

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: April 12, 2021

Meeting Location: Zoom Meeting

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice-President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Lydia Haynes; Linda McMeen; Brad Bates, DNR; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Adam Maus; Cleuts Schwoerer; Jane Schwoerer; Jess Bernstein

Minutes

Dave motioned and Bill seconded to accept the March 2021 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of March 2021 balance of \$30,393.80 in the Farmers Savings Bank account. We are starting to collect money from trail passes. There is \$30,094.74 in the Fidelity Account. Sarah motioned and Dave seconded that we accept the financial report, the motion passed unanimously.

Additions to this meetings agenda

None

DNR Topics

SW Savanna Area Master Plan

Comments on the SW Savanna Area Master Plan are due April 18. There are multiple ways to give comments.

Bill asked about the project that the Mount Horeb Area Economic Development proposed last year to rework the comfort station parking lot. He was wondering why this was not included in the Master Plan. The DNR has not been contacted again about this project. We do need to keep parking for the trail no matter what the final outcome is.

The Master Plan mentions that the DNR would consider the Riley Depot if it was offered for sale. Kevin thought maybe we should be looking into this option. The grants we got for the Depot run for a specified number of years so it may be that we can not sell the Depot until the grant period runs out. The biggest grant used was from DOT, and Bill thought it was a 15 year grant.

There is no specific plan for a Klevenville parking lot. DNR owns a portion of land on the NE side of the trail off of Highway P that could be made into a pull in lot.

The Riley parking lot is frequently full and could use expansion. The Draft Master Plan mentions expanding this lot. Kevin says, if expanded, the lot could be at least half again as big as it is now.

There is 40 acres associated with the trail near Ridge View Rd. There was talk of making this acreage into a camp ground but it is now no longer needed because of the bike and camp site in Blue Mounds State Park.

Kevin felt that it wouldn't hurt if we sent a letter in support of the plan to advocate for long term maintenance projects and stable funding. Sarah will send a letter on behalf of the Friends in support of the trail. The letter will include support of continued funding for maintenance, highlight that the trail is an asset to the community and is heavily used (especially during covid), and mention Kevin and Brad and the work they do. Dave motioned and Linda seconded that Sarah write a letter in support of the trail. The motion passed unanimously.

General Trail News

Visitation on the trail is way up this spring. The trail was soft with the thaw coming out of the ground and bikers left ruts. The trail will not be graded until the entire trail dries out (probably the end of April).

Insurance certification is done (taken care of by Bill).

Kevin needs from Jerry the audit information (about 7 items in total). Kevin will send Jerry an email about it.

The DNR is starting LTE hiring for parks and trails. They have one returning employee.

DNR is meeting this week with Finks and Kittleson to delineate the way the trail used to be on the south side of the Duluth building and work will start on realigning the trail to its original position.

Brad completed the step up to the observation platform near Riley.

Brad and Kevin met with ATC representatives. ATC is asking for two places for the new line to cross the trail instead of only the existing single crossing. The second crossing would be just east of the fenced quarry east of Mount Horeb. The DNR wants clarification of why ATC needs two crossings.

The Wells memorial bench has been ordered and will be installed at the Himsel Kiosk (it will replace the picnic bench). Also a name plate has been purchased.

Kevin met with DOT about the HHH intersection. DOT will be installing a living windrow (small shrubs and plants used to catch snow).

Brad is working on a new high tech mower to keep the trail edges clear, They are working on equipment purchases now and hope to acquire the necessary mower soon.

The DNR will be planting trees in the corridor on April 19. There are plans to plant trees near Town Hall Road and to fill in some empty spots on the trail.

Stewardship Grant Application

We did not get to the top of the list for this grant. We were asking for grant money for a new sign at the Riley parking lot. Because DNR has plans to rework this parking lot perhaps Kevin can push for a sign as part of the expansion. We also may resubmit this grant application if the Stewardship Grant is reauthorized. Kevin recommended that we wait.

Another Bench Requested

Bill got a request from Colin Benell who wants to locate a bench between Verona and Fitchburg to commemorate his mother. He wants DNR and FMRT to pick a location. The spot they like is at the intersection of the park-n-ride and the community gardens. Bill responded to Colin and asked that he pick a few more areas in case we can't locate it where he wants. Bill needs the approximate price of the project. Brad said the last bench was just under \$1000 for a 4 ft bench. This includes staining, concrete to mount it, and a plaque. We might want to choose another location between PB and Verona. This item will be on agenda again in May.

Friends Calendar

Lydia sent the draft calendar to everyone. We need to decide when (time) to have our FMRT Meetings. We decided to keep it at 5:30. In May (5/10) we will meet in person at the Riley Depot. Dave recommended we meet at the depot at 5:00 so we can clean it before the meeting and have the meeting at 6:00. That works for everyone. The June meeting (6/8) will start at 5:30. The July meeting will be at 5:30 at the Riley parking lot, after the July meeting all meetings will start at 5:30. The calendars will be distributed to the kiosks by Jerry and Adam (Fitchburg, Verona) and Dave (Dodgeville and Ridgeway). Lydia will mail them to everyone. Bill thinks we all need to get out and work on the kiosks. Following is the kiosk schedule: Jess will take Riley; Linda McMeen and Lydia (MH and Blue Mounds). Bill said kiosk cleaners need tacks, staplers, stuff to clean the glass, and a brush to clean bugs out.

Brad recommended a sign in the kiosks that has etiquette tips. Jess can rework a PDF the the DNR made that we can use for a one page single sided poster. Brad will send the PDF to everyone. The publication number is 472.

IRS 99 Form submitted by Lydia

She will send a copy to Jerry

Ownership of the Trail

The committee for this, Bill, Sarah, Linda, and Jess Berstein, will meet on Wednesday April 14 at Waltz Park at 5:30.

ATC Update

Lawsuits going forward but, ATC is also going forward with construction.

Dick Trexel

Jerry has tried to contact him again but not gotten through to him.

Horribly Hilly

Horribly Hilly signup is active and volunteers can sign up now. There are options for full or half day.

Riley Port-a-Potty

Bill has already ordered the Riley Port-a-Potty and it will be installed in May.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be May 10, 2021 at the depot. We will get there at 5:00 to clean and will start the meeting at 6:00. People are welcome to bring snacks. Jerry will let us know if we need to bring our own plates and silverware.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary