**CHESTER BEAUTIFICATION/TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES**

October 19, 2023

Call to order: 6:30 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Carla Draves, Jay Cooper, Barry Harle, Bob Lockhart, Mary Ann Heberlie, Brenda Owen, Bob Buckham, Linda Schafer, JoAnn Simmons, and Melissa Gross.

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

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** Motion to approve was made by Linda Schafer, seconded by Jay Cooper. Motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** In the absence of the Treasurer, Brenda Owen gave the Treasurer’s report.The balance on hand $19,073.12. Stone Cottage fund $847.17. The Penny Machine fund has $3,128.63. Mural donations total $2,775.00 to date. The expense in the amount of $39.39 was for the QR code. It should be reimbursed to Brenda Owen on the next month report. Carla moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report, Mary Ann seconded. The report will be set aside for audit.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:** Over a year ago, a U of I Springfield student, Nathan Cooper came to try to get the old Court House (County Museum) on the National Register of Historic Places. We had not heard from him in some time, however, he contacted Brenda Owen and said that he had been busy with starting a new job and he wondered if we were still interested in pursuing this. Brenda told him that we are still interested. We should be hearing more about this in the near future.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Take Pride Award:** The winners for October were Millie Gregory of 1102 Park Blvd and Jesse and Deb Canady at 783 State Street. Both of the winners were very happy about the award.

**Planters:** On November 9th all Commission members are asked to decorate the planters for winter. We will meet at 9:00 at the Gazebo and will start in groups. If it rains, the rain date is Friday, November 10th. Each member is asked to invite others to help – the more help – the more ownership. The planters are looking a little bare at this time. They had to be cut back early due to no one from the city to continue the watering. The city employees were busy with getting the park ready for the Fall Festival which will be held October 20-22nd.

**Riverboat/Tour Programming:** There is still no payment from any of the riverboats from this year, so none of the tour guides have received their payment. The last riverboat was not filled to capacity with passengers.

**Tourism:
 A.** Update Chester brochure/map – Brenda distributed the draft of the brochure. She will forward the draft to each member electronically so that we may each view it in a larger size. She is asking that each member edit the draft and get the changes, edits, etc. to her before next Thursday so we can get these out as soon as possible. We are hoping to distribute these with the eclipse information.

**B.** **Chester Landmark Notecards** - Brenda Owen reported that she is talking with Beth Stumpe Bell about producing watercolor cards. Other ideas are being discussed including an Art Day Contest. More information next month.

**C. Discover Downstate IL Videoing on October 26th – Brenda received notification that** on Thursday, October 26th Discover Downstate Illinois planned to be in town to video tape the statues. In anyone is interested let Brenda know if you want to tag along on the Popeye Character trail.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Riverfront Improvement:** JoAnn Simmons reported that this is on hold as the city is working on the Fall Festival.

**Fairground Place:** Melissa reported that invitations had been sent out to all donors, city officials and commission members. There was also an invitation in the County Journal and on Facebook. The programs for the event are printed. A sound system has been secured and all the plans for the event are in place.

**Eclipse April 8, 2024:**  The special postmark was approved at the last city council meeting and Brenda is taking it to the post office to finish the process. There is a special children’s book entitled, Rana Eclipso Rising written about the eclipse. The author will be in Chester to do a reading at the Family movie night in Cole Park with a book signing also. More details to come.

**COMMISSION FUNCTION REPORTS:**

**Public Relations:** Brenda presented a draft of the ¼ page ad for Discover Downstate Illinois – the yearly publication. There are 2 other ads for the Spring and Fall/Winter editions. We are planning to go ahead with the ad as per usual.

**City Council Update:** No report

**Welcome Center Update:** Bob Lockhart reported that he collected another $123.00 from the penny machine. Richard Jansen has a picture of the penny machine. They found some maps at the Welcome Center but they are not updated. There are no new volunteers, but they are covering more time slot each week.

**Randolph County Tourism:** No report.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Evergreen Cemetery Comes Alive October 22 - 2:30-4:30** Mary Ann reported that she has 11 volunteers. She is working on the program. Sandra Starr will cover the mausoleum. Carla Draves will bring a table for the check in. Mary Ann will bring a donation canister. Melissa had a flower arrangement and a black table cloth with a lantern for decorating the table. Mary Ann will have folders attached to a balloon for those persons that are not being covered by a volunteer so that the attendees can read about that person if they so choose. The volunteers need to be there no later than 2. Mary Ann will have a copy of an article she has written for a donation. The printed materials will be distributed to anyone who donates.

**Scott Condor request:** The city council voted at their last meeting to use $1,000 from the commission and $1,000 from Mr. Condor to pay for having Ted Mueller repaint the mural on the wall. Ted also reported that he used a paint this time with an over paint that will last longer than the first time.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Any other business that may come before the commission:** Mary Ann asked about a plaque for the Eagle Scout project on the City Steps. Brenda will email Bethany to put this on the agenda of the next Council meeting and Mary Ann will attend the meeting to explain the request for the plaque.

Carla Draves won an attendance prize along with Melissa, Bob, Linda and Mary Ann.

The group is considering having a pot luck in December – no meeting by ordinance-- just a party. Brenda suggested holding the event at her house house. More discussion at the November meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING:**

Linda Schafer moved to adjourn; JoAnn Simmons seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:32 P.M.

The next meeting is November 16th at 6:30 PM, City Hall. This is the last meeting for the year as we do not meet in December.