

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: July 12, 2021

Meeting Location: Riley Tavern

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice-President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Lydia Haynes; Rod Zentner; Meg Skinner

Minutes

Lydia motioned and Bill seconded to accept the June 2021 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of June 2021 balance of \$30,537.89 in the Farmers Savings Bank account. There have been lots of trail pass sales and payments this month. The Fidelity account has \$32,131.96. Dave motioned and Sarah seconded that we accept the financial reports as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Additions to this meetings agenda

None

Walk to look for sites for the Animal Watching Platform

Friends walked part of the trail, just east of the Riley parking lot, looking at potential sites to build a wildlife viewing platform for trail users and to memorialize Palmer. The site favored by most was just east of bridge #26 which looks out on the turtle pond, a snag of trees, and has a panoramic wetland view. We talked about adding the platform to the end of the bridge. Kevin said that this bridge will be one that is part of the new cement decking projects and may not be completed for about 2 years. If appropriate he will talk to DNR people about the FMRT project so, if possible, this can be kept in mind when designing the bridge project. FMRT members want a small viewing platform (approximately 8X4).

FMRT used to have a platform overlooking a spring on the south side of the trail about an eighth of a mile east of the Riley parking lot. The landowner of the property adjacent to the platform asked that the platform be removed due to trespassing and property line infringement and the platform was taken down. Kevin suggested seeing if the new landowner would be willing to sell the land around the spring and asked if Friends would be interested in perhaps supporting this land acquisition and using this location as a potential site for the proposed viewing platform. This option was discussed.

DNR Topics

-Brad ordered a new mower for the trail. Money generated from auctioning currently held equipment will cover the cost which is \$4800.

-The Duluth project is completed.

-Brix put a delineation between their property and the trail property.

-The Village of Ridgeway land use agreement is ongoing and is going to the village board soon.

-Bridge 32, just west of Highway PD, has been re-planked with overlay using a new techniques of two layers of boards at opposite angles.

-DNR is working with JSD on erosion around one of the culverts near the Verona High School.

New tax exempt number

The new tax exempt number is 008-1029207515-02, with an issuance date of 9/19/2016.

Discussion of the Big Ticket Items

The Friends need to make decisions on and prioritize the following big ticket items: Financial assistance to FBMSPP for solar panels (asked for \$8,000), an animal watching platform (cost unknown); endowments/scholarships; a sign for the Riley parking lot.

Dave moved that we support the FBMSPP solar project on the utility building for \$4000, upon approval of the project by the utility company. Lydia seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. Bill will talk to Karl about it.

If the Riley parking lot sign is approved the DNR could put it in next spring. Jerry thought the cost was about \$4000. Kevin thought that perhaps a State Parks Enhancement Grant would cover some of the cost of this sign if we applied and got the grant.

ATC

It was found that one of the commission members was compromised via communications with the utility companies and he is no longer of the panel that approved the line. ATC said they would rescind the approval made by the board and come in with a new proposal. They have already started construction on several parts of the utility line so it is hard to imagine that they are giving up on the project. Dave wondered why they aren't considering using underground cable. Dave wants members if they are so inclined to send something in to the commissioners expressing their disapproval of the line.

Letter to towns along the trail

-There is no new news.

Depot Open House

-Dave volunteered for September 5 open house (Jerry will be there also). In August Bill can be there.

New Bench

The family still wants a memorial bench but have not committed to a spot.

Horribly Hilly

Sign up to volunteer at the Black Earth water station for the Horribly Hilly bike event August 28.

Mary Kay Baum's Request

We discussed Mary Kay Baum's walnut tree harvest request. This seems to be out of our ability to do. Sarah will email Mary Kay and say it is not in our preview.

Thank you

Thanks to Riley Tavern for general use of the deck and for selling trail passes for us. Both are very generous.

Trail pass sales

Blue Mounds Mart is back on our list of selling trail passes.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be August 9, 2021, 5:30 pm, at the Ridgeway Depot..

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary