

Friends of Whitefish Dunes State Park

Minutes, January 21, 2021

The Zoom meeting was called to order by President John Swanson at 4:34pm.

Present: John Swanson, Susan Cubar, Don Gustafson, Lynn Zawojski, Jim Perry, Liz Story, Douglas Otopalik, Richard Weidman, Joe Jarosh, Rich Dirks, Adele Douglass, Sarah Stepanik, Erin Brown Stender

John made several announcements. 1. Board member Carl Scholz is now a resident at Anna's Place, a senior care facility. 2. Doug Otopalik, who is attending the meeting, would like to become a board member. 3. Adele Douglass and her husband are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary today; she will leave the meeting early to have a celebratory dinner.

The agenda was approved (Susan/Don) after the addition of two items.

The minutes from December 17, 2020 were approved (Rich/Don).

Susan presented the treasurer's report for December showing income of \$2.50 and expenses of \$2,203.35, mostly for lumber needed to construct the brachiopod trail kiosk (paid to Max Martin) and the snowthrower (paid to Herlache). The balance in the checking account was \$46,392.40 on 12/31/20 and \$20,661.95 was in the savings account.

Susan also presented a financial report for the second quarter (Oct-Dec) of the fiscal year, which showed income of \$7,501.06 (mostly from the kayak concession) and expenditures of \$2,595.30 (largest cost was the snowthrower).

Park report: Sarah reported December attendance of 1,028 about 10% more than in 2019, but somewhat less than in 2018. All buildings and the observation deck remain closed due to COVID restrictions. The hunting season went smoothly. Some visitors are still going into prohibited areas, and there is some evidence that barricades are being torn down. Also still problems of hikers using ski trails. Sarah will work with Erin to list projects to be considered for state funding. Rich

reminded Sarah about an old garage on Clark Lake which had been donated to the park. She felt there was no use for it and it could be offered for sale.

Old Business:

1. Trail report: COVID, plus the lack of snow, has resulted in many more hikers in the park. This has caused conflict between hikers and skiers, especially on the brachiopod trail. At grooming committee meetings there have been discussions about educating visitors regarding appropriate areas for hiking and skiing. Erin and Sarah reported that this conflict occurred regularly at other state parks.

2. Volunteer of the Year: The 2020 award will be given to Lynn Zawojski for serving as president for many years and for her efforts at selecting and ordering clothing.

3. Brachiopod Trail signage: There is no report on the Knowles-Nelson grant application.

4. Bench: Rich has not heard from Rich Ostrowski's wife about the wording for the bench. Adele and Rich will make some suggestions to her.

5. Wish List Priorities: The voting among board members resulted in three priorities for Friends' attention. These are: 1. Finish the brachiopod trail. 2. Update Old Baldy. 3. Signage for the pollinator garden. The remaining items will be retained for consideration as circumstances change.

With respect to Old Baldy, Sarah explained that handrails have shifted and that it may be necessary to replace the platform. Jim asked if some trees could be cut to improve visibility. Apparently if it's not too complicated it might be a volunteer activity. She added that adding a higher platform complicates the project since the issue of handicapped access might need to be addressed.

About the purchase of new stoves in the housing units, John felt this was a state responsibility. Therefore, adding new stoves has been deleted from the wish list.

With respect to the taxidermy items on the list, it was felt that this proposal should be deferred until funds become available. Dick said several items

presently in the elementary school library would not be moved to the new addition and that they could possibly be added to the park collection.

New Business:

1. Election: by a unanimous voice vote, Doug Otopalik was elected to the Board of Directors for a three-year term (2021-2022-2023).
2. Secretary position: Liz Story was elected secretary by a unanimous voice vote for a two-year term (2021-2022).
3. Dick Weidman was elected to the position of vice president by a unanimous voice vote for a two-year term (2021-2022).
4. Other board members. Doug suggested board members contact banks, accounting firms, law offices, etc. to see if anyone would like to volunteer to serve as treasurer. Erin noted that we still need to have an elected treasurer.
5. Trail ambassador program. This is moving ahead; similar programs in other parks should be studied.
6. Donated park benches. The form for requesting a bench needs to be updated. Sarah will send changes to Susan to get the revised form on the website.

Motion to adjourn (Rich//Don). Meeting adjourned at 5:53.

Next meeting February 18, at 4:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Adele Douglass and Susan Cubar