**CHESTER BEAUTIFICATION/TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES**

June 15, 2023

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Jay Cooper, Barry Harle, Mary Ann Heberlie, Cynthia Lawder, Bob Lockhart, Brenda Owen, Linda Rader, JoAnn Simmons, and Bryce Hill.

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

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Cynthia Lawder, seconded by Jay Cooper. Motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Linda Rader presented the Treasurer’s report.The balance on hand $16,330.75. Stone Cottage $847.17. The Penny Machine fund has $2,257.13. Mural donations total $2,775.00. The report will be set aside for audit. In a recent meeting with the mayor, Brenda asked if the commission could receive all the hotel/motel tax instead of half. The mayor was unaware that the commission only received half and said he would speak with the city clerk about this.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Take Pride Award:** The two recipients for the month of June were Mike and Tammy Liefer at 3023 State Street and Priscilla Preston and Darlene Claussen at apartments 1 and 2 at 743 State Street. The winners of the Take Pride Award were very appreciative. Winners are listed on the City’s Facebook page and the website. If anyone has any recommendations for future recipients, please send your information to JoAnn and/or Linda.

**Planters:** Tony continues to progress through the process for a new position and may not be available for plant care. Brenda met with the mayor to ask if city employees could take this on if we are left without a caretaker mid-season. She also expressed concern that a volunteer has supervisory responsibility for a part-time city employee. Mary Ann volunteered mulch for the pots to help keep moisture in. JoAnn said the pots at the riverside could use the mulch.

**Riverboat/Tour Programming:** There is no update from Patti Carter and no scheduled riverboat stops.

**Tourism:** Discover Downstate Illinois continues work on the new Chester brochure.

Brenda met with Patti Carter about the special cancellation stamp for the 2024 Eclipse and has created a black and white depiction of the eclipse over the Popeye statue and bridge which the city has permission to use. Brenda will follow up with the post office with this. Brenda spoke with the mayor regarding the “Welcome to Chester” signs on Route 150 east and at the bridge which both need repair. She expressed hope that the city would take this on since the commission does not have the resources for this size of project. The mayor indicated he would follow up on the Route 150 East sign and both agreed that the bridge sign repairs should wait until the new bridge was completed.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Riverfront Improvement:** JoAnn Simmons reported that the barrels on the riverfront are blooming and she is finishing the flower bed around the anchor. Brenda asked the mayor if city employees could water those barrels and he said he would check. Meanwhile, members are watering: Jodi on Monday, Jay on Saturdays and Sundays, Bob on Fridays and JoAnn on the remaining days.

**State and Swanwick Green Space:** Ameren will install the dusk to dawn light free of charge and Cynthia will get a bid in writing from Ameren this week. The mayor previously indicated this plan would be fine. Cynthia will take this to the council along with the commission’s recommendation for a 20” X 24” fiberglass sign to recognize project contributors. Jay moved to purchase the metal “look” sign for $125. Mary seconded the motion and the motion passed. The commission is considering a recognition event to potentially take place at the beginning of the Fall Festival. The group will consider a name for the area at the next meeting. One possibility was suggested: Fairground Plaza.

**Eclipse April 8, 2024:** Brenda forwarded information to Patti regarding a website sponsored by Discover Downstate Illinois for communities in the pathway to list their events. Brenda will follow-up with the Chester postmark. Bryce suggested we print stickers with the same design as the postmark to sell as a fund-raiser.

**COMMISSION FUNCTION REPORTS:**

**Public Relations:** Chester ads were viewed in the Scout publication and in the spring Tourism Times. Brenda has gotten information from Patti for inclusion in the Chester ad for the Fall/Holiday issue of Tourism Times and has sent it to Christine Orr. Brenda will contact Christine regarding the possibility of a story on the bridge or Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive.

**City Council Update:** Bryce reported that there was a possibility of the Welcome Center being abandon as a result of the new bridge. He indicated that it may be difficult to get additional city funding as the city is over budget.

**Welcome Center Update:** Bob Lockhart reported that he collected another $194.00 from the penny machine. Brenda looked into the issue of scheduling volunteers to work at the Welcome Center and found it was Patti’s responsibility. Patti agreed to let the commission take over this function. Bob Lockhart volunteered to take this one. Brenda will post information on our Facebook page asking for volunteers. Brenda continues work on collecting the information from the Welcome Center sign-in sheets. A suggestion was made to post a world map and ask visitors to place a pin on the map indicating where they are from to gain a visual representation of the folks who visit.

**Randolph County Tourism:** No report**.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive:** Mary Ann gave a report on the program and indicated her committee would be meeting soon. After a call to Patti to get approval, members set the date of October 22 in the afternoon for the event. This is the weekend of the Fall Festival.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Update contact list and organizational chart:** Corrections were made to the contact list and members chose areas in which they preferred to serve.

**Mural request from Mr. Conder:** Brenda met with Mr. Condor to discuss his request. She reminded him he’d been approached before, but he had said he was not interested. He described his desired artwork saying he wanted Wimpy holding a nutritional shake, not a hamburger and Brutus giving Olive a manicure. Brenda indicated that this would in essence be advertisement for hls business and as such, it would be inappropriate to spend city tax dollars on this. She welcomed him to continue with his project and possibly approach the commission if/when he had further information. She also indicated he needed to have the design approved through Patti with regard to the copyright.

**Any other business that may come before the Commission:** Barry discussed some information about “treasure hunting” using “Popeye clues”. The commission will explore this idea further.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING:**

Cynthia Lawder moved to adjourn; Linda Rader seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:20

The next meeting is July 20 at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

**ADDENDUM**

On June 16, Patti emailed Brenda saying that the Fall Festival parade was taking place on October 22 at 2:00. Cynthia visited Patti on June 19 to see if the time for the parade could be changed so there wouldn’t be a direct conflict. Patti indicated this couldn’t be done, but that the parade would only last about 30 minutes. Brenda and Mary Ann conferred and recommended by email that the time of the Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive event be on October 22 from 2:30 to 4:30. Brenda sent an email to the group requesting they vote on the time by email. The following replied “yes”: Jay Cooper, Carla Draves, Melissa Gross, Mary Ann Heberlie, Cynthia Lawder, Wendy Lochhead, Brenda Owen, Linda Schafer, JoAnn Simmons, and Linda Rader. No one replied “no.” The motion passes and the Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive event will be held on October 22 from 2:30 to 4:30, taking advantage of the shuttle service, crowd, and advertising of the Fall Festival.