



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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**James Kuhn, Cashton, WI**  
Chairman  
**Margaret Baecker, Independence, WI**  
Vice Chairman  
**Vicki Burke, Onalaska, WI**  
Secretary & Treasurer  
**Greg Flogstad, Onalaska, WI**  
Director

## MINUTES

### MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC) BIMONTHLY MEETING

10:00 a.m., October 11, 2017

AmericInn (formerly Best Western Riverfront Hotel), 1835 Rose Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin

#### **Call to Order**

Chairman Kuhn called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the roll call. A quorum was present. The attendance roster is attached. There were several guests in attendance: Jay Zambito, Geologist, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, UW Extension, Pat Malone, UW Extension, and Jenny Kuderer, Wisconsin Economic Development Association.

#### **Minutes of August 9, 2017 Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the August 9, 2017 bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the August 9, 2017 meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Ehrsam. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Secretary-Treasurer Burke gave the treasurers report. Ms. Burke said the July 31, 2017 balance in all MRRPC accounts was \$291,373.92 and the August 31, 2017 ending balance was \$256,360.76. She reported the beginning balance in September 2017 was \$256,360.76 and September 30, 2017 ending balance was \$231,569.14.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund (BCF) began with a July 31, 2017 balance of \$292,561.58. Activity from August 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 included loan repayments of \$14,047.28 and interest earned of \$100.37, leaving a September 30, 2017 balance on hand of \$306,709.23. The BCF Sequester Account began with a July 31, 2017 balance of \$454,154.57. Activity from August 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 included interest earned of \$229.00, leaving a balance on hand of \$454,383.57.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 began with a July 31, 2017 balance of \$41,458.12. Activity from August 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 included loan repayments of \$1,480.00 and interest earned of \$14.11 leaving a September 30, 2017 balance of \$42,952.23. Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 Sequester Account began with a July 31, 2017 balance of \$160,605.34. Activity from August 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 included interest earned of \$80.98 leaving a September 30, 2017 balance on hand of \$160,686.32.

Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund began with a July 31, 2017 balance of \$52,580.00. Activity from August 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 included loan repayments of \$934.16 and interest earned of \$9.15 leaving a September 30, 2017 balance of \$53,523.31. Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund Sequester Account began with a July 31, 2017 balance of \$104,078.62. Activity from August 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 included interest earned of \$17.96 leaving a balance of \$104,096.58.

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***Providing Planning and Economic Development Services to Improve the Environment, Economy and Quality of Life!***

***• Land Use Planning and Zoning Assistance • Transportation Planning • Economic Development Planning • Recreation Planning • Business Lending • Grant Writing • Economic Data Dissemination • Assisting Local Interests in Responding to State, Federal and Private Programs • Advisory Services on Planning and Development Issues • Coordinator for Programs and Activities • Advocate on Issues Affecting the Region***

The La Crosse County Economic Development Fund began with a July 31, 2017 balance of \$16,980.42. Activity from August 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 included loan repayments of \$5,466.68, interest earned of \$4.64, and administrative expenses of \$668.00 leaving a September 30, 2017 balance of \$21,783.74.

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Commissioner Schlesselman made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baecker. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

**Presentation on geologic and natural resource mapping to assist with zoning and mining permits in Buffalo and Pepin Counties by Jay Zambito, Geologist, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, UW-Extension.**

Mr. Zambito, Geologist, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, UW-Extension, discussed their recent geological projects being conducted in the southwest region of the state and on the status of industrial sandmining. He said the Geological Society is part of the UW-Extension System and operates under the Wisconsin Idea which states that research done in the public should be shared. They provide information, so agencies, government, and individual citizens can make informed decisions. He said that they administer these programs: mapping bedrock geology, hydrogeology, manage the state core depository where there are cores from more than 2,000 drill holes around the state and well cuttings from high capacity and municipal wells, and the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey publications which can be accessed through a database on their website [www.wisconsingeologicalsurvey.org](http://www.wisconsingeologicalsurvey.org). He said that they are concentrating their bedrock mapping in the Southwestern part of the state due to the increase in industrial sandmining. The sand is mined in Wisconsin and then shipped out to different states by railroad to places such as Texas, North Dakota, and West Virginia for oil and natural gas extraction. Currently they have been mapping in Trempealeau County since it is the epicenter of industrial sandmining and into Buffalo and Pepin Counties. In 2016 mapping in the southern part of Trempealeau County began and in the second year they are working in the northern part of the county. He said the report will be available in a few months on the website. He said that the Wonewoc sandstone is the majority of sandstone mined and is concentrated by railroads along the Trempealeau River Valley. A proposal to the federal government to map the bedrock in Buffalo and Pepin County is going to be submitted. The mapping project for Southern Buffalo County and Pepin County will be conducted from 2018-2020. The Geological Survey collaborates with UW-Extension and the counties. Mr. Zambito said that this is just a part of the work the Geological Society is involved in and currently they are working on a side project with Pat Malone from the UW-Extension and Trempealeau County on groundwater quality and quantity in Whitehall near the frac sandmining corridor. Commissioner Stittleburg asked if the Wonewoc sand was the sand that the industrial sandmines are looking for. Mr. Zambito responded that the Wonewoc sand is very clean and easy to extract and meets all the specifications for frac sand. Commissioner Ross asked if sandmining in Texas and Oklahoma impacts the mining here. Mr. Zambito replied that the sand in different areas has different properties. In Wisconsin the sand has a higher crush strength which is good for fracking the deep mines in North Dakota. When you extract from 5,000 feet down, sand from Texas will work but when you go down 10,000 feet such as in North Dakota you need a sand with a higher crush strength such as the sand from Wisconsin. Currently it is more economical to extract oil and gas in Texas than North Dakota but market conditions change. Commissioner Borreson asked about the groundwater quality and quantity in Whitehall near the frac sandmining corridor. Mr. Zambito responded that a presentation will be made in January or February 2018 regarding the findings. He said that long term monitoring devices have been installed on private wells which will monitor the water table and how it changes seasonally, climate, and how it affects the landowners. The geochemistry is also being monitored and will be presented. Pat Malone responded that 380 samples have been collected and tested for nitrates, organic matter, and minerals. Commissioner Baecker asked if there were any results that they could share with us or is it a work in progress. Pat Malone responded that it is still a work in progress and findings will be presented at the October meeting. Commissioner Schlesselman asked if there is an increase in fracturing to increase water flow. Mr. Zambito said that it is common in the northern part of the state. It is difficult to get water out due to the make up of the rock. Hydro fracking for oil and gas extraction is different. Mr. Zambito ended the presentation by encouraging the commission to contact the Wisconsin Geological Natural and Historical Survey with any information needs.

**Report on July 2017 Presidential Disaster Declaration request to FEMA and SBA Assistance now available to homeowners and businesses in La Crosse, Trempealeau, Buffalo, Eau Claire, Jackson, Monroe, and Vernon counties.**

Mr. Bonifas said that previously he had given a report about the damage done in July 2017 in Buffalo, Trempealeau, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, and Vernon Counties. He said that a request was submitted to FEMA and FEMA came out and inspected the damage. The SBA came out and made loans available to small businesses and homeowners. He said that two sites were created for people to apply for SBA loans in La Crosse and Centerville. At these two sites they will be taking loan applications through the end of November. He said that a Presidential Disaster was declared on October 9<sup>th</sup> for public assistance which will reimburse

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municipalities for 75% of the cost for public damage to infrastructure, roads, parks, etc. The Emergency Management Staff will have the most current information about the progress of the distribution of the funds and will contact the municipalities to let them know the time and place to work through the paperwork with FEMA to complete the reimbursement process as they have done in the past.

**Report on the Wisconsin Supply Chain Market Place website for businesses to access Foxconn and other industry supply chain opportunities.**

Mr. Flogstad discussed the free online tool developed by New North that will help business owners to become part of supply chain needs in Wisconsin. It is a database of industry clusters such as the Food and Beverage Industry Cluster. He said that Foxconn's annual \$4.5 million in supply chain needs is part of this web based tool that is designed to help businesses in the state find suppliers or suppliers find buyers for their products or services. He said businesses need to create an account and profile on this web site. This database will connect businesses to other businesses in the state as well as Foxconn's supply chain. Jenny Kuderer commented that New North is a regional economic development group that has been focused on the Fox River Valley where many companies struggled when Defense Contracts went away. Different economic development groups applied for a grant to create this database for companies to reach out to become part of different supply chains. Creating this supply chain database helped these companies diversify so they weren't dependent on just one contract. Commissioner Schroeder asked if the Foxconn contract is finalized. Jenny Kuderer replied that the legislature has approved the WEDC to go ahead with the contract. The contract is with the WEDC board of directors to finalize the language.

**Report on the October 2<sup>nd</sup> launch of the Scenic Mississippi River Regional Transit's (SMRT) bus service from La Crosse to Tomah.**

Mr. Fletcher said that the Feasibility Study that was completed in 2016 was to look at expansion of the SMRT Bus into the Tomah and Arcadia areas. He said that when the study was completed, they looked at existing routes to determine the new route. He worked with Charlie Handy, La Crosse County Planner in applying for funding from Gundersen to do a pilot route. The new route originates in Tomah and runs to La Crosse and then back to Tomah. It is one bus making 2 round trips a day. He said that stops along the route include Northern Engraving, the Sparta Library, the West Salem Park-n-Ride, and the Valley View Mall Park-n-Ride. He said that they need to continue to adjust the schedules due to traffic at certain times of the day causing the buses to be late to stops. They also needed a place to store the bus and the Tomah VA volunteered to store it and has redone their wiring to plug the bus in during the winter to prevent the diesel fuel from gelling. He said the Opportunity Center in Crawford County had a bus to donate to them for the project. There was a grand opening held at Gundersen with La Crosse Mayor Tim Kabat and Representative Jill Billings in attendance. There was also a ceremony at the Tomah VA hospital as well. He said that UW-La Crosse is possibly looking at a way to reduce the fares for faculty and students who ride the bus. He said that they are working on applying for funding through the Wisconsin DOT for federal funds to primarily fund this new route from La Crosse to Tomah. Local contributions from businesses, communities and healthcare institutions are also be sought. Commissioner Leys asked where people would be able to find a schedule. Mr. Fletcher replied that there are printed schedules in the communities being served by the SMRT Bus and the SMRT Bus schedule is posted on the website. For the new route he has been directing people to the website because the route is still being adjusted and the website would have the most up-to-date schedule.

**Report on the Scenic Mississippi River Regional Transit's (SMRT) Statewide Award for a project that focuses on "Growth within Communities and Regions" by the Wisconsin Economic Development Association.**

Mr. Fletcher said that LADCO, the La Crosse Area Development Corporation, nominated the SMRT Bus for a project that focuses on "Growth within Communities and Regions". The SMRT Bus won this award given out by the Wisconsin Economic Development Association, at its Economic and Community Awards Ceremony held in Madison. Mr. Fletcher presented the award to Commissioner Leys to have it placed at City Hall in Prairie du Chien since the City of Prairie du Chien was the key player in creating the first SMRT Bus routes and continues to support the program today.

**Report on the successful U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant award to the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and Coulee Region Business Center to fund a feasibility study on development of a fabrication lab, food processing, packaging and distribution center and a transitional jobs program to assist persons with barriers to employment.**

Mr. Flogstad said the technical assistance grant will look at determining future uses for the business center. He said that the grant will help them with long term planning. Some of the subjects that will be researched include a second stage food processing area which will help business owners test and market product, feasibility of fab lab, real estate site research to determine whether a new incubator should be built, and the feasibility of a transitional jobs training program created for those individuals who are

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currently unemployable and need to gain additional job skills will be researched as well. Commissioner Ross asked if part of the jobs program would be to assist those individuals who were incarcerated and if the prisons would be contacted. Jenny Kuderer responded to the question by saying Western Technical College will be involved and would be collaborating with correctional institutions.

**Old, Business, New Business and Adjourn**

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any old business. Commissioner Kraft thanked Mr. Bonifas for providing the answers to clarify questions about the Farmland Preservation Program. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any new business. Hearing none, a motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Twidt and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. The motion was unanimously approved.

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Vicki Burke, Secretary-Treasurer

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

DATE: 10-11-17

PLACE : AmericInn

	NAME	REPRESENTING
1.	Greg Flogstad	MRRPC Staff
2.	Margaret Buecker	Tremp. Cty.
3.	John Schlesselman	Buffalo
4.	Det Fwidt	Buffalo
5.	James Ehrson	La Crosse
6.	Shelly R. Miller	La Crosse
7.	Philipp Borreson	Trempealeau
8.	Ernst Vold	TREMP.
9.	GERALD M. BAKER	PEPIN
10.	JAMES K KRART	PEPIN
11.	Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
12.	Peter Fletcher	"
13.	Dave Rupp	"
14.	Todd Stitt	Jackson Cty
15.	Rni Dancy	Jackson Co
16.	Herb Conell	Vernon Co.
17.	Bill Schroeder	Pierce Co
18.	Derick Kady	Crawford Co.
19.	RON LETS	CRAWFORD
20.	James E. Ron	Pierce Co.
21.	John Nickelath	Vernon
22.	Viki Bunter	La Crosse
23.	James Kuhn	Monroe Co.
24.	Jay Zambito	UW-Extension
25.	Pat Malone	UW-Extension

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MEETING ATTENDANCE ROSTER - Page 2

NAME	REPRESENTING
26. <i>Jenny Kuderer</i>	<i>Wisconsin Economic Develop. Corp.</i>
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