

Friends of Whitefish Dunes Park

Minutes, 16 July, 2020

The zoom meeting was called to order by John Swanson (host). President Lynn was unable to join us.

Present: John Swanson, Sarah Stepanik, Susan Cubar, Carl Scholz, Jim Perry, Joe Jarosh, Liz Story, Erin Brown Stender, Adele Douglass.

The agenda was approved (Joe/Jim).

The minutes were approved, following small corrections (Susan/Joe).

Treasurer's Report: Due to the closure of the nature center, there has been essentially no income in recent months. The total is \$1,886.93 since early March. The majority of the income is from membership renewals and the pop machine. Expenses during the same period were \$1,530.42, most of which was the purchase of patches and medallions to be sold when the center is again accessible to the public. Don was also reimbursed for the purchase of plants for the pollinator garden. As of 30 June, the checking balance was \$39,287.02. The savings account balance is \$20,506.85, most of which is designated for a park naturalist and other brachiopod trail improvements.

The treasurer's report was approved (Carl/Liz).

Park report: Sarah reported about 33,000 visitors during June, a big increase over 2019. There were two occasions when capacity closures went into effect due to lack of parking spaces. The 3rd access beach was re opened on 10 July and has attracted many visitors. This has somewhat improved social distancing, especially since the observation deck, shelter, and nature center all remain closed to the public. Sarah reported many boats (20-25) anchored off the beach this past weekend and some evidence that boaters are leaving their vessels and climbing the dunes. Better signage regarding the fragility of the dunes will be posted. The brachiopod trail is open to the public. Park entrance stickers are only available by phone or online. Kayak concession is operating.

Erin does not foresee the nature center opening and cautioned that closure could extend for the entire summer season and beyond.

Old Business: The brachiopod trail is now opened, with some grading needed. With respect to potential handicap access, Sarah has been in contact with the highway department, more discussion will be needed. Once construction got underway, it was revealed that additional handrails were needed due to higher water levels. The department will cover the labor for the additional rails, Friends have been asked to cover the materials cost of \$8384.73. There was discussion about the cost of the handrails, and a general feeling that Friends and the park should have been informed earlier. Erin will discuss this bill with the project engineer. It was voted (Susan/Jim) to pay the additional money after Erin has checked with the engineer. Erin also spoke about future potential trail improvements. These might include grading, parking arrangements (for up to two vehicles), and signage. Susan reminded Erin that the Friends were committed to grading and gravel, but was uncertain about the parking. Erin reminded us that "accessibility funds" from the state or from Knowles/Nelson funds may be available for the parking. Following a brief discussion of fund raising, Susan reminded Erin of the fact that there is no income for the foreseeable future.

New Business: John has discussed with the supplier about getting aluminum cans for the vending machine. He was told that due to covid 19 restrictions aluminum factories have been closed, so the supply is limited for the present. After discussion about the complexity of holding an annual meeting, the board voted (Adele/Susan) to suspend the bylaws (which state that one should be held annually) for 6 months. Susan will prepare a newsletter updating membership on various topics, including the lack of an annual meeting and the cancellation of the summer candlelight walk. The final piece of new business concerned the award from the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks which was to have been used for naturalist programs can now be redirected. Susan will let them know that we'd like to use the money for updating/improving the interpretative signs.

Adjourned at 5:50pm.

Next meeting will be Thursday August 20.

