



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission Meeting January 26, 2023

Meeting called to order by Chair Cory Jobe at 1:35 PM

“Today is January 26, 2023. We have assembled the platform for us to conduct today’s Commission meeting in person and by WebEx in order to attend to matters and comply with Executive Orders. This meeting is being conducted with a remote option pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Meetings Act which permits remote meetings when certain conditions are met. The Governor has issued a disaster declaration due to the circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic. I, as the Chairman of the Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission, find that conducting an in-person meeting for some members not practical because of the disaster, all members of the Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission have verified that they can hear the discussion and testimony, members of the public are able to hear the meeting contemporaneously via the DCEO website, all votes will be conducted by roll call, notice of the meeting was posted prior to 48 hours before the meeting, and a verbatim record of the meeting is being recorded and will be available to the public.”

Roll call was taken of the Commission Members:

Cory Jobe – yes
Tim Butler – no
Bonnie McDonald – no
Rep. Larry Walsh Jr. – yes
Bob Navarro – yes
Rep. Martin Moylan – no
Steve Dougherty - no
Tim Bradley – no
Milton Sees – yes
Scott Dahl – yes
Jamie Reynolds/DNR – yes
Jan Kemmerling/IOT – yes
Dave Juens/State Archives – yes
Casey Claypool – yes
Deputy Governor Andy Manar – no

Guests in attendance: Bill Thomas, The Road Ahead; Sharon Osborne; Ron Romero; Quinn Adamowski; Greg Peerbolte; Kate Meehan

Chair Jobe indicated he was going to make a couple of edits to the agenda by moving item VII Electrifying Route 66 in Illinois to the next quarterly meeting.

Asked for review of the 5/17/22 meeting minutes; Bob Navarro motioned to approve and Milt Sees seconded the motion – all in favor to approve

Bill Thomas provided an update from the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership and the US Route 66 Centennial Commission. Presentation is attached.

There will be a trademarked logo for each of the states to use. Once they launch the website, they will be looking for events to start to be populated for events taking place from 2023-2026 so you can funnel those in.

Cory mentioned when looking at potential partners for the national group, they may want to look at Brand USA and US Travel Association as well as the 8 state tourism offices to be involved with marketing.

Bob Navarro asked about the status of the postage stamp; Rialto Theatre will be 100 years old that year. It was indicated that the US Post Office has acknowledged and in their queue. There will be 8 in the series. Bill will have access to the brand identity once he is official.

Casey Claypool indicated they have submitted a \$750,000 grant for a new interpretive plan for the whole road in Illinois – not awarded yet. They are working to get signage in place and updated for communities along the route. Sherman, Lexington, and Chenoa signs submitted and should be up by August or September. They will work internally to get them up.

The Byway will have a stencil you can purchase from Byway to spray paint on the road – use however communities see fit. The Scenic Byway organization is willing to be the organization to lead the efforts for this group and offer that support to the Commission.

Mid-2025 is the target date for signs and shields on the ground. Their office also has the historic Route 66 signs – IDOT official signs – so can be turned over quickly.

It was asked if IDOT can approach this as centennial project. Casey will work on a spreadsheet of what it will take to get this done – fill in the holes – handling community by community – work on it over the next 2 years. Probably need about 200 brown sign and the alignment signs that go along with it once the others go up.

Milt Sees indicated that the IDOT sign shop made and put them up – IDOT special signage efforts – suggest you do a spreadsheet and work through your contacts there. Need to replace Doug House as the IDOT representative on the Commission as he retired. Suggested could start with Paul Wappel – PIO as a contact if you need it.

Casey provided an update on the Gate 2 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds project – have a 10-year contract as a permanent exhibit – educate travelers of the entire route in the state – 90 communities. It is open 365 days per year – hope to have the entire project completed by end of June 2023. Had to have \$500,000 in match funds – have \$375,000 secured and need rest for the grant from DCEO.

Scott Dahl updated about the Giant Slide and the Route 66 design, and it will be open May-October at least one day a week as part of that experience as a ticketed attraction. Sangamon County making some improvements outside there to look cohesive by this year's Fair dates.

Dave Juens asked if they had anything like a Welcome to Route 66 Centennial Community. Not currently and will leave up to the communities.

Jan Kemmerling provided an update on the Route 66 grant projects and international advertising and promotion efforts that have been taking place.

Cory indicated they now have a full Commission except for the representative from IDOT. This group will continue to meet quarterly and asked if the group felt we had the correct committees to move forward. Want to make sure that we do something great for the Centennial – what can we do well and be prepared. Is it possible to invite others to be on the Committees? Will follow up with Legal to determine.

Rep. Walsh asked about the \$4 million in funding and the projects and asked about the new products being created and could that be presented at the next meeting.

Asked for public comments – Ron Romero from the Illinois Rock & Roll Museum talked about his recent addition of the world's largest guitar in front of the museum and the trip from east coast to Joliet with stops along the way in Illinois for photo opportunities. He thanked Heritage Corridor CVB team and DCEO for the grant funds to do this. Hope to have the first floor open late spring or early summer and obtain funding for second & third floors later.

Mayor of Joliet joined the group and welcomed to Joliet and the History Museum. He talked about the success of the Old Joliet Prison and the tours they now offer and how it has grown in the past 5 years. Talked about opening the first ever Dairy Queen located on Chicago Street in Joliet.

Asked for comments from any other public members and there were none.

Next meeting dates:

Thursday, May 11 – 1 PM – Springfield

Thursday, September 21 – 1 PM – Collinsville

December meeting date will be provided during the May meeting

Casey Claypool moved to adjourn the meeting and Bob Navarro seconded.