

**Minutes of the
QUAD CITIES RIVERFRONT COUNCIL (QCRFC)**

Tuesday, November 15, 2022, 12:00 p.m.

Council Members in Attendance

Mr. Chris Mathias*
Ms. Heather Bishop
Mr. Larry Burns
Mr. Ralph Heninger
Mr. Tim Knanishu

Mr. Doug Littrel
Mr. James Peterson *
* *Current QCRFC Officers*
** *QCRFC Representative to BSRC*

Others in Attendance:

Ms. Jennifer Bizarri
Bre'Anna Brooks (zoom)

Clare Lindahl (zoom)

1. **Call Meeting to Order** The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mathias at 12:02 p.m.
2. **Approval of the September 27, 2022 QCRFC Meeting Minutes** Mr. Heninger made a motion to approve the July 26, 2022 minutes. Mr. Burns seconded, and the meeting minutes were approved.
3. **Presentation on Investing in an Inclusive Quad Cities Environment Movement** Ms. Bre'Anna Brooks, Program Officer at the Mississippi River Initiative Walton Family Foundation, and Clare Lindahl, Consultant and CEO at the Soil and Water Conservation Society, discussed investing in an inclusive Quad Cities environmental movement. Bre'Anna Brooks works at Walton Family Foundation and she is a Program Officer on the Mississippi River Initiative Team. The key term of the presentation is inclusive. She has worked in costal Louisiana and now the Quad Cities. She works with social and ecological issues and has worked with water quality. Clare Lindahl is the CEO of Soil and Water Conservation and is originally from the Quad Cities and she has worked with River Action, the Scott County Soil and Water, and the Partners of Scott County Watershed.

The Walton Family Foundation has 3 specific focuses: strengthening the connections between K12 education and lifelong opportunity; protecting rivers, oceans and the communities they support; and advancing the home region of Arkansas Mississippi delta. The environment program has 3 geographies: the Colorado River basin; the Mississippi River basin; and the national and international fisheries. The work involves protecting the oceans and rivers and working with fisheries and fisherman. They work with communities and businesses closest to natural water resource challenges to find solutions so that nature and people can thrive. The Mississippi River initiative essence is inclusion, innovation, supply chain, and policy. A lot of the work in the Quad Cities is inclusion.

Started this project in August 2020, and they have an interest in exploring environmental education to achieve their goals. They define community as any group with influence over an issue or an outcome. Walton Family Foundation defines community as any group geographically proximate to

the effects of an environmental issue. Community engagement is described by the grant team as incorporating values, and supporting and facilitating participation, in the development of solutions to the environmental challenges. From their research, community engagement has potential to play a role in shifting power to historically-marginalized communities. How to grow the community engagement by changing from funder-led to community-led allows for more sustainable impact because when the community feels ownership, the community goes on when the funder is no longer involved.

The Foundation is bringing 15 years of work with coastal Louisiana up river to the Quad Cities. Clare, with the Soil and Water Conservation Society, did an assessment to see kind of work was being done in the environmental Quad Cities. She held a series of interviews with Quad Cities' environmental groups, cities, and groups representing underserved communities. She created an overview of the key players who are doing the environmental and community building work, the programs, and where the opportunities are to build this environmental movement in the Quad Cities. Some results of her research are that the Mississippi River is very valued and a multi-purpose river and resource for the Quad Cities. Also, what the river means to each individual person really differs. The goals are to increase the diversity of voices in the environmental conversation of the river, learn by doing, join an advisory group, and create a vision for the river. There will be a collaborative visioning workshop on November 17th in Davenport to focus on goals, introduce the team, discover, and define.

4. **Individual Riverfront Reports.**

- *Mercer County* – Mr. Peterson said they are winding down the year as far the riverfront is concerned. There are two Cargill terminals at Keithsburg and New Boston. The barges have partial load restrictions at New Boston and then they can load full at Keithsburg. Keithsburg has the habitat restoration project in the 2nd phase at Port Louisa. There was a project at Cargill where they dug out for the barges. Low water is a big issue economically. The Bay Island is a lower bluff bottom ground and the drainage committee has sand collecting from the Iowa River. Where the water used to collect has washed away the area. If they are going to bring in cargo ship and trading, right now is a good time to review the river to see how it has changed. Their busy season is spring and summer. Cargill has different carriers such as Ingram, Marquette, etc., and have other commodities such as salt, iron ore, and anhydrous. The corn in the US generally is GMO, but the IP is the product Cargill deals with. There needs to be a plan before they dig up the river. Sturgeon Bay used to be 20 feet deep, but now it is a mud flat.
- *US Army Corps of Engineers* – Ms. Bishop said water is low, but locks and dams are doing what they were designed to do, so there are not the problems here that they are having further south. They are dewatering lock and dam 12 this winter just downstream of Dubuque. There will be tours of the lock and dam when it is dewatered. There is a lot of stuff going on with NEST and they are designing the additional lock at 25 and the fish passage at lock 22. There is work on the Illinois River to keep the invasive carp (Coti) out of the Great Lakes. Ms. Bishop said the presentation was interesting and that it would be good to combine resources to work with the Walton Foundation. The Colonel is in DC working on Congressional visits and updating them about events and issues in our districts.

- *Riverdale* – Mr. Littrel said Riverdale had the highest voter turn-out this year at 72%. Arconic plans to make Fenno Road an overpass over the railroad for employees and the trucks. They can create the overpass because the power plant is being removed. Scott Community College has a new entrance on Highway 67, but there will not be a stop sign there anymore. Since Anthony became mayor, they are fully staffed.
- *Scott County* – Mr. Mathias said they are looking at accessory dwelling units for planning and zoning items, which might create an upper level accessory dwelling unit or building a detached unit to help deal with growing in place.
- *Representative for Bi-State* – Mr. Henninger is opening a new bicycle trail to integrate with the rest of the country and connectivity to other parts. The bike trail will connect Rock Island County to Rockford and Chicago. He mentioned that they could broaden their vision to include more than the River, and possibly could include the bike trail.
- *REDEEM* – Mr. Knanishu said the Great River Trail just completed. In East Moline the Mecum Auction is at the Bend Expo and it is Thursday through Sunday. They are building a hotel at the Bend that will connect to the Expo Center itself. The RAISE Grant is a \$30 million dollar grant with the federal government contributing \$25 million and the City contributing \$5 million. The City engineers have issued a number of requests for proposals for different sections of that, and it will create a roadway from the back of the property along the river to 7th Street. It also makes changes along River Drive (in Moline) and 12th Avenue (East Moline), and it will connect the Bend Hotel to 12th Avenue and to 7th Street. It also includes a lot of street scaping in the downtown including zero-curbs, planters, and landscaping.
- *Rock Island County* – Mr. Burns said the bike path is open and they are repairing the blacktop.

Mr. Mathias had to leave, so at this point Mr. Peterson chaired the meeting.

5. **Next Meeting.** The next meeting of the Quad Cities Riverfront Council will be January 24, 2023. Begin thinking about nominations for certificates of appreciation that we will discuss at the January meeting.
6. **Other Business.** None
7. **Adjournment.** Mr. Peterson moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Burns seconded it. The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.