

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL Monthly Meeting

Meeting Date: July 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; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Bruce Paull; Hailey Roessler, Ridgeway Village Clerk/Treasurer; Adam Maus, Webpage Administrator; Rodney Albers

Minutes

Rodney motioned and Bill seconded to accept the June 2023 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed a balance of \$36,797.13 in the Farmer's Savings Bank as of June 30, 2023. There was a lot of activity in the account this month due to trail passes. There was one donation this month of \$25 from Flax. As of June 30, 2023 the Fidelity account had a balance of \$30,249.92. Sarah motioned that we accept the financial report as presented, Dave seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

DNR Report

- DNR mulched the Riley sign and are planning on getting the sign stained.
- The trail pass checking compliance is about 50%.
- DNR staff is working on bridge approaches.
- DNR staff is working on road crossings and monthly mowings.
- Brad is working with the DNR to get funding for the depot roof. He reached out to several contractors to get bids.
- The new bike repair stand has been installed.
- DNR staff is working on Barneveld signage.
- There is nothing new on the Riley parking lot or the Highway T connector.
- There is a major Epic project that is in the conceptual phase. Epic is planning a new road and bridge. The bridge will go over the trail and the road through the marsh. The road will come from the off ramp from G.
- The budget has been signed. DNR staff does not know what is in it for bridges.

Trail Issues

Rodney pointed out that where the trail crosses Kleevenville Riley Road it is hard to see for both the bikers and cars. The vegetation needs to be trimmed way back for visibility.

What is happening where the cone is placed on the trail east of the Waltz Road? According to Kevin that area is up in the air. Homeowners in the area keep rebuilding this path to the trail (which causes significant erosion) even though the DNR has asked them not to.

Ridgeway Village Accessibility Project

The village has 2 grants: a DNR park improvement grant for \$177,000. This is a matching grant with the village and covers electrical improvements by the ball field, a retaining wall to keep the parking structure separated from dog park, and more; and a WI Economic

Develop Corp grant for green space improvement especially around the water tower and some parking lot improvements, including a sidewalk in front of and on the side of the depot to provide wheelchair accessibility. The commemorative bricks around the depot will not have to be moved. The parking lot improvement will allow for parallel parking by the water tower and make 2 ADA parking spaces in front of the depot. It will also allow for improvement to the walk to the bathrooms and access to the park shelter. Work approved by one grant has to be started this year. The 2023 green space has to started this year and completed next year. The improvements resulting from the DNR grant can't start until the contract is signed. Planners are hoping the electrical lines will be buried.

The Ridgeway Board of Trustees has to approve the draft design plan before implementation but no changes are anticipated. Hailey will keep us up to date on any changes.

There was discussion about renovating the bed in front of the depot, removing the shrubs and replanting or filling with stone. We will wait until the renovation is done before we make any plans. Sarah pointed out that this was a potential project for Epic volunteers.

Dave motioned the FMRT consent to the draft design as presented by Hailey in present form, Lydia seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

July 2, 2023 Open House/Ridgeway Independence Day Celebration

Bruce, Donna and Jerry were here for the July 2nd open house and had 69 plus people. They got some challenging questions and made some good connections. This open house was concurrent with a run on the trail, a suicide prevention group releasing butterflies, the Ridgeway Independence Day celebration, and the farmer's market.

Horribly Hilly Event Debriefing

The FMRT peopled a water stop in Black Earth for the July 17th Horribly Hilly. All went smoothly, and they were done by 3:00. Thanks to Cletus for the map/schematic that he did of the FMRT aid station site in Black Earth. It will be useful in the future.

Scavenger Hunt Debriefing

There was rain for the first 2 hours of the event (and few people) and then a steady stream of people for the last hour and a half. There were approximately 30 kids and 40 adults who attended. Two T-ball games (which took place in the rain) were played in the diamond next to the shelter and some of these kids and parents joined in the hunt after their games. The event was well advertised and we went through 2 1/2 quarts of ice cream. Sarah bought a large plastic sandwich board that can be used for all FMRT events. It has tabs on the side that allow for signs to be swapped in and out of the sandwich board. We need a generic sign for all FMRT events or events where we participate (bike day, horribly hilly, scavenger hunt, work days etc.). Sarah will bring ideas for a generic sign to the next meeting.

Nature Walk

Meg, Lydia, and Jerry attended the walk (June 26) led by Meg. The group saw a green heron.

Mt Horeb Garden Club Tree Planting

MH Garden Club planted a tree (Kentucky coffee tree) in memory of Palmer Haynes by the trail west of the comfort station. There is a plaque on the ground with Palmer's name and more.

Solar Panels

Due to the scavenger hunt Sarah has had no time to work on funding for the proposed solar panels on the roof of the bike shelter in Mount Horeb on South 2nd Street. She will talk to Brad since he is working with the DNR on getting money for a new metal roof on the shelter. The roof has to be assured before she wants to start raising funding/asking permission from the village for the solar panels.

Caboose repair

Dave looked at the windows and saw how they could be replaced. He recommends replacing the panes with plexiglass instead of glass. Dave ran into Mike Larson while looking at the caboose and will try and talk with him on Saturday. Dave thinks Mike will charge for the replacement. If Mike can't do the work Dave recommends Gary Olson. Kevin pointed out Badger Home Improvement does our kiosks, and that Megan and Adam Baldwin might bid this work.

Webpage - Online membership

Adam set up a secure website so members can test Zeffy, the online service Adam is considering for online memberships. He sent the test form to the group. Bill thought it was simple to use and liked the header referencing our website. Bill and Adam thought we should set up a separate bank account for donations through this site so no one can hack into our regular checking account. Adam would keep the Zeffy website current and take down old events. Zeffy encourages people to donate to Zeffy at the end of the donation checkout. This is how they are funded.

Open House/Volunteers

Rodney and Patti Albers volunteered to be at the August 6th Open House (12-3:00).

Skol Project on the trail

The group felt it is okay to post about the owner of Skol's prairie/woodland renovation project along the trail in Mount Horeb south of the Duluth parking lot.

Next Meeting

The next FMRT meeting will be August 14, 2023 at the Ridgeway Depot. The meeting will start at at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary