

Motor Mill Foundation

Minutes

(DRAFT)

July 16, 2024

The regular meeting of the Motor Mill Foundation of Clayton County was held Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at the Motor Mill Inn. Those present included: Ken Zichal, Chuck Morine, Larry Stone, Chris Schoen, Jay Elvers, Mark Yackel-Juleen, David Beck, and Dan Slagel. Clayton County Conservation Board director Jenna Pollock, naturalist Abbey Harkrader, and Motor Mill co-coordinator Laura Elsinger also attended. The group shared lasagna furnished by Zichal before Zichal called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

AGENDA

Elvers moved to approve the agenda as distributed. Schoen seconded. Carried.

MINUTES

Morine moved to approve the June 18 minutes as distributed. Elvers seconded. Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

May 17	Beginning Balance	34,545.33
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Receipts

Jun 20-July 14	Square Credit Merch/Donation.	1,183.99
June 24	Donation	300.00
June 7,14	Blackbaud	40.00
June 24.	Donation	174.00
July 1	Donation	187.00
July 8	Donation	229.00
July 15	Donation	122.00

Total Receipts
2235.99

Expenses

June 13	Allam-Clayton Electric	17.46
June 17	Dust Buster Road	675.00
June 27	Stable Roof Repair*	19,216.81

June 27	Esser's Clothing	943.00	
	Total Expenses		20,852.27

June 18	Ending Balance		15,929.05
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Pending Payments:

Check for Inn items**	15.10
Allam Clayton Electric	74.41

Claims: None.

*April 23 MMF meeting it was agreed that up to \$20K was approved for stable roof repair.

** \$500 for such expenses approved in May. Less than \$100 spent so far.

Check for Inn items**	15.10
Alpine Communications	74.41

Claims: None.

VISIONING SESSION

Mallory Hansen with NE Iowa RC&D conducted a “visioning” session with the board. The exercise involved board members listing many past accomplishments, a few of which included: the turbine display, basement clean-out, Inn and Stable restoration, electricity, cable internet, bridge replacement, acquisition of milling equipment, and interpretive panels.

The board next listed strengths of the Foundation and the Motor Mill Historic Site. Some examples: location, diverse expertise of board members, Conservation Board staff support and grant success, historical story to tell, package of experiences available at the site, and community support.

Weaknesses the board discussed included: flooding, remoteness, maintenance and upkeep, need for more volunteers, limited hours, county road intrusion, and uncertain demographics of visitors.

Board members talked of the relationship with the Conservation Board, and the potential need for a written document to clarify each board’s role. Pollock noted that volunteers John Nikolai and Jon deNeui “led the charge” to protect, preserve, and interpret the site – and that the Conservation Board and the Board of Supervisors respect that legacy. Morine said the role of the Foundation is to support the Conservation Board, which manages the county-owned site.

Board members outlined short-term goals – many of which are already in progress: Repair of eroding pillar base in the basement, marketing and promotion, and Cooperage renovation.

Longer term (3-5 years) suggestions included: steel bar gates for the basement arches, more work on the Cooperage, determine a theme and décor for the Inn, video update, landscaping, better marketing to younger visitors, and clean silt from dam abutment.

Ideas for goals from 5 to 10 years might include: paving the road from Communia, full-time staff, publishing a book about Motor, a wheat-grinding demonstration, preserve the serenity and authenticity of the site, and involve a college architectural history class.

Hanson said she will compare ideas from this session with the Foundation's earlier visioning plans and make some cost estimates before preparing a report to bring to the Foundation at a future meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1 – UPDATE ON STABLE ROOF – Pollock said the Stable roof has been replaced and the upper west windows covered with plexiglass. The haymow door on the bluff side also was boarded over. Lights will be installed before the August 10 Night at the Inn event. There will be two permanent lights for safety, with 12 outlets to position other lights.

2 – UPDATE ON INN RECEPTION AREA – Elsinger said the co-coordinators usually have been busy. The 3D topographic site map has arrived. Tuesdays and Wednesdays have had the least traffic, while the 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. hours on other days often have been busiest. Merchandise sales have been good. She said the John Mellinger note cards have been popular. Stone agreed to order more.

Zichal said he will work at Motor on Friday, July 26, which may be a busy day because it is the beginning of Elkader's Sweet Corn Days.

3 – UPDATE ON NIGHT AT THE INN – Harkrader said she, Brenda Yearous, Jane Metcalf, and Margaret Stone have been planning a "Night at the Inn" event, with music, wine tasting, art demonstrations, crafts, and food.

Schoen said Thrivent Financial Services has given a \$250 grant to help pay for the band, which is Kismet Rendezvous, a duo from Minneapolis. Beck moved that the Foundation pay the remaining \$150 of the band's \$400 fee. Slagel seconded. Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1 – SIGNAGE AT THE MILL, INN, CAMPGROUND AND BOAT RAMP – Slagel described the directional signs he’s been designing to place where they will be visible as vehicles come off the bridge. The wooden signs will be routed with lettering and arrows to Mill, Welcome Center, campground, and boat ramp.

2 – CLEANOUT OF UNUSED/UNNEEDED ITEMS (JUNK?) – With the help of Hunter using a tractor and trailer from the Clayton County Conservation Board, volunteers on July 16 removed the remaining machinery and other items from the Glenn Vaske shed. Some things are temporarily stored in the Stable, but will be removed before the Night at the Inn on August 10. People at Plagman Barn may have some interest in a few pieces. Considerable mill related equipment is stored in the white garage at Motor.

Zichal said visitors often express interest in the runner stone pieces at the Mill. He suggested trying to build a model of a runner stone that could be suspended from the crane on the millstone platform to show how the stones were lifted up to sharpen.

ADJOURNMENT

Stone moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Slagel seconded. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry A. Stone, secretary