We need to purchase some more snowflake Christmas decorations. Linda Rader made the motion to purchase four more snowflakes. Cynthia Lawder seconded and motion carried.

**Chamber of commerce representative member** David Randall.

**Meeting Dates-**It was decided to continue to hold the meetings on the third Thursday of each month except December.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING:**

JoAnn moved to adjourn, Bob seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.

The next meeting is Thursday, February 17, 2022, 6:30 pm.