

Motor Mill Foundation
Minutes
February 18, 2014

The regular meeting of the Motor Mill Foundation of Clayton County was held at the Osborne Conservation Center on Tuesday, February 18, 2014. Chairman John Nikolai called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Other board members present were Ellen Collins, Jon deNeui, Chuck Morine, Lee Lenth, Tom Gifford, and Larry Stone. Betty Buchholz arrived about 8 p.m. Clayton County Conservation Board naturalist Abbey Harkrader also attended.

MINUTES

Nikolai accepted the minutes of the January 28 meeting as printed and distributed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Morine submitted the following monthly report:

Jan. 28 beginning balance	\$9,224.32
No receipts	
Expenses	
West Bend Insurance	\$251.00
Clayton Co. Development Group partnership	\$25.00
Allamakee Clayton Elec.	\$32.64
Total expenses	\$308.64
Feb. 18, 2014 balance	\$8,915.68
CONSERVATION RESERVE	
Jan. 21, 2014 balance carried forward (negative balance)	(\$70,240.21)
No change	
Feb. 18, 2014 balance carried forward (negative balance)	(\$70,240.21)
CAPITAL FUND	
Jan. 21, 2014 balance brought forward	\$10,368.30
Receipts	
Bruce & Betty Landis	\$100.00
Feb. 18, 2014 balance	\$10,468.30

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OLD MILLS (SPOOM)

Morine said Engelhardt has asked that the Motor Mill Foundation to start paying the \$50 SPOOM annual membership dues, which in the past have been paid by the Clayton County Conservation Board. deNeui moved that the Foundation pay the dues. Stone seconded. Carried.

Collins and Lenth suggested that the SPOOM magazines are useful references that should be available for MMF members.

INTERPRETIVE PLAN

The board discussed interpretation ideas presented in January by Angi Reid, Education and Interpretation Manger for Silos and Smokestacks.

Stone summarized the theme statements that he and Lenth wrote, with Reid's guidance. They were:

Agricultural:

As settlers came to Northeast Iowa, they supported their families at first by growing and processing crops and later by adopting more diverse agricultural methods.

Beautiful Landscape :

The unique geology, flora and fauna of the driftless area have attracted people for thousands of years and created opportunities for agriculture and industry, and challenges for stewardship.

People:

For generations, people have followed their hopes and dreams to this region, where they used its rich resources and their own hard work to build a good life for themselves and families.

Architecture:

European craftsmen brought many skills and traditions that resulted in beautiful, enduring structures built with local materials.

The board noted the importance of stories to make the history appeal to visitors. Several members also supported the development of an interpretive guide, but with the flexibility for tour guides to adapt their presentations to specific interests and questions of tour groups. (If we receive a Silos and Smokestacks intern grant, one of the tasks of the intern would be to prepare that guide.)

It was agreed that the guide should give new volunteers a good background, but it should not be so detailed and extensive that it might intimidate people.

Collins noted the need for other displays, interpretive signs, and hands-on demonstrations, along with the tours.

Nikolai asked that each board member use the interpretive themes as a guide to prepare stories to share at the March meeting. Board members also should seek additional volunteer tour guides.

TOUR PROMOTION, MAGAZINE ADS?

Collins was contacted by “Bus Tour Magazine,” which wanted the board to buy an ad to promote Motor Mill tours. The cost would be \$350 for an ad the size of a business card. The board’s consensus was that the cost was prohibitive.

But the board discussed other ways to encourage bus tours, including contacting local banks. Lenth noted that “Our Iowa” magazine hosts regular bus tours, and that we should be in touch with that publication.

INTERN GRANT

Engelhardt has applied for a Silos and Smokestacks grant to pay for a temporary employee to work on interpretive plans for Motor. The person would work 32 hours per week for 12 weeks. We should learn by March 1 whether the grant is successful.

MOTOR MILL TRAIL

Engelhardt has been working with the Iowa DOT. A phase one archeological study is the next in a long series of steps.

STORIES IN STONE CAPITAL FUND CAMPAIGN

The Clayton County Development group is hosting a “crowd funding” workshop at 5:30 pm., on Wednesday, February 19, at the Central State Bank community room. Nikolai plans to attend. Other members also were urged to attend if possible.

SPEAKING TO PROMOTE MOTOR MILL

Nikolai has arranged to speak to two groups in Volga on March 4, and to a Clayton County Farm Bureau group on April 3. Stone will speak to the Murphy Library “bookworms” in Monona on March 4.

BOARD MEMBERS

Nikolai has invited Myron Phelps to board meetings, and has asked if he would consider being a board member.

BUSINESS PLAN

Nikolai has submitted a revised business plan to Engelhardt.

ART/HISTORY ON THE WEBSITE

There has been no progress on soliciting art for the website.

Nikolai urged Stone, with assistance from Jean Mari Hall, to follow up on the idea of submitting regular “Stories in Stone” to local newspapers.

ADMISSION CHARGE?

The board discussed the idea of charging admission for tours at Motor Mill. Lenth and Stone suggested that free-will donations probably would generate more money than a set admission fee.

Morine noted the logistical problems of collecting a fee, and the question of whether people could visit some areas of the site without paying. He also said an admission charge might create ill will.

Harkrader proposed a compromise of charging admission to groups that ask for special tours

Nikolai said one reason for an admission charge would be to demonstrate to the Conservation Board and County Supervisors that the Motor Mill Foundation is making a good-faith effort to raise money to pay for the bridge and future projects.

The discussion turned to other ways to produce income from the historic site. One suggestion was to keep the Mill open for tours – and potential donations – more often. Questions included how many days or weekends that might be, the effect on our tax status, and how to get volunteers.

Buchholz noted that the Carter House Museum gets most of its donations in conjunction with an annual fall open house.

The board pondered ideas for a Motor event, such as a dinner or concert on the bridge.

The board took no action.

OPEN ITEMS

Collins said that Marlys Svendsen has successfully completed the amended nomination of the Motor Mill Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places.

Lenth reported on a tour of the University of Iowa’s Hydraulics Research Laboratory Building conducted by Cornelia Mutel.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

TURKEY RIVER RECREATIONAL CORRIDOR

Nikolai attended the TRRC’s January meeting. He reported that an Iowa Great Places grant has been delayed.

Plans are under way in Elkader to connect a sidewalk to the Pony Hollow Trail.

FACILITIES

deNeui said volunteers are waiting for better weather to install the remaining windows in the Cooperage and to begin fabricating and installing hand rails in the Mill.

Lenth is making a wooden handle for a mill bill.

Lenth also plans to make another wooden mill stone on which to mount donor plaques.

COMMUNICATIONS

Nikolai presented estimates for interpretive signs from Mark Collins at Signs N Frames in Elkader. The board took no action, pending development of an interpretive plan.

EDUCATION

Buchholz has continued to research the genealogy of John Thompson. She has learned that he had two daughters, but neither apparently had any children.

She has found several posters from the October 2008 Big Blue Sky concert.

NEXT MEETING

The next board meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18, at the Osborne Conservation Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Nikolai adjourned the meeting about 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry A. Stone, secretary