

MINUTES
ALPENA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY BOARD
City Hall – January 21, 2016 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Alice Holcomb, Judy Kalmanek, Roger Witherbee, Elizabeth Littler, Vernie Nethercut, Terry Gougeon, Tom Orth, Adam Poll, Christian Stevens, Jacqueline Walchek
Guests and Resource people: Michelle Sobeck and Melody Goldwine from Nature's Kingdom Wildlife Rehab, Ron Young of Thunder Bay River Watershed Council
Absent: Melissa Doubek, Erin Riopelle

Roger called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Judy made a motion to approve the minutes from the December meeting, Vernie seconded. Minutes approved.

Nature's Kingdom Wildlife Rehab – Michelle Sobeck and Melody Goldwine

NKWR is a non-profit which strives to conserve and rehabilitate sick, orphaned, or injured wildlife. They are active in educating the public to preserve and protect our native Michigan wildlife. They are licensed to care for mammals and working toward a license for raptors and migratory birds. They are interested in working along side the River Center to create informative displays and seminars that cater to many age groups including sportsmen.

Alice will contact them regarding helping to sponsor a River Rats session on the Island this summer.

Updates – Adam

Adam informed the board that it is budget time and he is anticipating the board will get \$4,000 again this year (same as 2015) in the budget. Roger will be preparing a report on all activities from 2015 for City Council. Information for the report needs to be to Roger prior to March 7.

Adam summarized the bridge and Island usage policy written by Rich Sullenger. The policy was sent previously to board members by email. It was suggested that bullet point number 4 on the policy read: No amenities, i.e. tables, chairs, etc. can be placed on the bridge *or on the Island*.

Landscaping/Set Back Committee - Elizabeth

The committee of Ron, Terry, Karen and Elizabeth have met and discussed bank erosion, water quality and wildlife habitat. They recommend two setback areas, one at Washington Park and the other on Chisholm St. across from the hospital. They request that there be a setback of 25 feet. Also where the ground slopes to the waters edge there be no removal of vegetation and shrubs. The meeting notes are attached to the minutes.

Terry questioned the problem with people not getting approval for removal or planting of vegetation. For example, the buckthorn at Duck Park was removed before approval because it was free labor. Adam agrees the staff at the City needs to agree on a policy. The next step is for the committee to meet with Rich Sullenger and Shawn of DPW. The committee has board support. Tom suggested a sign to educate people as to why vegetation should be left alone.

Artist in Residence - Alice

Alice informed that board that she is seeking other public areas besides the library for our artwork to be displayed temporarily until the River Center is built. Alice has drafted a letter to go to businesses such as NOAA, CFNEM, Chamber of Commerce/CVB, and ACC.

Other suggestions were Besser Museum, TB Arts Council, and Reel Fun sponsors such as Top of Michigan Insurance. Justin Christensen-Cooper, Gallery Coordinator at Art in the Loft has agreed to be on our jury for artist selection and artwork selection.

Festivus/Reel Fun Tournament – Roger

The Festivus is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 26 at the Aplex. The committee is in need of a bartender assistant. Roger asked that board members please bring desserts to the Aplex in the afternoon. The committee is also in need of people to help on Saturday at the Reel Fun to walk the area and make sure anglers are following the rules. Roger asked for volunteers to be hole-decorating judges and take some pictures.

Pamphlet update - Tom

Tom has drafted two pamphlets, an Island Park pamphlet a Wildlife Sanctuary pamphlet. Several points were discussed:

- Keeping the pamphlets simple with QR codes that go to checklists of wildlife, plants, trees, birds, habitats, etc.
- Adding photos (Judy volunteered Betsy's large selection of sanctuary photos and Barb Meek as another resource)
- Repetition with the River Center pamphlet and newsletter format
- A new map with trail names and habitats labeled. A new map should coordinate with the large map sign on the Island.
- Jackie suggested partnering with the ACC Graphic Arts department and getting a student volunteer to help. Tom agreed to contact them.
- Alice volunteered to reduce the habitat paragraphs in the old Island pamphlet to a few sentences for the new one.
- Alice will scan and send Tom the River Center pamphlet

Roundtable

Vernie informed the board that by the second sandy and by the fairgrounds launch there are a number of trees being cut by beavers in the sanctuary. Vernie questioned whether there should be something done, i.e. contact DNR wildlife management about trapping, or let nature take its course. The board decided to continue to monitor and if it becomes a problem talk to the DNR for trapping.

Roger and Judy met with the GLSI leadership team regarding support for programming at the River Center. There will be a brainstorming session for River Center programming at NOAA on March 8 from 1:00-3:00.

Vernie stated that Mike Kendziorski has been speaking to several area groups about the bridge. He has built the bridge to last hundreds of years. Vernie has compiled a history of Island Park to be submitted to Mike (attached to minutes) for use at his talks.

Judy gave a quick update on the Steering Committee. They have passed the articles of incorporation and bylaws. The business plan is in progress.

Reel Fun booklets were available for board members to distribute to friends and fellow fishermen.

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, February 18 at 4:00 p.m.** at City Hall. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alice Holcomb, Secretary

AWS SETBACK COMMITTEE

The Wildlife Sanctuary Setback Committee met Jan 7, 2016 at the US Fish and Wildlife conference room. Present were Karen Enterline, Terry Gougeon, Ron Young of the TBRWC and Elizabeth Littler.

The AWS shoreline photos (and maps) were viewed and setbacks on the river within the sanctuary discussed. The committee listed three primary issues of concern: bank erosion, water quality and wildlife habitat. The latter is of concern because of its importance to the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary vision and goals.

Two properties of interest and concern were discussed: Washington Park and the river area on Chisholm St. across from the Alpena Regional Hospital.

The committee has developed the outline of a plan for an educational project that they are recommending to the AWS Board. Two setback areas, one at each of the properties of interest and concern, would be planted with native shrubs and native wildflowers and grasses. The native plants will be attractive flowering shrubs and wildflowers, both low growing and low maintenance. These areas will be planted by students and interested people in the community and organized by the AWS Board and volunteers.

Access to the river where people fish the river will be avoided.

There will be printed material listing the benefits of setbacks and other publicity.

Also, the committee would request that there be a setback of 25 feet, where possible, on both of these properties where there will be no mowing. They would also request that where the ground slopes at the water's edge, that there be no removal of vegetation such as trees and shrubs.

After some research, it appears that the two properties of interest within the Sanctuary, Washington Park and the river area on Chisholm St. across from the Alpena Regional Hospital, are actually Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Right of Way (ROW). Since the City of Alpena maintains these areas, there appears to be a City/MDOT arrangement that will have to be explored.

EALittler 1.12.21016

ISLAND PARK HISTORY

(Formerly known as Sportsmen's Island)

Island Park is owned by the City of Alpena with the agreement that it will be used only as a natural area for environmental education and quiet recreation.

Highlights of the island's history follow.

Chief Sah-gon-ah-ka-to, the area's last Indian chief, lived on the high ground of the island. He died in 1869 at the age of 93.

The Alpena Sportsmen's Club started conservation and maintenance efforts in the 1940s with planting trees, developing trails, building stairs and fishing platforms, importing Canada geese and swans and memorializing veterans.

In 1985 the Sportsmen's Club sold the island to the City of Alpena for \$163,000. Most of the money was given to the city by the Michigan (Kammer) Land Trust Fund with the agreement that the island would be used only as a natural area for environmental education and quiet recreation.

A covered bridge to Island Park from Duck Park was built in 2015.