

**Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau
Board of Directors Hybrid Board Meeting
Alton City Hall- Council Chambers or via Zoom
Thursday, April 15, 2021**

8:00 a.m.

Present: John Hopkins, Lauren Pattan, Kristi Hyten, Mitch Bair, Michael Barker, Brian Campbell, Tom Guarino, Stacy Friedrich-Hinrichs, Jennifer McClure, Cameo Holland, Sandy Hefner, JD Lorton, Dave Miller, Patty Rotermund, Doug Stotler and Erin Ventimiglia

Absent: Karen Brncic, Linda Jun, Cathy Luttrell and Mike McCormick

Staff: Cory Jobe, Barbara Strack, Stephanie Tate, Katie Bennett, Sydney Peckham and Lauren Richey

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by John Hopkins.

Chairman opening remarks: John thanked everyone who was able to make it to the board meeting. He offered congratulations to Cameo Holland, Brian Campbell and Mike McCormick for their re-election results. He reminded board members to RSVP for the May Tourism Rally at Gordon Moore Park next month and the next board meeting will be on May 20, 2021.

President opening remarks: Cory thanked everyone who could make it and also offered congratulations to Cameo Holland, Brian Campbell and Mike McCormick for their re-election results. Cory said there will be several new faces at city and village halls across the region after this month's election. He had a zoom meeting with Alton Mayor Elect David Goins and Cameo Holland this past week, and will meet with Grafton Mayor Elect Mike Morrow next week. Cory said he is very excited about the Go Guide, and copies were handed out to those in person. Cory gave a special thanks to Stephanie Tate for the content and Katie Bennett for helping to sell the advertisements.

Board Minutes and Financials: John asked the board to review the March board minutes and financials. Dave Miller made the motion to approve both the March board minutes and financials; Sandy Hefner seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

COMMITTEES

Finance Committee: Kristi said the Finance Committee met and reviewed the proposed FY 2022 budget. A brief overview was given and board members were asked to review and ask any questions before the next board meeting.

Nominating Committee: Lauren said her and Kristi will be working on the Nominating Committee recommendations. Alton has five Mayoral appointed seats and John said that Mayor Elect David Goins said he does not plan to make any immediate changes, but we will need to get his approval for the Alton appointed seats. Voting on the board seats will be at the June meeting, along with the slate of Officers.

Proposed Board Assignments: The list of proposed committee assignments were provided to board members. John said these committee assignments are a follow-up to the strategic plan for get board members more involved with the Tourism Bureau. If anyone has questions about their committee assignment to contact Cory. There will be further discussion at the next board meeting

REPORT OF BUREAU ACTIVITIES:

The Visitor Center will re-open to the public on Tuesday, June 1. New hours will be 10 am – 4pm, seven days a week. We will be hiring three part-time staff members to work at Visitor Center and if anyone knows someone who is looking for a part-time job to send them our way. We will be sending out a request for

new/updated rack cards to display at the Visitor Center when it opens back up. Cory encouraged all board members affiliated with any attractions, restaurants or event organizers to send them to Sydney Peckham.

We received notice that we were approved for re-certification as a Tourism Bureau through the Illinois Office of Tourism.

Cory said both the State House and Senate returned to in-person meetings this past week in Springfield, and we will continue to meet with local and statewide legislators to discuss the importance of using federal funds as a lifeline to help support the tourism industry for FY 2022 as hotel/motel taxes receipts continue to lag.

Last week, Cory and three other DMO leaders presented to the House GOP Caucus Leadership team and House GOP Leader Jim Durkin the importance of tourism to economic recovery. In addition, he met with Congressmen Rodney Davis and his team to discuss the federal CARES funding and needs of our bureau and key projects that need support to help grow our industry.

With so much talk of federal dollars coming to the state, it is important for the Tourism Bureau to be on the forefront of funds available for our organization to continue our mission and our local businesses and community projects we represent. To that end, we are in the process of hiring a part-time Grant Writing Consultant. This person will help our Tourism Bureau, plus local organizations who need assistance. We hope to have this position filled in a couple of weeks.

Board members were reminded to register for the Home Opener to Summer Fun Tourism Rally event on Thursday, May 6, from 4 – 6 pm at the Lloyd Hopkins Field in Gordon Moore Park, which is the home to the new Prospect League baseball team Alton River Dragons. Let Sydney know if you can make it and bring a friend or colleague. Baseball food will be served, and beer is donated by Fritz Distributing.

Due to the popularity of the Restaurant Weeks, Craft Beer Week, we are adding new promotions to highlight as we celebrate our craft food and beer scene in the region. All designed to drive consumers to and throughout our business community in southwest Illinois. We will have Epic Burger Week from June 14-18; Epic Ice Cream Week from August 9-13; and Epic Pizza Week from September 13-17. The cost is \$25 to participate in each week. All Star Restaurant Week will be from July 9-18. This year the commemorative glass will be celebrating the inaugural season of the Alton River Dragons. Craft Beer Week will be July 30-August 8 with six local breweries participating.

The new RiversAndRoutes.com 2.0 website will launch on June 30. We will have a preview for the board at the June board meeting.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

General Announcement: The Light up the Great River Road All Summer Long fireworks campaign is still on and Dave Miller said he plans to have fireworks at the St. Louis Regional Airport for the July 4th celebration. More details to come.

Brian Campbell invited board members to his ribbon cutting at 5 Diamonds Campground in Hartford on Tuesday, May 11 at 10 a.m.

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by JD Lorton and seconded by David Miller. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Cory Jobe
President/CEO

Kristi Hyten
Secretary/Treasurer