**CHESTER BEAUTIFICATION/TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES**

January 19, 2023

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Barry Harle, Linda Rader, Cynthia Lawder, JoAnn Simmons, Carla Draves, Bob Lockhart, Linda Schafer, Brenda Owen, and Melissa Gross.

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

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** The minutes from the previous meeting were presented and discussed. Motion to approve was made by Cynthia Lawder and seconded by Bob Lockhart. Motion carried.

Appointment of a Secretary: Brenda Owen made the motion to approve the appointment of Melissa Gross as Secretary for the Commission and Linda Rader seconded. Motion approved.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Linda Rader presented the Treasurer’s report**.** Our balance on hand was $24,736.40. The Stone Cottage balance is $847.17. The Penny Machine fund has $1,786.87. Mural donations total $2,775.00 to date. The reimbursement for 23.75 to Brenda Owen was for the glue for the QR Code for Ham Gravy, the Anchor project expense at Wal-Mart was for spray paint in the amount of $39.92, the Village Designs in the amount of $325.00 was for the Red Wire Bows for the flowerpots, the reimbursement to Brenda Owen in the amount of $120.00 was for the white branches in the flowerpots for Christmas decorations. The expense to Chester Electric for the Christmas Replacement Bulbs in the amount of $2,127.00 was discussed further. Brenda Owen will check into why the replacement bulbs were so expensive. JoAnn Simmons moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report and Cynthia Lawder seconded. The report will be set aside for audit.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:** The commission received a thank-you note from the Family of Betty Wagner for the floral arrangement sent for her funeral. Betty Wagner served on the Beautification and Tourism Commission for many years. Her death was a great loss to the community of Chester.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Take Pride Award:** The award will begin again in the spring.

**Planters:** Tony West would like to plant flowers in green spaces between the sidewalks and road. He is working with IDOT to achieve permission to do this at the corner of Stacey and State streets. Tony would like to plant wildflowers at the Park. The scheduling for the removal of the greenery will be done later. The wire bows are standing out and were attached well, however, a few of the red bows are missing. Brenda Owen will check to see if we can get those replaced. Some of the greenery is looking shabby. We will need to tear apart some more Christmas trees.

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**Riverboat/Tour Programming:** No updates

**Tourism:**

Update Chester brochure/map: Illinois South is rebranding with a kickoff dinner next Tuesday in Highland. Brenda Owen will follow up. Brenda Owen reported that she did get permission to use the picture from Rose Baughman of the flags at the Courthouse at sunset. Brenda has also enlisted John Reith for photography for the brochure.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Riverfront Improvement:** The Riverfront Committee consists of Cynthia, Patty, Bob, Carla and Jo Ann. Another idea was presented concerning the cutting of barrels in half and using them as planters against the poles along the riverfront side – still a plan in progress.

**State and Swanwick Green Space:** Cynthia Lawder reported that the mural is almost finished. The need for halogen lights was discussed. Asking Korando’s Heating and Cooling to sponsor the lights was discussed. The halogen lights will run about $10.00 or less a month. Cynthia Lawder would like to have some informational signage similar to that at the riverfront. She will check with John Reith about some photography to use for publicity.

**Eclipse 2024:** April 8, 2024 a total solar eclipse will take place. It will be the last visible one from the United States until 2045. More than 31 million people across 13 states – including Illinois – live in the “path of totality” for the event – meaning those places will see 100 percent totality. The state of totality will begin on April 8, 2024 at 1:58 p.m. and end at 2:06 p.m. The committee met on January 18, 2023, to begin planning. There are plans to make this a big weekend along with the eclipse. There will be coloring books/coloring contests and T-shirts also. Patty Carter is limiting the number of people on the committee. The next meeting will be February 15, 2023. More information to come.

**COMMISSION FUNCTION REPORTS:**

**Public Relations:** Ad in Scout Magazine – Brenda Owen reported that the packet for the ad went to the Chamber of Commerce and did not get to us, so an executive decision was made to purchase the ad. We paid $250.00 for ¼ page ad and ended up getting a whole page ad with the same publisher as the Belleville News Democrat. Brenda Owen displayed the ad. It will now come to City Hall with Bethany’s name on it, so it will get to us in a timely fashion. We need to think about what pictures to feature once the Chester Bridge is no longer there. Cynthia Lawder made the motion to approve the $250.00 expenditure and JoAnn Simmons seconded. The motion carried.

**City Council Update:** No report.

**Welcome Center Update:** Bob Lochhartreported that many visitors are still making pennies at the penny machine. There is a penny machine website with locations of penny press machines. It was suggested to consider placement of another machine at another location perhaps Reid’s Harvest House.

**Randolph County Tourism:** Brenda Owen has met with Michelle Umbenstock to offer assistance on projects where we could partner with them.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Commission Openings:** Donella has moved to Kansas and iis doing well. She will be missed on this commission and in the City of Chester. Brenda Owen reported that she talked with Wendy Lochhead about the commission and Cynthia will invite Jay Cooper again.

**Plant hanger fundraiser:**  Melissa Gross reported that she has been trying to contact Rich Inman about the metal works from Triple R Metal Works. He has not returned her calls yet. She will keep trying.

**Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive:** Brenda Owen will ask Mary Ann Heberlie to chair this committee.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Any other business that may come before the commission:**

**Pens:** Brenda Owen showed the new pen samples. This will be revisited at the next meeting.

**Christmas snowflakes:** Brenda Owen reviewed the information about the Christmas snowflakes with $2,100.00 plus from the budget line item of $3,000.00 being used for replacement bulbs. The company has 4 different kinds of snowflakes with a variety of prices. The snowflakes are 1/3 off until the end of February. On sale the prices range from $425.25 to $519.25 each. This will be tabled until next month to allow Brenda Owen the time to talk to Charlie Bargman.

As a follow up to the meeting, Brenda Owen met with Charlie Bargman, Sr. and found out the replacement bulbs were indeed to replace burned out bulbs, but he explained that it was 2 years worth of bulbs, so that in addition to price increases that would explain the increased amount. Brenda suggested purchasing one Diamond Snowflake for $452.25 and one Presidential Snowflake for $519.25 for a total of $971.50 from Temple Display while the 30% off sale continues. Commission members were polled with the majority voting yes (9 voted yes, 4 did not respond) to expend the monies for the snowflakes.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING:**

Cynthia Lawder moved to adjourn; Carla Draves seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

The next meeting is February 23rd at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall.