**CHESTER BEAUTIFICATION/TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES**

March 16, 2023

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Cynthia Lawder, JoAnn Simmons, Bob Lockhart, Linda Schafer, Wendy Lochhead, Tony West and Brenda Owen.

**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 Bob Lockhart and seconded by JoAnn Simmons. Motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Brenda Owen presented the Treasurer’s report**.** Our balance on hand was $24,090.83. The Stone Cottage balance is $847.17. The Penny Machine fund has $1,899.38. Mural donations total $2,775.00 to date. Cynthia Lauder moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report and Bob Lockhart seconded. The report will be set aside for audit.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:** The Commission received notification that Wendy Lochhead had been appointed to the Commission. The group welcomed Wendy and thanked her for her interest and commitment.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

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

**Planters:**  Linda Schafer, JoAnn Simmons, Cynthia Lawder and Brenda Owen removed and stored greenery from pots this week. Four bows were missing from pots and trash, liquor bottles and a syringe were found in the process. Brenda notified the police of the syringe. Tony was unable to get permission from IDOT to plant flowers directly in the ground at the corner of State and Stacey. He will replace the two pots near the Olive Oyl statue with direct in-ground plantings. He has customized plantings per pot locations and will get plants from McNitt’s. He alerted the commission to the fact that he may be getting a new state position that would require him to retire from plant caretaker. He suggested we ask the City for placement of additional trash cans in 3 locations as he finds trash in the flower pots at these locations on a regular basis. The locations are: at the corner near Arbeiter’s office, near the thrift store, and in front of Subway. Linda Schafer has graciously accepted the assignment of flower pot care after the growing season.

**Riverboat/Tour Programming:** No report. Linda Schafer reported that the American Queen must have paid their bill since tour guides did receive payment.

**Tourism:** Update Chester brochure/map: ongoing. Brenda contacted Discover Downstate Illinois to ask about progress. They indicated our brochure would be their next project.Brenda is following up on the special cancellation stamp for the 2024 eclipse. Information about Oscar has been added to the Library website and Brenda will create a QR code and order the plaque.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Riverfront Improvement:** JoAnn met with Jay Allison and moved some rocks. Jay had secured barrels and is willing to cut them in half for planters. JoAnn indicated she would been plants and dirt for the barrels. Tony said he had plenty of soil for her to use. The planters will be placed on the river side of the street near each light pole with a banner.

**State and Swanwick Green Space:** Cynthia Lawder reported that the mural is finished and the painters will be paid Monday. She checked with Ameren regarding installation of a dusk to dawn light attached to the pole at the location. The cost to the City would be approximately $15 per month. She has solicited information regarding cost of a plaque to recognize donors. Brenda will explore a potential grant we could use to purchase informational signage featuring the history of the fairgrounds.

**Eclipse—April 8, 2024:** The committee continues to meet for planning. Brenda asked if anyone else from the commission was interested in participating on the committee.

**COMMISSION FUNCTION REPORTS:**

**Public Relations:** Discover Downstate Ilinois’ Visitor Guide is available. Bob pointed out multiple pages where sites in and around Chester are mentioned. Brenda suggested a map of hiking trails at the county lake be included at the Welcome Center.

**City Council Update:** No report.

**Welcome Center Update:** Bob Lockhartreported the latest penny machine deposit was $100.00.

**Randolph County Tourism:** No report.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Commission Openings:** One opening remains.

**Pens:** Brenda Owen reported that there was an offer from the pen company for ordering 1000 at 0.69 each.

**Plant hanger fundraiser:**  No report.

**Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive:** Brenda has made copies of the information from previous events for Mary Ann.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Cynthia moved to approve up to $300 for plants, fertilizer, dirt, etc. for the barrels to be placed at the riverfront. Linda Schafer seconded. The motion passed.

Cynthia moved to purchase 1,000 “Chester” pens at a cost of $0.69 each. JoAnn seconded the motion and the motion passed. Brenda will place the order.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING:**

Linda Schafer moved to adjourn; Bob Lockhart seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

The next meeting is April 20 at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall.