

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: March 8, 2021

Meeting Location: Zoom Meeting

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice-President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Lydia Haynes; Linda McMeen; Brad Bates, DNR; Kevin Swenson, DNR

Minutes

Dave motioned and Bill seconded to accept the February 2021 meeting minutes as amended with Jerry's suggestions. The motion passed unanimously. The amended minutes were sent to Lydia for posting on the website.

The Annual Meeting minutes from the February 2021 meeting were reviewed and thought to be correct. They will be accepted/or amended at the next annual meeting in February 2022..

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of February 2021 balance of \$30,3124.07 in the Farmers Savings Bank account. We got a charge which comes every 2 years from Webly for the website domain. Dave motioned that we accept the treasurer's report, Sarah seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Additions to this meetings agenda

None

DNR Topics

The SW Area Master Plan (which includes the MRT) will tentatively be released to the public March 15, 2021. It will be on the DNR website. The release will open up the 30 day review process and a public meeting at the end of March. This will be a virtual public meeting and you can sign up to meet and will get a zoom invite. If you just want to listen to the meeting go to the DNR media website. Kevin will let us know if he wants us there to support anything from his perspective. During the 30 day period individuals can make email or phone comments, or send them send to Kevin or Brad. Jerry will add reviewing the master plan to the April agenda in case we want to have a formal comment from the Friends about the plan. Kevin said the Friends input carries a lot of weight.

Brad is working with an individual on a memorial bench. They will get back to us on the name. Kevin suggested the bench be placed west of Mt Horeb by the kiosk (near Highway E) and the old picnic table be removed.

We have the new plaque for the Himsel Shelter.

DNR has been working on trail signage, replacing intersection signs in towns, replacing posts, farm crossing signs, etc.

The DNR is working with the village of Ridgeway on the land use agreement. The agreement is currently with the attorneys. The agreement, when resolved, will last 15 years. The DNR is asking in the agreement what they have asked for in the past: an annual certificate of liability (liability could be a problem if Ridgeway is holding special events, etc).

There was another meeting with the city of Verona, snow mobile clubs (ASC - Assoc. Snowmobile Clubs), and Verona schools. ACS wants a permanent parking lot agreement, the lot to be located on school property. They also want a permanent south trail to Paoli through the state parks (so they don't have to depend on access from land owners).

The DNR is working with DOT on snow drift screening. There is lots of drifting on HHH heading west. The DNR wants plantings to act as a fence to prevent drifting on 18-151.

Jerry needs to get information together for Kevin for the annual audits for Friends' groups. There may be an issue with the wording in an insurance contract. Bill and Jerry will work on this.

The Horribly Hilly bike race has been moved to August 28 (date and event taking place needs to be approved by the DNR). August 28 is also Brad's birthday!

Friends would like to meet at the depot in May if this is allowed by the DNR (with covid precautions still in place). Kevin thought it was okay since it is not a DNR building. Kevin and Brad may not be allowed to come however.

Friends Calendar

Lydia sent the draft calendar to Jerry. Jerry will send it out to the other Friends. We hope to have the calendar finalized next month with changes due to covid posted on the kiosks and in the papers.

Future meetings

The May 10 meeting will be at the depot. We will get there early to to clean it. The June meeting was to be on the trail near Riley to look at sites for the birding platform but Jerry can't be at this meeting. The meeting on the trail might be postponed until July. We suggested Lydia put the best guess calendar out there with the caveat that there may be changes due to covid restrictions. Bill suggested that we post changes to the calendar on the kiosks. The last two meetings of the year will be at Blue Mounds State Park if allowed. We will see what happens and will post updates on the kiosks if meetings in buildings are not allowed.

Library use of the Depot

Carol Murphy has proposed 3 dates for book readings fir kids in the caboose/Ridgeway Depot.

Depot open houses

We will try and start depot open houses in July. We will still enforce mask wearing if the health department recommends this. We should put a sign on the depot door to list the dates that depot will be open. Lydia will list these on the calendar.

Letter to towns and villages

Jerry will send Sarah a list of points and she will draft a letter intended to ask clerks/ administrators/etc to suggest people to represent the towns along the trail. Hopefully, representatives from each town will take care of kiosks in their area, pick up along the trail in their area, report conditions, know where users can buy passes in their area, and come to meetings.

IRS 9-90

Lydia will work on IRS 9-90 to get it done ahead of time. Lydia keeps notes on this. Bill says that the IRS website doesn't show that we submitted the form for 2019. Lydia, during the meeting found something from IRS to show that we did submit it.

ATC Update

No new news.

Dick Trexel

Jerry has tried to contact him but not gotten through to him.

Ownership of public spaces

The committee for this is Bill, Sarah, Linda, and maybe Jess Bernstein. Sarah will organize a zoom meeting. Bill thinks that the existence of the Friends group could be shown by current members doing trail maintenance. This would/could lead to talking to trail users. Dave thinks Friends working of trail need a t-shirt or vest to show Friend membership. Jerry asked that we form a group around this idea. Sarah will contact Jess Bernstein to see if she is interested in working on this.

April Meeting

One discussion point will be a letter from the Friends about the MRT part in the Master Plan.

May Meeting

One issue will be to discuss projects to fund: options suggested include scholarships to students pursuing Natural Resources; scholarships to high schools in towns along the trail (recipients to be determined by the high school) ; Bikes 4 Kids; and paying trail passes for needy trail users. Bill also suggested we discuss how much we want to disburse every year from our Fidelity account. Bill suggested we disburse the money the Fidelity account makes on an average annualized basis.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be April 12, 2021 via zoom. Dave Pearson will send out an invitation and open the meeting at 5:15.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary