

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL Monthly Meeting

Meeting Date: March 11, 2024

Meeting Location: Blue Mounds State Park Friend's Shelter

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Dave Pearson, Vice President; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Brad Bates, DNR; Adam Maus; Bruce Paull; Rodney Albers; Andrew Hodgson; John Helmenstine

Minutes

Bill motioned that the February 2024 minutes be approved with the change suggested. The motion was seconded by Dave. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

The financial report showed a balance of \$51,754.03 in the Farmer's Savings Bank as of February 29, 2024. There was no action in the Zeffy account. Dave motioned to accept the financial report. The motion was seconded by Sarah and passed unanimously.

Trail Pass Sales Are now Online

Daily passes are now sold online. Annual trail pass sales will go online before Memorial Day. The parks will put up a sign at the kiosks directing people to a website where they can buy passes. For online purchases, the buyer enters credit card and identifying information, a receipt is issued (to use that day as a proof of trail pass), and an email is sent to the buyer. The annual sale process will be the same. You can also get all kinds of passes (annual and daily) from Kiosks in the park offices. There is some confusion among kiosk users as to what they do with the receipt that they get. Bill suggested that the sale service should now be done via phone not at a kiosk or online. Brad explained how the machines in the parks offices work. We are not sure how the online sales will affect the money the Friends' groups get from sale of passes. Bruce suggested that perhaps sales could be done via the depot. Friends are still selling passes.

DNR Topics

Trail counters will be up on the MRT for at least 3 years. The number of trail users is a lot higher than anticipated.

The trail crew will be working until the end of the month clearing up dead ash.

The MMSD project in Verona is still on going. Adam thinks they have dug under the trail.

The Barneveld park is almost gone (razed) , and the DNR is finishing up with a village agreement. They will be starting on the new park shortly. This should not affect the trail except for the highway T project where a path comes up to the trail.

The MRT variance from the master plan public comment period has ended.

Lots of special events are rolling in rapidly. Kevin asked if the Friends want information on these. Jerry thought maybe some events could go on the website or facebook page with a

list of the sponsors. We could link to the events' websites. Kevin will try and remember to send events to Adam and Bruce so they can put them on the webpage and facebook page.

There is no news on the Epic 18/151 project. Epic has submitted their application to the DNR.

There are no updates on the Riley or Highway P parking lots.

There is still no assurance about the bridge repair money in the DNR budget.

Sandwich board inserts

The cost estimate is \$140 for 8 signs. Bill asked if we could do two sided signs then have only 4 signs (each sign would be 2 sided). Sarah will ask the provider. Bruce thinks the sign for the library should say Friends of the Library not Dodgeville Public Library. Sarah will check with Carol Murphy on this.

Sarah motioned up to \$200 for 8 (or 4) panels to go into the sandwich board, Dave seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

Solar Panels

Sarah asked if people were still interested in solar panels at the comfort station in Mount Horeb. Bill is not sure if the group should push it. Rodney thought the village should be pursuing it. Bruce thinks that the village should pursue it. Brad said that the village is looking at replacing/repairing the welcome center. The DNR is asking people to hold off on car charging stations, until they have clear direction on it. It appears most people (except Sarah) thought it was not something that we should move forward with at this time.

Calendar

Rodney changed the wording on the calendar for the Dodgeville Public Library event. Lydia will call Meg Skinner about guided tours. Rodney printed up the calendar. Bill asked if Rodney could send the file out as an attachment so people could print more calendars as needed. Rodney will do this.

Kiosk Repair

One side of the kiosk in Mount Horeb (maybe the Chamber of Commerce side) has a key broken off in it. Bill will look into this. When we are putting in the calendars Bill asked that we make note of what needs repair in the kiosks and bring this back to the next meeting.

RFP for Iowa Country Recreation and Tourism Grant

Bruce asked If we want broadband at the depot. The Friends group would have to pay for this and maybe it could be a grant proposal. We would then get a monthly charge for this and the depot is closed 5-6 months of the year. The group did not want this added bill.

Gutter Hangers

Jerry said some of the gutter hangers are missing at the depot.

Caboose Window Repair

Dave said they would begin work soon on the caboose.

No Mow May

Mound Vue Garden Club wants to put signs for No Mow May on the trail and at the welcome stations. Will the DNR allow this? The DNR wants the signs to be on peoples lawns. They don't want to take a stand on this.

Ridgeway Park Rework

Ridgeway Park reworking is moving along. Bruce can send out the construction schedule. We still don't know the timeline for moving the bricks. We also don't know if there will be ADA approval for the limestone trail crossing.

Facebook and Webpage

There were no updates on the webpage or facebook page.

Driftless Conservancy Trail Presentation

Barb Brazen, from the Driftless Area Land Conservancy, will give a presentation 4/20 at 1:15 in the Blue Mound Park Shelter after the FBMSF Annual Friends meeting.

Courtesy Signs

Rodney asked if the courtesy signs could they be more permanent. And, could they include information about who to call if the trail needs maintenance. He thought this could be part of the Stewardship grant. Kevin likes the idea of just using the "Way Finding" signs for the Stewardship grant. There was discussion about where to put courtesy signs and if they were sign pollution

Horribly Hilly Hundred

We are signed up to participate.

New Kiosks

Depot and Quarry signs were sent to the graphic artist.

Next Meeting

Jerry is gone for the Friends meetings in May and June and the first two open houses.

The next FMRT meeting will be at 5:30 April, 8, 2024 at the Blue Mounds Friends Shelter at Blue Mounds State Park, Blue Mounds, WI.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary