

Friends of Whitefish Dunes, Inc.

3275 Clark Lake Rd., Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Minutes of Friends Board Meeting 4/21/21 - Approved

Present: John Swanson, Susan Cubar, Liz Story, Adele Douglass, Rich Dirks, Don Gustafson, Joe Jarosh, Doug Otopalik, Jim Perry, Dick Weidman, Sarah Stepanik, Erin Brown Stender. *Guest: Mike Bergum, District Parks Supervisor*

Absent: Carl Scholz, Lynn Zawojski

Call to Order: The Zoom meeting was called to order by President John Swanson at 4:00

Agenda: Motion to approve agenda: Susan, second: Don. All in favor.

REPORTS:

Minutes of March 17, 2021: Motion to approve: Don, second Dick. All in favor

Treasurer Report:

Income: \$41.48

Expenses: \$0

- Active Grants: Raibrook Grant for Brachiopod Boardwalk not closed out yet because they need a report of all expenses.

Waiting on expense report from Peil to submit to Raibrook so grant can be closed out.

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report: Adele, second: Don. All approved.

Park Report (Sarah):

March saw 9,874 visitors, which was up from 5,775 last year.

- Self registration and kiosks continue to be open all day every day for Park pass purchases
- Observation decks currently closed; will open May 1 with posted capacities. Masks and social distancing will be encouraged. Hopefully the reopening of observation decks will help curtail the destruction of barricade at Old Baldy
- Enclosed shelter closed until at least June 1
- No date yet on when or if Nature Center will open
- Outdoor restrooms open now
- Water fountains closed until mid-May
- Contact stations closed, but regular hours will begin May 1.
 - May 1 - May 23: limited hours will be Fridays 10:00-2:00; weekends 10:00-4:00.
 - May 23 on: Monday-Thursday 10:00-4:00; Friday and Sunday 9:00-5:00
- John and Brynna will be doing outdoor work to get ready for the season

DPS Update (Sarah):

- Hail damage has been repaired on damaged roofs
- 2 new stoves ordered and should be in on May 4
- Amy Moore (new engineer) hoping new water heaters will be installed by late June or early July. Waiting on bids.
- Amy will make another site visit soon. Will survey 1st Beach access in near future. She is interested in getting that project underway.
- Seasonal hiring complete:
 - Brynna will be back just under full-time but will begin full-time in late June
 - Jeannie will return in part-time VSA position
 - John will be working just under full-time

- Samantha will be full-time VSA and will start May 24
- The Naturalist position was turned down by the person originally hired because of schedule conflict. A solution for filling the Naturalist position would be to use Samantha and Brynna to share the duties of the position, and in turn cover the need for a Naturalist at Whitefish Dunes and Potowatami.
- Limited interpretive services will be offered this season, so no in-person interpretive programs will be available at this time.

Trail Report (Rich):

No news to report. Hope to get Trail Committee together sometime in May to talk about next year.

Trail Ambassador Program (Doug):

- Continued discussions; this program is still in planning stages
- Mission statement with objectives has been put together. Some of the objectives include:
 - Need for expanded observation; Ambassadors would be eyes and ears of Park
 - Need for visitor education. Ambassadors would help educate and provide information about Park to visitors
 - Model good stewardship
- Upcoming member renewal letter will include a checkbox where people can indicate interest in volunteering for the program
- A list will be compiled of those interested
- Conversations had with people who are interested in creating videos for training purposes
- Doug would keep a video library to put on YouTube or FaceBook so volunteers can review

Project List (Wish List):

- **Brachiopod Trail signage:** We are recipients of Knowles-Nelson grant for Brachiopod signage. John has spoken to Wendy Wagner, a naturalist familiar with the area, who will hike the trail and give some ideas for interpretive signs. Sarah will talk to a graphic designer in Madison to work on sign illustrations/design. Need to transfer matching funds from Friends account for Knowles-Nelson grant.

Susan moved to transfer \$10,772 from our checking account to savings account for Brachiopod project to bring our match to the \$20,000 needed for Knowles-Nelson grant; 2nd: Jim. All in favor.

- **Pollinator Sign:** Sign has been ordered from Vacker. Don and Sarah decided sign will be placed on east side of garden facing walkway.

- **Old Baldy:** Sarah waiting for reply on code recommendations, and also whether we would be subject to any other regulations.

OLD BUSINESS:

• **Treasurer Position:** Julia Stoneman is interested. Susan has sent information to her about the position. Motion to invite Julia as Treasurer: Adele; 2nd Rich. All in favor.

• **Friends Insurance Policy:** We don't think it necessary for The Friends to spend the extra money to cover accident insurance for volunteers since people have their own insurance. This extra liability insurance is not required by DNR. We will accept the proposal from Stoneman, who will become the local agent for our current policy.

• Adele attended a Town Hall Meeting with Andre Jacques to speak in favor of Knowles-Nelson and how it benefitted the Parks. She asked if he would commit to supporting it. He said he knew it was popular, but did not give a yes or no answer to her question.

• **Nature Center Kiosk:** Sarah spoke to Bridget about this and she is in the process of hiring someone to take over the project. Hopefully in the next year we will have this kiosk. Max Martin wants to look at area and decide on best design before building this.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **EV Charging Station:** With the increase of EV charging stations around the county, Rich made the suggestion to think about putting an EV charging station at the Park. There is currently no policy on charging stations from DNR. Perhaps this idea is something that could be discussed at a higher level in DNR for future policy. There are many factors to consider, and Rich will begin collecting information to share with the group. Mike Bergum will bring this up at a Park Management Team meeting and get feedback from other managers. We will add to future agenda.

- **Planning for August Candlelight Event:**

- Special Events Update (Sarah):

- Special events have been approved
- DNR staff can't be used to help staff event
- Events limited to 100 attendees, which includes volunteers and spectators
- Staggered events approved if unable to stay within the allowed 100 count, but still limited to 100 within each phase
- Application for approval of event would be needed, including a COVID mitigation plan

Registration of some kind with a set time would be necessary to keep participant numbers within maximum limits

- **Volunteer Update (Sarah):**

- Volunteers can work on outside tasks only; no indoor work
- Minimal to no staff supervision
- Volunteer roles would not include public interaction
- As of 4/30/21, volunteer groups can be a maximum size of 50, as long as the group is split into 5 groups of 10 individuals
- Masks and social distancing expected when working in close proximity with others
- Volunteers can use their own hand tools, but not power tools
- Volunteers not allowed to use any state owned equipment
- Equipment should be disinfected before and after use
- Volunteers are not approved to be in state buildings
- Camp hosts are allowed

Next meeting 5/19 at 4:00 pm.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn meeting: Rich; 2nd: Adele. All in favor

The meeting was adjourned by President John Swanson at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Story

Secretary