

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: March 14, 2022

Meeting Location: Zoom meeting

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice-President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Lydia Haynes; Adam Maus; Ethan Nelson; Carol Murphy, Librarian Dodgeville; Hailey Roessler, Village of Ridgeway; Maggie Johnson, Village of Ridgeway; Bruce Paull; Brad Bates, DNR; Kevin Swenson, DNR

No additions to the agenda.

A big thanks to Ethan Nelson for agreeing to develop a Friend's Facebook page and to Adam Maus for taking over the website, and to Lydia for developing and maintaining the website for years!!!

Minutes

Bill motioned and Dave seconded to accept the February 2022 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of February 2022 balance of \$40,610.20 in the Farmers Savings Bank checking account. Sarah motioned and Dave seconded to accept the financial report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Village of Ridgeway

Hailey Roessler and Maggie Johnson, from the Village of Ridgeway, appreciate the depot. Ridgeway is working on getting public vs private property better delineated. They are posting public parking signs in the public parking stalls (but not putting signage on the private parking places) in an effort to keep people from using the private parking stalls. This signage will be up soon. Ridgeway is involved in a WI Economic Development Corporation project called Connect Communities which provides money for revitalization efforts. Ridgeway has completed an outdoor recreation plan. They are working on a plan for grants, and are applying for a stewardship plan to include a dog park, improvement to village park and parking areas, and a bike rack. The first Ridgeway Farmer's Market is the first Sunday in May. The Village is looking for statistics, specifically the number of people who use the trail. DNR does have numbers on trail users. They report 210,900 users annually (they get this number by counters they used to have on the trail). When covid hit the numbers on other trails went up by 40 percent. The DNR added about 40% percent to the numbers they had (these numbers were pre-covid). The area in back of the park by the depot is a staging area for equipment and materials used in road construction. This project will be completed June 30 of this year. The Village owns property adjacent to the ATC line which ATC needs for a property easement. The Board opted to sign this easement. The Village would like it if the depot would sell ice cream at the farmer's market. Jerry pointed out that we don't have the people to man an ice cream cart and don't want to compete with other vendors. July 3rd is when the Village of Ridgeway has their 4th event. The depot is open from 12-3 that day. Carol Murphy would like to have a kid/ice cream event at the depot that day and will work with Hailey on this. They wouldn't need a village permit to do this if sale proceeds are for a fundraising event and the sale is licensed thru DTCAP. A sign on the highway (18/151) for the trail would be expensive, plus we didn't know how many parking spaces at the depot will be ours. Hailey explained where the public parking was in town but said other business people in town did not seem to be interested in signage. The DNR paid for the trail signage in Mount Horeb (MH) and the MH public works department put the signs up. Kevin was not sure how the sign on 18/151 outside of MH was paid for.

DNR Topics

The expansion of the 18/151 EPIC off ramp (heading west) is moving forward. Crews are moving fiber optic lines near the road bed.

Thanks to Jerry, Bill and others for work on the annual report.

Incentive grants are due March 31. They are easy to fill out. The match is \$2,000 (maybe the Riley signage again)! There was discussion about what incentive grants funded and it seems to be signage, equipment (grills, etc.), but not administrative overhead, design work, or consultation services. Sarah made a proposal that we submit an incentive grant proposal for a sign at the Riley trail head, Lydia seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously. Jerry will work on the grant proposal (thank you Jerry!).

Work on the ATC line has started east of MH.

DNR will be working with Fresh Start out of Madison, doing projects along the trail, including brushing, planting trees, and picking up trash.

Adam asked if there was any official verbiage the DNR had that he could put on the website about not using the trail when it was wet (to prevent rutting). Kevin didn't have anything official but thought we could put up advice, something like: if you leave a mark on the trail please don't use it or walk or ride on the side. He said that now would be the time to put something up on the website as a suggestion since frost is coming out of the trail.

Dodgeville Library use of the Depot

Carol Murphy is again hosting readings for children at the depot. The library is giving out bandanas and train whistles to the children attending the readings. She wants to focus on history/workings of the depot this year. She would like to learn more about the depot and asked if we have a subject expert to work with her. Dave proposed getting together at the depot with Carol to share information. Friends set up a meeting for Sunday, 5/22, at 3:00 with Carol at the depot to pass on information they may have. Jerry will look for the writeup he started on the depot workings. Carol will put books in the Little Library in Dodgeville.

Website/Facebook Page

A subgroup of FMRT members met Thursday, March 10, with Ethan Nelson. Ethan agreed to develop a Facebook page for the group and work with Adam on sinking the Facebook page and the website (which Adam has taken over). Ethan is developing content and asked for trail pictures. He will come up with a prototype and make it available for the group to review. Some goals of the Facebook page include: advertise the trail, and get more people involved in the Friends group, enumerate trail resources, and list events on the trail (depot book readings, volunteer opportunities, etc.). Jerry asked if the DNR could list our Facebook page when it is up and running. Kevin will send Jerry the link to the DNR web master once the Facebook page is up. The DNR would like our website and Facebook page to link to the DNR "Current conditions" site which elaborates of trail issues (storm damage, muddy trail conditions, etc.). The DNR does not post reroutes of the trail when portions are closed. Kevin advised Ethan to link to the entities doing the reroute (ex. like City of Verona for 18/151 reroute) for reroute information. We asked Kevin if we could link to businesses and other organizations (restaurants, bike stores, Ice Age Trail, Chamber of Commerce), Kevin thought we could list entities but it would probably best to keep it generic for businesses. We could list who sells our passes along the trail. The Facebook page will reference the website and vice versa.

Adam made a few updates to the website. He removed Tamilyn's name from the footer (based on Lydia's conversation with Tamilyn), added the trail guide that Jerry forwarded, updated information that Google uses when individuals search for the trail name, and added an announcement about trail conditions stating that using the trail now will lead to rutting.

Calendar

Lydia's changes to this year's calendar include:

- Covid information was deleted
- Open house dates were added

Other calendar changes/issues include:

- Sarah needs to verify the May meeting at Epic.
- Friends will meet at the depot April 11. The meeting starts at 5:30 but Friends will try and get there at 3:00 to clean the depot. Sarah will bring tools to clean/prune the shrub bed.
- Hyde days is June 11. The depot will be open in coordination with Hyde Days (open from 11-2) and Dave and Bill can be there.
- The schools want to bring both 4th and 5th grades to the school (no date has yet been determined).
- Saturday, June 4th, is the Dairy Breakfast in Dodgeville. The depot will NOT be open that day.
- July 3rd open house will be 12-3. (This is Ridgeway's 4th of July Ridgeway celebration).
- Bruce suggested putting on the calendar "for changes to the calendar look at the Facebook page and the Website".

ATC Line

The ATC is moving ahead with construction and has started work on the line east of Waltz park (in Mount Horeb).

April Meeting

The next FMRT meeting will be April 11, 2022, 5:30 at the depot. If possible, Friends will come at 3:00 (or sometime before the meeting) to help clean the depot.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary