

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY PARTNERS

Villa Maria

Frontenac, September 1, 2004

President Sherrone Mulry called the meeting to order with 14 members and one guest present.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Larry reported that about 30 members have paid their 2005 membership dues. The organizations accounts had the following balances on 083104:

Checkbook: \$1,3889.57

Money Market Account: \$1,063.24

Birding Festival Account: \$5,126.12

Larry stated that there is still some problems with receiving the data from the website as far as number of hits received and thus he did not have a report for this month. He questioned the need for a password to access this data. From discussion, apparently the password protection is standard operating procedure as annoying as it can be. Kelly Larson moved acceptance of the treasurer's report, Mary DeRoos seconded and motion passed.

At this time, Sherrone asked that we go around the room introducing ourselves, as there were a few new members present. The new members were Mike Smith, new owner of the HISTORIC Anderson House and Richard Fuller, Windwhisper West Kimono Shop.

The August meeting minutes were reviewed. Carolyn Klees moved acceptance with Kelly Larson seconding. Motion passed.

85 MILE GARAGE SALE - Next year's dates are set at May 6,7, & 8. The website has been updated with the new dates.

BIRDING – Kelly announced her resignation from the birding and marketing committees due to an impending relocation. She offered files from these assignments to whoever would like to take over for her. She recommended that the birding festival be kept on the weekend after Mother's day. Mary DeRoos announced that at this time there is some question whether there will be a birding festival next year.

GARDEN – More brochures were printed. Carol indicated that due to the errors on the original printing, the reprinting cost was reduced. Carol is putting together a booklet on the gardens to be located at the MVP visitor center in Pepin. She asked members to send her pictures of their respective community gardens for the booklet. She also asked for help from each community in "putting to bed" each of the gardens later this fall. She indicated that Bill Moore was in the hospital recovering from surgery and would not be able to help her.

VISITOR CENTER – There was some discussion concerning the hours of operation of the visitor center. It is now run strictly by volunteers and is not open a lot of hours.

Someone asked if the center could be moved to an operating business so that it could be open more hours. There probably are not any MVP businesses that are large enough for that. The board is considering an offer to staff the visitor center for a small stipend of \$5.00/hour. No decision was reached.

MEMBERSHIP – Sherrone introduced Pat Mutter, Director of the Winona VCB. She has been at that post for three years. She made a pitch to allow Winona and the other small communities to its north join MVP. She stated that Winona could serve as the southern gateway community and that it now promotes a number of MVP businesses and refers visitors to others. She announced that the center is open 9-5 Monday – Saturday and 10-4 on Sunday. The number of visitors to the center since it opened after remodeling in May through July was 6,000. She felt that Winona shared many of the same characteristics of the other MVP communities. Winona is now a member of Bluff Country but it does not fit that organization well. She stated that a new Equestrian Center which brings in 200-300 people for every show that occurs. The equestrians spend lots of money while at the shows.

Sherrone, Carolyn, Kelly, Mary and Richard spoke in favor of considering opening membership to Winona and others. Mary reminded everyone that because of past issues with opening membership this question must go before the entire membership. There was some concern if making this move would start a chain of events that would change the direction and mission of the current organization. Larry read the by-laws which state that any membership change must be voted for consideration at one regular monthly meeting and a final vote taken at the next monthly meeting.

Kelly moved that MVP vote at the October membership meeting to open the boundaries of MVP membership. There will be a town hall style meeting conducted one week before the regular membership meeting at which the pros and cons of such a move will be discussed. Sherrone will send a letter to all members announcing this proposal and meeting. The Historic Anderson House offered their place for the meeting.

TOLL FREE – Sherrone stated 241 Travel Planners were sent out from 800 number calls.

WEBSITE – The Travel Planner text on the website is being at this time in anticipation of the new printing of the planner. Each community should look at their text on the webpage and send in corrections. Everyone should also go to the webpage and test linking to their own business to make sure it works.

AROUND THE LAKE – An idea was brought forward to have a members challenge event, community vs. community to spur activeness by membership. What do you think?

Kelly moved and Larry seconded meeting adjourned.

Next meeting will be October 6, 2004 at Lark Toys in Kellogg. See you there!!!!

Respectfully submitted, Harry Roberts, acting secretary