**CHESTER BEAUTIFICATION/TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES**

August 17, 2023

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

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

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** Motion to approve was made by Cynthia Lawder, seconded by JoAnn Simmons. Motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Linda Rader presented the Treasurer’s report.The balance on hand $16,176.20. Fund balances: Stone Cottage $847.17; Penny Machine $2,751.63; Mural donations total $2,775.00 to date. Linda will check on the expenditure listed as “Cohen Home Project” and report at the next meeting. The report will be set aside for audit. Brenda spoke with the mayor and with the City clerk regarding receiving all of the hotel/motel tax as income instead of half.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:** none

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Take Pride Award:** The two recipients for the month of August were Bruce and Paula Luthy at 2605 State Street and Alan and Louise Liefer at 4 Knollwood Drive. Both winners of the Take Pride Award were very appreciative. The winners are listed on the City’s Facebook page and the website. Members should continue to look for nominees in the 62233 area code and send recommendations to JoAnn and/or Linda.

**Planters:** Jay Allison has lost his part-time help so plants will be watered on Tuesdays and Thursdays the remainder of the season. Details of planning and watering will need to be addressed before next sping. Linda Schafer reported that she is ready to receive greenery and pinecones at her address at 206 E. Old Plank Road. They can be dropped off on the porch and Linda can be notified. She would like to work on the winter decorations soon after the plants are removed after the Fall Festival.

**Riverboat/Tour Programming:** There is one remaining scheduled riverboat stop. The American Queen will dock September 23 from 7-2. Patti has suggested a tour loop which includes the new mural and high school to the riverboat company, but there are likely no changes until next cruise season.

**Tourism:** Brenda Owen distributed revised Popeye Character Tour maps that list the statues in a user-friendly, efficient order for viewing. She has done the entire tour in this order with parking and reading the information from the website using the QR codes for each statue. This takes approximately 3 hours. The Mayor’s secretary will see that maps are delivered to the Welcome Center. Bob Lockhart will provide maps to Spinach Can. Brenda ordered the QR code plaque for the Oscar statue and will have it attached prior to the Fall Festival.

Discover Illinois South will be working on the revision of the main Chester brochure. Chester will have an ad in their Fall/Holiday guide that features information about Christmas on the River, Fall Festival, and Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive.

Brenda has been working on the special cancellation stamp for the 2024

Eclipse and discovered there are requirements that our original design did not include. She is working on making those changes before submitting the design.

Devin Hunter, Associate Professor of History from the University of Illinois Springfield visited Chester on July 26th. The meeting at the library was attended by Tammy Grah, Wendy Lochhead, Mary Ann Heberlie. In this phase of the Mythic Mississippi Project, Devin is working with the Office of Historic Preservation to create a survey of historical resources related to African American history and culture in Calhoun, Jersey, Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, and Randolph counties. The group identified four Underground Railroad sites—a former house in Rockwood with stone steps remaining, a cave in Rockwood, the Hayes House in Sparta, and the Burlingame home in Eden. Brenda asked others who had information to contact her on our Facebook page. She received a call from Ted Mueller as a result.

Brenda left a copy of an ordinance creating a “certified local government” from Columbia, IL with Bethany to give to Jason Coffey. Having this designation would allow the City to apply for grant funding to help with preservation activities.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Riverfront Improvement:** JoAnn Simmons talked with Bob Lockhart about painting an historic boat on a large stone already located at the riverfront. She has the leftover paint from painting the mural on the retaining wall, so there would be very little cost. The commission liked this idea and asked them to proceed.

**Fairground Place:** Lorin Mott will oversee the lighting of the sign which will involve fixtures attached to the Korando building. Ameren will install a separate meter so the City will be billed for the electricity. The City Council will consider approving the name “Fairground Place” at their next meeting. Melissa and Cynthia will work on the program for dedication/donor recognition of the mural on the Friday evening of the Fall Festival.

**Eclipse April 8, 2024:** The next city eclipse planning meeting is August 22. Brenda shared a page from Liz Bockelman’s book, Raina Eclipso Rising, which features Chester. Liz is scheduled for a book reading/signing on the Friday before the eclipse prior to a family outdoor movie. Patti asked for help from us for “pop up” merchandise shops. Cynthia and Linda Schafer volunteered to help the day of the eclipse.

**COMMISSION FUNCTION REPORTS:**

**Public Relations:** Nothing additional

**City Council Update:** Bryce indicated he was trying to identify a city employee to water plants for next year.

**Welcome Center Update:** Bob Lockhart reported that a number of folks visited the Welcome Center last month. JoAnn sent a letter to churches to ask for additional volunteers for the Welcome Center. She has not received any feedback yet. Brenda will put the request for volunteers on our Facebook page.

**Randolph County Tourism:** no report

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive – October 22 from 2:30-4:30** Mary Ann Heberlie has talked with Steve Colonel about asking high school students from the drama club to portray our cemetery “citizens.” She has had a little difficulty recruiting folks and at this point has 3 “actors.” She plans to mark the actual graves of the folks portrayed with balloons so visitors can visit the actual site after meeting the character.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Small world:** Linda Rader shared that she had met a couple from a riverboat that were from California and had made the trip before. They said they had met someone from Chester on a cruise and found Chester inviting and interesting. Linda thinks it’s likely to be Brenda since Brenda had shared meeting a couple from CA on a cruise to Iceland, Ireland and England who had been to Chester and said it was their favorite stop on the river cruise they had been on!

PBS Program: Barry Harle mentioned he had seen a program on PBS called Illinois Adventures that was quite interesting and recommended it to the group.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING:**

Linda Schafer moved to adjourn; Linda Rader seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

The next meeting is September 21, 2023, 6:30 PM, City Hall.