

Friends of Whitefish Dunes, Inc.
3275 Clark Lake Rd., Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Minutes of Friends Board Meeting

Present: John Swanson, Dick Weidman, Liz Story, Rich Dirks, Jim Perry, Doug Otopalik, Don Gustafson, Max Martin, Sarah Stepanik, and Erin Brown Stender

Absent: Julia Stoneman, Susan Cubar, Lynn Zawojski, Adele Douglass.

Call to Order: The Zoom meeting was called to order at 4:03 by President John Swanson. John announced that Carl Scholz passed away this morning.

Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda: Dick; second, Don. All in favor.

Minutes: Motion to approve the Minutes of 3-16-22: Rich; second, Don. All in favor.

Treasurer's Report (Julia):

Income: \$205

Expenses: \$12,429.84

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report: Don; second, Liz. All in favor.

Park Report (Sarah):

- February attendance was low again with a total of 3,129 visitors, which is 3,938 less than 2021, and 1,790 less than average. February average is 4,919. The drop in attendance might still be due to malfunctioning car counter.

COVID Updates:

- Many protocols have been lifted.
- Masks are no longer required indoors or outdoors.
- Indoor events are approved to resume.
- Staff are now able to attend in-person meetings on and off property
- Food sharing at meetings or events is now permitted.
- Vehicle and tool sharing approved.

Park Hiring:

- Interviews have finished. Candidates will be reviewed and offers will be made in next two weeks.

Updates:

- Water systems will be turned on the last week of April, weather permitting.
- Returning LTEs will be back to full or near full-time hours in mid-May

Park Manager Projects:

- Dune Etiquette sign holders have been ordered and should arrive in time to install signs this spring.
- New snowshoe rack has been built
 - Snowshoes are labeled
 - Rental program and policies have been established and everything will be ready to go next winter.
- Beach Rake may be moved to another property, although we have no official word on that at this time. If it does not get moved, it will be put up for auction.

Knowles-Nelson: Sarah has reached out to both Peil and Tielens regarding the Old Baldy Boardwalk project, as well as replacing the sliding doors in the picnic shelter. She has not heard back from either yet. Other contractors are being looked at and considered.

Tractor Training:

- Anyone who operates the new tractor will need to be a certified operator, regardless of ownership.

- A certified operator must put in at least 10 annual use hours to maintain certification.
- If any Friends board members wish to become certified operators, a skills test can be set up with Curtis to get them certified.
- Perhaps Dick or Max could do training, as both are qualified.

Trail Report (Rich):

Ski/snowshoe season is over due to lack of snow and the ground less frozen. Rich will talk to John Craig about taking winter trail signs down. Groomers may meet with Sarah to have a follow-up on the season and think about next year. Rich will have an annual report on winter grooming next meeting.

Trail Ambassadors (Doug):

Not much new to report. When the kiosk is up, Sarah will post some signage to create more awareness of the program and maybe generate some outside volunteer interest. The last training was a few months ago. Doug will survey committee members to get thoughts on the program so far. About 200 hours were submitted.

Events:

- Spring Dunes Day will be Saturday April 30 from 9-noon. Sarah will let us know what work would be helpful to get done before LTEs get back.

Project List:

- Brachiopod signage: No updates at this point, but Wendy working on things.
- ADA handicapped trail: Sarah will check back with Jessica (engineer) to see if there are any updates. The last she heard was that Jessica had not gotten results back on the survey. John was wondering if we could do the work if we knew what the grade was. It was noted that anyone operating equipment on the property would need to be insured.
- ADA parking lot: would be nice to complete this year.
- Roof ready for kiosk
- EV Charging Station: Rich is trying to get John Hippensteel out to give input on EV charging station. He is still waiting to hear back from John. He also got a name for a solar installer as an alternate EV charging possibility.
- Taxidermy mounts: Sarah will try to get other specimens to Mike Orthober soon.
- John Bagnall will donate a tanned and mounted coyote to the Park Nature Center.
- A bear skin and deer mount have been installed in Nature Center.
- Cave Point Access Trail: Still waiting on trail route and archaeology sign off.
- Native American Village: Goal is to do some clean up this spring. Mike Madden may be available and have some ideas.

Old Business:

- Naturalist Endowment Fund through DC Community Foundation: Last month we discussed the possibility of setting up a fund with the DC Community Foundation as a way to help fund the naturalist position. An Agency Fund was recommended for its flexibility. Both Potawatomi and Peninsula Parks use this type of fund. There is no start up cost or minimum amount required, although there are some low fees associated with it. Criteria for the fund and use of these funds need to be clearly spelled out. It might be advantageous to have Bret Bicoy at a meeting to answer our questions. Motion to bring Bret Bicoy in for a meeting: Jim; second, Doug. All in favor.

New Business:

- John would like to put an end to single use plastic bags at the Nature Center. We will recycle what we have and switch to paper bags for those who want a bag for their purchase.
- There is a Friends of Wisconsin State Parks Incentive Grant that we can apply for, which looks at naturalist and educational opportunities. Up to \$3,500 can be awarded, but application needs to be in by the end of the month.
- Interpretive Guide Training Course: This would take place April 18-21 at the MacKenzie Center near Madison. This course would be for individuals who are interested in more formal training with certification. Cost is \$160/person. Sarah

was wondering if the Friends would be willing to pay the attendance fee. Motion to fund up to 2 individuals to participate: John; second, Rich. All in favor.

The next meeting will be Wednesday April 20. John will not be here and Dick will chair the meeting. It will be an in-person meeting with the possibility of a hybrid option.

Motion to adjourn: Don; second, Rich. The meeting was adjourned at 5:02.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Story

Secretary