**CHESTER BEAUTIFICATION/TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES**

January 18, 2024

Call to order: 6:30 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Jay Cooper, Barry Harle, Bob Lockhart, Carla Draves, Cynthia Lawder, Brenda Owen, Linda Schafer, Linda Rader, JoAnn Simmons, and Melissa Gross. (Guest: Scott Marcinkowski)

**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 Bob Lockhart. Motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Linda Rader gave the Treasurer’s report.The balance on hand $24,688.08. Stone Cottage fund $870.47. The Penny Machine fund has $3,426.63. Mural donations total $2,775.00 to date. The report will be set aside for audit.

 The Commission discussed the budget and sources of income: there are two more outstanding payments from a boat company that have not been paid since last fall and a water bill to the City that has not been collected from the company. The boats are a huge source of income for out Beautification and Tourism Commission and we would not be able to complete some of the larger cost items without this income.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Take Pride Award:** The awards will start again in May.

**Planters:** Due to the frigid temperatures, it was decided to wait until February to remove the decorations. Several dates were discussed, and we will confirm at the February 15th meeting when to remove the decorations. We will need members to volunteer for the use of two trucks. This item will be on the agenda for the February meeting.

**Riverboat/Tour Programming:** There are two payments outstanding from the riverboats this past year, so the tour guides have received partial payment. There was some discussion about the Popeye Character Trail having some interest after the eclipse on April 8, 2024.

**Tourism:
 A. Update Chester brochure/map** – Brenda Owen reported that the brochure is finished, and the printing is complete. There are 15,000 brochures and will be delivered to Brenda on January 19, 2024. The estimated cost is between $5,300.00 and $5,500.00. Additional printing can be done as necessary.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Riverfront Improvement:** At a standstill.

**Fairground Place:** Cynthia Lawder reported that Jeff Korando is working with the City of Chester on lighting for the mural. The City is in negotiations with him for abatement on utilities to offset lighting costs. There should be more progress information reported at a future meeting.

**Eclipse April 8, 2024:**  Brenda Owen reported that the postmark is approved and ready. The postmark will be used on all mail for that day only. The post office will do pre-stamped items and we will be able to sell these at 4 different locations during the event. The Commission discussed producing a postcard with a colored picture of the Popeye stature with the eclipse, a James Webb telescope stamp and the special postmark. Cynthia Lawder made the most to approve the printing of 5,000 postcards at a cost of $295.00 and purchase 1,000 stamps at a cost of $660.00 to be pre-post marked for sale. Jay Cooper seconded the motion. The motion carried. The postcards will sell for $5.00 each with the proceeds for the Beautification and Tourism Commission. There was also some discussion about using the stamp image on stickers and/or magnets. Brenda will check into this idea and will check prices.

# There is a special children’s book entitled, Rana Eclipso Rising: A Total Eclipse of the Sun Story, written and illustrated by Liz Bockelman. As a green frog, Rana, was living a wonderful life in the bog. But in the middle of the concert one night, a human girl caught him, dumped him into a frog tank, and took him home. He was to be part of her solar eclipse night noise science experiment. Being sad—and believing he would never be free—Rana made no noise at all. With the eclipse just days away would Rana’s silence ruin her experiment? The City of Chester is the setting for the story and the book is dedicated to the citizens of Chester. The book is now for sale. Mrs. Bockelman will do a reading and book signing at Cole Park on Saturday and Sunday prior to the eclipse. More details to come as the planning progresses.

# Cynthia Lawder and Brenda Owen attended the Eclipse meeting. The activities will take place Friday, April 5, 2024, through Monday, April 8, 2024. There will be places to watch the event with vendors, food and souvenirs at Cohen and Cole Parks and there will be two pop up shops at Gazebo Park and the BV parking lot.

# The website for the event is Chestereclipse.com administered by Mike McClure.

# There is a great need for volunteers for this event. The members discussed where they would be most needed. Linda and Barry agreed to help at BV Bank parking lot and Bob will be at the Welcome Center. Brenda is going to speak at the Women’s Club meeting on January 26, 2024, and she will go over the eclipse information, pass out brochures and ask for volunteers for this event. The group will meet again to refresh the information in February.

**COMMISSION FUNCTION REPORTS:**

**Public Relations:** The Commission members, Brenda Owen and Melissa Gross assembled a card with a penny attached to be handed out at the Christmas parade in December. Commission members, Barry Harle, Mary Ann Heberlie, and Brenda worked the parade and handed out the pennies to be used at the Welcome Center Popeye Penny machine. The new brochure will be distributed at the Welcome Center. There is an artist rendition of the new bridge at the Welcome Center.

Members of the Commission also met on December 16, 2023, at the home of Bob and Brenda Owen for a Christmas potluck. Barry Harle provided a delicious ham and the others brought delicious side dishes and dessert. Everyone enjoyed the event.

**City Council Update:** No report

**Welcome Center Update:** Bob Lockhart reported that he collected another $72.00 from the penny machine. The machine has now paid for itself. Scott Marcinkowski is now volunteering at the Welcome Center. Many thanks to Scott for volunteering. We need additional volunteers at the Welcome Center, contact Bob Lockhart for further information.

**Randolph County Tourism:** No report.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Tour Jerry Costello Lock and Dam -** Due to the extremely cold temperature predicted for January 20th the group tentatively set a date for February 17, 2024, to take the tour. We will make the final decision at the regular meeting on February 15, 2024.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Christmas decorations –** Brenda presented some examples of the Snowflake decorations for the City of Chester. The decorations were discussed, and prices compared. Jay Cooper made the motion to purchase two Diamond Snowflakes for Christmas decorations at the cost of $486.75 per snowflake. Carla seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Any other business that may come before the commission:** Brenda presented an idea that she and some others were discussing casually about perhaps putting a star on the water tower. Tim Lochhead is willing to help and has someone that will help with the construction of it. Another idea was to attach a star to the top of the courthouse. These ideas were discussed with no decisions being made and will be placed on the back burner for now.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING:**

Linda Schafer moved to adjourn; JoAnn Simmons seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:37 P.M.

The next meeting is February 15, 2024 at 6:30 PM, City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Gross, Secretary