**CHESTER BEAUTIFICATION/TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES**

April 18, 2024

Call to order: 6:30 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**  Carla Draves, Wendy Lochhead, Bob Lockhart, Brenda Owen, Linda Rader, Linda Schafer, and JoAnn Simmons. Guest: Scott Marcinkowski

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

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:** Motion to approve was made by JoAnn Simmons and seconded by Linda Rader. Motion carried. In Melissa’s absence, Wendy Lochhead took notes.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Linda Rader gave the Treasurer’s report.The balance on hand is $20,183.98. The Stone Cottage fund $870.47. The Penny Machine fund has $3,582.63. Linda R. and Brenda both turned in soda sales money totalling $780. Brenda will meet with Bethany to finalize the income from eclipse merchandise sales. The motion to accept the treasurer’s report was made by Wendy Lochhead and seconded by Bob Lockhart. The motion carried and the report will be set aside for audit.

**PUBLIC PETITIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE: none**

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Take Pride Award:** The awards will start again in May. Please make referrals of appropriate properties to Linda R. and JoAnn.

**Planters:** Tony West plans to get plants by April 19th and to plant them soon after. recently met and discussed the plans for the planters. Scott has been approved by the City Council to take over the part-time watering job and will get training from Tony. Linda has additional snowflakes for the planters during the winter.

**Riverboat/Tour Programming:** There are no riverboat tours scheduled according to Patti. It was reported that the water hydrant at the riverfront will not be replaced thereby eliminating the City’s ability to provide water to the riverboats.

**Tourism:**Brenda Owen indicated Popeye’s 100th birthday will be celebrated in 2029 and asked the Commission to begin thinking about ways to acknowledge this. In 2024 Popeye will be 95 so the copyright for use of his likeness expires at that time.

Scott indicated he had sold the house on the river bluff adjacent the City Steps where Elsie Segar lived from 5 years old until he left Chester. The owner may be interested in working with the Commission on a project involving this property. Scott will follow up.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Riverfront Improvement:** Jo Ann has been researching ways to mark various flood stages from previous flood years. She has talked with Patti about metal “street signs” that would be attached to the water intake building next to the river stage gauge indicating the year the water was at various heights. The estimate for the signs is $158 each. The road is improved from the replacing of water lines at the riverfront.

**Fairground Place:** No update.

**Eclipse April 8, 2024:**  Brenda Owen

All agreed that the eclipse was awesome, and all activities associated with it were successful. It was reported that a number of folks ended in Chester when they were not able to get to Carbondale in time for totality.

**COMMISSION FUNCTION REPORTS:**

**Public Relations:** Brenda changed the wording on the ¼ page ad for The Southern Illinois Scout magazine and submitted it.

**City Council Update:** Bryce Hill has resigned from the Council because of a move. No one has yet been appointed as a liaison to our Commission.

**Welcome Center Update:** Bob Lockhart reported that he met many wonderful people this past month who stopped at the center. The log book reflected 246 folks visiting from 23 states and folks from Guatemala, Germany, Korea, Luxemburg, and Portugal. Amazing! Brenda is working on a project to create a spread sheet with this visitor data. Bob sold over $100 in postcards at the Welcome Center during the eclipse.

**Randolph County Tourism:** No report.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Star on the Water Tower with Laser projector –** No update as Jay was not at the meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Bridge Demolishing event –** The Commission was asked to begin thinking about activities for the Chester Bridge demolition in the summer of 2026 with the possible theme of “Well Blow Me Down.”

**Any other business that may come before the commission:** The group discussed the possibility of creating a “long weekend” itinerary for visitors to advertise on Facebook with interesting places in our area. The building of the bridge makes an interesting site. The group also wondered if a portion of the entrance to the old bridge could remain as a viewing spot much like what was done in Cape Girardeau.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING:**

Linda Schafer moved to adjourn; Carla Draves seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:40P.M.

The next meeting is May 16, 2024 at 6:30 PM, City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Owen, Chair