

Friends of Whitefish Dunes Minutes

Feb. 15, 2018

Present: Erin Brown, Fred Viste, Michael Bergum, Missy VanLanduyt (via phone), Rich Dirks, Don Gustafson, Dale and Mary Goodner, John Swanson, Carl Scholz, Lynn Zawojski, Adele Douglass

The Agenda was approved (John/Susan)

A presentation via phone and in person was made by several DNR personnel who explained the budget process and the recent realignment activities of the agency. The DNR facilities are to be largely self-funded going forward. Due to certain legislative restraints the properties can only spend a portion of the income in a given year. The remainder goes into an account to be used in a time of lesser income. Only 9 of the 70 state parks generate more funds than the cost of running them. The Dunes Park is one that does not generate as much income as the facility costs. Expenses exceed revenue by about seventy to one hundred thousand dollars most years. The interpretive program has been restructured throughout the state so that there are fewer full-time naturalists, typically there will be one naturalist per district. Thus there will be one naturalist for the five state parks in this area.

The other side of the DNR budget concerns capital expenditures, which has been drastically reduced over previous periods. For the past 5-6 years the agency has only been able to focus on health and safety issues or emergency repairs such as leaking roofs.

The role of communication with state legislators was explained. Friends members can speak to members of the Assembly and Senate about park and DNR issues. However, Friends' money cannot be used to influence legislators. Reaching out to municipalities (for example the Sevastopol or Jacksonport Town Boards) would be acceptable.

The meeting resumed after the DNR visitors left. The minutes from January were approved (Don/John).

The treasurer's report for January was approved (Dale/Mary). It showed an income of \$786.40 and expenses of \$317.87. There is \$34,581.72 in the checking account and \$41,368.32 in the various reserved accounts.

Park Report: 1. There were about 1000 more visitors in 2017 than in 2016. 2. Good skiing conditions early in the month. 3. A great increase in sticker sales. 4. The DNR has a website, updated regularly, where folks can search for current snow conditions. 5. A new winter park map is available. 6. A new cash register has arrived which needs to be programmed. 7. A timber sale will occur in the red pine plantation. 8. A new battery has been installed in the AED machine. 9. Interviews for the seasonal naturalist will occur on March 17 and 18. 10. Fred will attend a property managers meeting on March 1.

New Business. 1. Park benches. Fred feels some parks are "benched out" with too many. The current agency thinking is to find alternate ways to recognize persons who enjoy the park. Recently no one has taken responsibility for this, but it was pointed out that this has been a significant fund raising vehicle for some parks. Susan will solicit someone to manage this effort via the newsletter. 2. Fund raising: A document is available to present to potential donors. The Business Membership fee is \$100 annually with the first years' funds to be designated for the Brachiopod Trail replacement.

John has a nature puzzle which will be dry mounted. It was voted (Rich/Susan) to reimburse him (\$37.75) for the project

There will be no March meeting due to a lack of quorum.

The next meeting will be April 19. Representative Joel Kitchens has been invited to attend, including a walk to the Brachiopod trail with Fred and one or two other members.

Adjourned at 6:30.