

Grafton Ferry Study Committee Holds Initial Meeting

by Submitted by the City of Grafton
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GRAFTON - With the real-life map of the Mississippi and Illinois River confluence spread far below, the first meeting of the Grafton Ferry Study Committee kicked off at Aerie's Winery on Thursday, June 22nd.

The meeting was hosted by America's Central Port District (Granite City) and the City of Grafton, partners in seeking the planning grant to study the regional ferry systems and

provide recommendations. The consulting contract was awarded to Nelson/Nygaard, who is conducting a comprehensive study of all aspects of river ferry operation along the Mississippi.

Participants included the Ferry Oversight Committee, appointed by the City Council to review the data and to provide input to Nelson/Nygaard. The committee is comprised of Grafton business owners and residents; city government is represented by Alderwoman Donna Smith, Alderman Andy Jackson, and Mayor Morrow. The overall scope of the study was presented, and input was gathered from committee members regarding the vital role played in Grafton's tourism industry by the current weekend ferry service. A full-time ferry would be of even greater benefit to the town's economic health, and provide businesses with a broader platform for success if given the potential of year-round tourist income. Nelson/Nygaard interviewed ferry riders all weekend; a comprehensive survey is coming soon for residents and tourists to complete.

Dennis Wilmsmeyer, Executive Director of the Port District, commented, "This study has been a long time in coming. Going forward, the consultants have taken away a lot of valuable information about the Grafton, Brussels and Golden Eagle ferries and all that the State has to offer. I see this as a great opportunity for Grafton residents, because this study will eventually culminate in a report providing some great recommendations."

"I am pleased to see that we are getting the ferry study started," said Mayor Morrow. "It was one of my campaigns promises to look at ways to increase ferry operations in Grafton."

The Calhoun Ferry Company operates the Grafton Ferry and is open Friday through Sunday and on holidays in the summer season.

Photos provided by Dave Sanford, City Photographer.