

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: January 9, 2023

Meeting Location: Blue Mounds Park Friend's Shelter, Blue Mounds Park, WI

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice-President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Adam Maus, Web master; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Brad Bates, DNR; Lydia Haynes; Mark Cis; Elizabeth Brady; Karyn Windmoeller;

Agenda Additions

None

Minutes

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

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of December 2022 checking account balance of \$42,422.32. Income coming in for 2022 trail passes is almost wrapped up. Bill has already distributed about 2,000 trail passes for 2023.

We got a donation of \$90 in honor of Louis Solomon.

At the end of 2022 the Fidelity account balance was \$26,933.47 This amount was up a little from last month but down for the year.

Kittleson was paid for the landscaping work around the Ridgeway parking lot sign.

Tamlyn is still paying \$120 every 2 years for the website provider (we reimburse her) but Adam would like this duty moved to him.

Dave motioned to approve the financial report, Lydia seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

DNR Report

DNR completed the annual trail and ditch mowing right before Christmas.

There was a lot of tree damage along the trail with the heavy snow. Snow mobile groups did a lot of cutting, and threw cut branches to the side.

Construction barrels are placed at the depot to keep snow mobiles off the sidewalk.

The ice rink in Verona dumps water in the trail corridor. The city public works director worked with the DNR and remedied the situation.

There is a new public works director in Ridgeway.

Haley Roessler, Ridgeway Clerk/Treasurer, said the land owner with the barn near the depot (Mike Larson), is petitioning the town to tear the barn down and build a home. DNR was consulted on this. They deferred to local zoning issues, setbacks, etc.

The work that Ridgeway will be doing in the park, and the sidewalk just on the east side of the depot, may be to provide ADA access. Sidewalk reworking will affect the light pole and the bricks that we have.

Sarah will contact Haley about the parking lot in front of the depot and the possibility of removing the shrubs and putting in washed stone.

Website

Adam asked if the group would like to have an online version of the membership form (in addition to the paper form). This would give people a way to donate to the group on line. We would still have the option that we currently have to join or donate (via paper). Adam will explore online services specifically for non-profits. Donor Box is used a lot. Adam asked what questions one might ask when vetting the service. Suggestions included: annual cost, what is the amount the service takes per donation, who accepts liability in the case of hacking. FBMSP does inline donations and memberships. Bill will work with Adam on this. Kevin can get Adam in touch with Justin Gleicher (he works on FBMSP website).

Annual Meeting

Next month is the annual meeting at Blue Mounds Park Friends Shelter . Everyone currently serving will continue unless someone else is willing to take their position. We will take nominations from the floor the day of the next meeting. People can also send nominations before the meeting to Jerry or Sarah via email.

State Friends Membership Fee

It is time to renew the State Friends Membership. Jerry recommended going ahead with this. Kevin suggested contacting Friends of Wisconsin State Parks to see how they handle donations (in relation to Adam's idea to accept donations and memberships online).

Incentive Grants

Jerry encouraged Friends to start thinking about ideas for incentive grants.

Trial surfaces and bridges

Mark Cis lead a discussion on the Friends' views on the trail surface and bridges and the Friend's roll related to them. He is trying to find out if the Friends have ever clarified this role. Mark felt that trial surface conditions were also a safety issue. DNR people pointed out that Friends pass along anything they see or hear related to trail surface issues to the DNR. We (Friends) have no ability to do anything about the surface conditions (no expertise, no equipment, no budget, no authorization).

Mark is interested in fund raising, and then allocating money raised for specific projects (bridges or trail surfaces). He asked if money raised could be assured of going to a specific project. DNR people thought it could. They pointed out that if the money were tied to specific criteria (for example naming rights or other business advertisements) chances are the DNR could not comply with these criteria and accept the funds.

Mark asked if the Friends were interested in being a conduit (since they are a 501C3) for funds raised and then these funds could be funneled to the DNR. Mark asked if the Friends would be willing to form a subgroup to work with him on a capitol fund raising project. Jerry pointed out that as a non-profit we are not allowed to lobby either the DNR or the state. Plus there are already some things in the works to repair the bridges (these are funds asked for by the DNR). The number of Friends who regularly attend meetings is small and most did not seem interested in investing time as a subgroup involved in fund raising.

DNR people pointed out that they do as much as they can to “fix” the decks (and structures) of the bridges that are reported as issues. There is a lot of structure below the decks of the bridges so there is no chance of falling through. Part of DNR’s job is to replace, repair, or whatever is needed before a structure becomes unsafe. The bridges are assessed on a timely basis by an engineer for safety. The DNR does have a design and a product in mind to get long lasting bridges installed but needs the money. They have applied for money for bridge improvement but have not been granted any yet.

Mark will get together with other individuals to put together a package to talk about a capitol fund raising effort. Mark agreed to develop an idea around capitol development and come back to the group and present it. He is assuming that the DNR can accept the funds if funneled through the Friends (contingent on donor requests), and the funds can be targeted. Mark asked for DNR policy statements about naming rights, plaques, and whatever is available to offer to donors.

Ventilation Fan and Caboose Window Repair

Discussion on this was deferred as it was to be led by Bruce who not in attendance.

Facebook

Bruce and Adam are working on this as well as Ethan.

Next Meeting

The next FMRT meeting will be February 13, 2023 at the Blue Mounds Friends Shelter. The meeting will start at at 5:30. This is the annual meeting when officers are nominated.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary