

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL Monthly Meeting

Meeting Date: April 10, 2023

Meeting Location: Ridgeway Train Depot, Ridgeway, WI

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice-President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Lydia Haynes; Rodney Albers; Adam Maus; Brad Bates, DNR; Bruce Pauli; Bobbi Zaunes, Potential owner of the lumber yard next to the depot in Ridgeway

Minutes

Bill motioned and Lydia seconded to accept the March 13, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of March 2023 checking account balance of \$42,602.88. Grandstay paid for their trail passes for 2022 and this money was deposited. The Medtronics check was cashed and deposited. The Fidelity Account showed a 3/31/2023 balance of \$28,455.31. Dave motioned that we accept the minutes as presented, Sarah seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

DNR Report

- The DNR summer LTE interviews are taking place now. Only one trail person from last year might come back. They had a decent candidate pool.
- DNR staff is doing lots of washout/sink hole repairs, especially around Mt Horeb.
- The recent rains did not do much damage to the trail (only about 2 or 3 trees down).
- The DNR is planning to get the grader again this year and grade and herbicide the trail early in the season (May and early June). Brad will send a notice to Bruce when they expect to do the herbicide treatment and he will put it on Facebook.
- There is a beaver dam and lodge in the Kleevenville/Riley area. The DNR is hoping the dam will negatively impact the honey suckle bushes.
- The Highway 78 substation construction will resume this spring.
- The DNR was contacted by ATC. They are erecting towers and hanging wire by YZ.
- An arborist near Ridgeway is taking down dead ashes along the trail per agreement with the DNR.
- The DNR guys found a 1914 photo of the quarry, which can be used in the planned interpretive panel, from the UW Geology Department. The stone that came out of the quarry was used for underpasses and culverts along the trail. It is not known how the rock and gravel was transported. Brad's niece is still interested in doing the graphic arts for the kiosks.

- In 2 weeks the DNR is meeting with engineers to decide what to do with the new parking lot at Riley. There is also some momentum on the proposed parking lot in Kleevenville.

Landscaping around Riley Sign

According to Brad we still have \$500 in the budget for the Riley parking lot sign. The DNR will stain the timbers of the sign. We need to decide what to do under the sign. Possibilities are hardscaping, or dense evergreens. Brad and the group decided on rocks below the sign.

Friend's Calendar for 2023

Lydia distributed this at the meeting to put in the kiosks.

Trail Pass Vendor Sign

An updated vendor sign will be printed on stiff paper for people to put in the kiosks.

Solar Panels on the Mt Horeb Bike Shelter

Sarah wants to know if the group is interested in partially funding solar panels on the Mt Horeb comfort station if it is allowed by the DNR/Village of Mt Horeb. This station has bathrooms that are heated year round and heavily used. Brad said that the DNR has applied for money to re-shingle the roof of this shelter. According to Brad, approval of solar panels would look good on the DNR re-shingling proposal. Lydia brought up electric recharging stations and the idea that the panels could potentially support these. Sarah will look into it with the new Mount Horeb Sustainability Board and Nic Owen, Village administrator.

Discussion of the meeting in MH held to get public input on the siting of a new apartment complex on Main Street in the old Fire Station lot (which has been newly converted to a parking lot)

Brad went to the meeting and reported on it. The complex would have underground parking and a first floor parking lot, then 4 floors of apartments above this. There are people on all sides of the issue: those who support the complex; those who want the green space/events center idea to move forward in the area that is now the bike shelter and trail parking lot, so don't want the new parking lot to be taken away; those who are worried about the new apartment complex having enough parking spaces for the tenants; those who don't want anything done (aesthetically not good for the town); and more.

Facebook - boosting posts

- Bruce reported that for \$10 you can reach up to 1,280 people that are like minded (trail users potentially) by using a boosting feature for the boosted post. An example given would be to boost the new trail pass vendors list and this would potentially reach more people. Bruce didn't see any downside to this. Bill proposed spending \$100 to boost what Bruce feels is appropriate and see how it works; Lydia seconded it and the motion passed unanimously. Rodney asked if Facebook was even the

right medium to use. Should we have a presence on other venues (Instagram for example)?

Tour of Military Ridge Trail proposed by Rodney

- Rodney had an idea to get more people interested in the trail by using golf carts to take people on a tour of the entire trail. There was discussion about how the FMRT people use the trail and ideas to get more people interested in the FMRT and using the trail. Jerry proposed virtual trail tours. The FMRT used to do a ride on the trail with a small van and take people along.

Caboose Window repair

There was no update on the window repair.

Website

Adam added the FMRT 2023 calendar and 2023 brick sign as well as the sign up for the Horribly Hilly Race. At the next meeting Adam would like to present options for online sign up forms.

Trail clean up grants (\$250)

The group discussed possible uses of a trail clean up grant. Brad had the idea of removing graffiti from the Wildcat tunnel (part of cost could be shared by Village of Verona). Bill thought we should just leave the graffiti. Jerry will look at the grant and see how hard it is to complete and we will discuss it at the next meeting and decide on a topic if completion of the grant looks reasonable.

Meg Skinner Walk

Jerry sent Meg an email suggesting June 26 on July 17 for nature walks on the trail for the FMRT group. Meg hasn't responded to him yet.

Social with Driftless Area Land Conservancy

Bill sent out an email he got inviting Friends to the Driftless Area Land Conservancy Social April 13, 4-6 in Broadhead, WI.

Bridge Closure

Now the bridge on the way to Hyde will not be closed This has implications for school field trips to the depot in conjunction with Hyde Days. Bruce would like to know the FMRT's interest in having the students come to the depot.

Next Meeting

The next FMRT meeting will be May 8, 2023 at the Ridgeway Depot. The meeting will start at at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary