

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL Monthly Meeting

Meeting Date: February 12, 2024

Meeting Location: Blue Mounds State Park Friend's Shelter

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Bill Kalscheur; Treasurer; Dave Pearson, Vice President; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Brad Bates DNR; Adam Maus; Bruce Paull; John Helmenstine

Minutes

Bill motioned that the amended January 2024 minutes be approved with the change suggested by Bill and one additional change suggested by Kevin. Kevin's suggestion is the following: Under "DNR is still working with...to prevent flooding" wording has been changed to "...to improve safety." The motion was seconded by Adam. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

The financial report showed a balance of \$51,898.04 in the Farmer's Savings Bank as of January 31, 2024. This total included the trail pass money from 2023 collected from REI and Chalet. We also had a donation from Medtronics. The balance showed money for our work on the 2023 Horribly Hilly.

The Budget Report (Income and Expense Consolidated Report) shows all money in and out of the check book and Fidelity account for 11 years. In 2013 (the beginning year of this report) we started the year with \$27,000, took out \$12,500 for investment (Fidelity), deducted \$11,000 that we used for depot expenses (\$7,000 into siding and \$4,000 for doors and windows), and ended the year with \$10,996. We now (2024) enter the year with about \$45,000, plus \$6,000 that came in in January 2024 for trail passes in 2023. Bill illustrated this point to discuss how much we could potentially spend each year on projects. He proposed that if we spend up to \$30,000 this year, we could still probably end the year with \$26,000. This does not include out Fidelity money. There was no decision on how to spend money in 2024.

Dave motioned to accept the financial report. The motion was seconded by Adam and passed unanimously.

DNR Topics

It is not official yet but the DNR is going online with trail passes this spring. Kevin had no idea how this would impact Friend's groups who sell passes. Kevin did not know if there would be paper and online pass sales.

Another trail counter has been added at Riley. There are now trail counters in Riley, Verona-Fitchrona, and Mt. Horeb. The numbers for trail users are higher than were projected.

DNR continues to work on removing ash trees. They are focused on the west end of the trail removing ash and other dead trees.

There was discussion about an access trail request across Hwy 18/151 made by Marvin Winch.

Madison Metropolitan Sewer District (MMSD) pipe work continues in Fitchrona.

Barneveld's 2024 Memorial Park (and parking lot) and Highway T are being redone.

There is no news on the EPIC bridge. Surveying is underway.

For the 2023-2025 (development cycle) project clarification, MRT is has been allotted \$3 million for upgrades. This may shift. It covers a wide range of things, a large (hopefully) portion of which will go to bridge repair. Bridge repair could result in much rerouting of the trail.

The Riley and Kleevenville parking lot projects (which are high priority projects) are outside the scope of this money. The Kleevenville lot will be small and gravel. The Riley lot will be enlarged and paved. The Riley lot will likely need more port-a-potties or a vaulted toilet.

The sign discussion was differed until the next meeting.

The possible Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant request could be for "way finding signage" (i.e. 10 from here to Verona...).

Jerry requested any changes to the calendar be sent to Rodney. We need Meg Skinner's okay for nature walks (by request).

Dave brought up the issue of users making ruts in the trail due to a soft trail bed which necessitates grading by the DNR. We decided to put something on Facebook and the webpage to remind users.

There is an Iowa County Outdoor Recreation for Tourism Grant RFP. They have a total of \$50,000 to disburse. The application has to be in by April 1. This is for Iowa County. We could consider promotion of the west end of the trail and the two state parks in Iowa County. Jerry said it is not a complicated grant proposal. We need to come to the next meeting with ideas. Kevin proposed "way finder signage".

Ridgeway Park Development

There are two new clerks in Ridgeway. We will need to keep track of the Ridgeway project to know when to take the bricks out and put them back by the wall of the depot. There might be fiber optic tubing by the depot.

Facebook and Webpage

Adam made some adjustments to the language on the Zeffie form on the web site. He added verbiage about why you should join the FMRT. Bruce asked about brick promotion language on webpages.

John Helmenstine introduced himself and talked about the work he is currently doing and what he might do for the Friends.

Next Meeting

The next FMRT meeting will be at 5:30 March 11, 2024 at the Blue Mounds Friends Shelter at Blue Mounds State Park, Blue Mounds, WI.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary