

## **Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL Monthly Meeting**

Meeting Date: April 8, 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; Adam Maus; Rodney Albers; John Helmenstine, Lydia Haynes

### **Minutes**

Bill motioned that the March 2024 minutes be approved.. The motion was seconded by Lydia. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Financial Report**

The financial report showed a balance of \$58,758.38 in the Farmer's Savings Bank as of March 31, 2024. There was a \$100 donation from Huemmer. The Fidelity account showed a balance as of 3/31/2024 of \$37,205.41.

There was no action in the Zeffy account.

Bill motioned to accept the financial report. The motion was seconded by Sarah and passed unanimously.

### **DNR Topics**

Brad and Kevin had a meeting with Mount Horeb about paving the trail between 4th and 8th. The project will be started in early to mid May and will take about a week. The goal is to have the project done by Memorial Day.

Projects the DNR has requested (including the bridges) are still being considered.

The Riley and Hwy P parking lots are progressing and will cost about half a million. The projects need building commission approval. The DNR wants to do them in conjunction with the Verona paving.

Barneveld is continuing with the park and Hwy T project. The DNR is finishing up the easement paperwork with Barneveld.

Nothing is known about the Ridgeway Park project.

Trail counters show that in March, which in years past had about 3,000 people using the trail, this year had over 13,000 users!

Kevin is sending event listings to Adam who is putting them on the website.

The MMSD project in Verona should be finishing up. They will be replacing the asphalt where the work crosses the trail. The trail might be closed for an afternoon.

The DNR trail crew ended up work at the end of March on ash tree removal.

DNR is going thru LTE hirings now.

There is no news on the Epic 18/151 project and no information on Epic and the wetland work. It does look like Epic plans a bridge that crosses the wetland and the trail.

There is no update on the 18/151 culverts.

DNR is going forward with the online sale of trail passes. Signs are going up. Daily pass sales are online and annuals are set to go online Memorial Day.

Verona paving (once 2 agreements are signed) is a go. Paving will run from the Verona High School to Hwy PB. The project is being undertaken because the trail is used by students and Verona residents. It will not be lit at this point. The City of Verona will mow along it, plow and maintain it.

### **Bike to Work Day**

One volunteer is needed at the Monday, June 3 Bike to Work Week Event at the Fitchburg Trailhead. Dave Pearson will do it and Adam will be backup.

### **Healthy Communities Summit**

Janet Hutchins requested Friends' groups to send someone to attend the Healthy Communities Summit 4/29, 8:00-4:45, April 29th, at Memorial Union. We need someone there to network. Think about it and get back to Jerry on it. The summit also affords learning opportunities.

### **Sandwich Board Sign**

The signs will have no phone number. Sarah will contact Minutemen Press in Fitchburg this week.

### **Kiosk and Calendar replacement and things needing repair/replacement**

The bench on Blue Mound Drive in Mount Horeb needs staining.

The Riley bench on the kiosk needs work.

The Fitchburg kiosk has one pane that is pushed in.

Ridgeway and Dodgeville kiosks are in good shape

The Verona kiosk has one side which is hard to get the metal hook off of. Adam will try WD 40.

### **Further Discussion on 2024 budget**

Dave felt there is a lot of interest in getting the trail paved from Mount Horeb to Epic. DNR is not interested in this. The snow mobile club would be opposed to this because they want to use this section of the trail.

### **Linda Lynch Memorial Bench**

Dave talked to Kristen O'Donnell (Linda Lynch's daughter), and she wants the bench to happen. We don't know if the family is pitching in for the cost. Benches are up to about \$1600. Dave will talk to her and see if the family wants to contribute to the project.

### **Turtle Pond Viewing Platform (for Palmer)**

Design of the turtle pond viewing platform (Bridge 26), Palmer project, will be coordinated with DNR engineering when they draw the bridge. Kevin recommended allocating \$10,000 to the project then hope we get a Knowledge Stewardship matching grant. The Friends group would be requesting an overlook viewing platform from the DNR, the DNR engineers will come up with a cost, then Friends will start covering some of the cost.

### **Epic Volunteers**

Sarah will call Joel Zavier and then get a hold of the contact at Epic unless Joel is working on this.

### **Facebook and Webpage**

Next Monday Sarah, Jerry and Adam will meet at Verona Public Library at 6 pm about the mailing list and Zeffy. Adam is putting events Kevin feeds him on the webpage.

### **New Kiosks**

Brad sent the Depot and Quarry signs to the graphic artist.

### **Next Meeting**

The next FMRT meeting will be at 5:30 May 13, 2024 at the Mount Horeb Public Library, 105 Perimeter Road, Mount Horeb, WI. Dave will chair the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Castello, Secretary