

Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board Minutes June 15, 2017

Members Present: Roger Witherbee, Vernie Nethercut, Elizabeth Littler, Tom Orth, Terry Gougeon, Judy Kalmanek, Susie Austin

Members Absent: Adam Poll, Jackie Walchek, Christian Stevens

Guests: Casey Stutzman

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Roger Witherbee at 4:01 p.m.

8. Canoe/Kayak Business

Roger asked Casey to discuss his new kayak rental business prior to discussion of the rest of the agenda. Casey replied that he is operating the rental business at Duck Park from noon until 6:00 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at present. He hopes to be able to expand operating hours within a couple of weeks as his employees become more familiar with the business routine. However, when the rental is not open, people can make a reservation on line (www.performancelocker.com) or call Casey directly at Performance Locker 989-884-1702 or on his cell 989-657-1766. He'll make arrangements to accommodate the canoe/kayak renter. So far, the feedback has been quite positive online: beautiful, in town location, perfect spot, easy access.

Roger noted that even though we have a map of the Blue Heron Water Trail, some of the buoys are not numbered and/or have moved over the winter and need to be placed correctly again. Judy will send Casey a copy of the Blue Heron Water Trail map.

Some discussion followed on the Thunder Bay River Restoration group of which the Wildlife Sanctuary and the River Center are a part. Although initiated by the Long Rapids Volunteer Fire Department, the river restoration is being coordinated by John Frye of Huron Pines. Judy will put Casey into the restoration group email and into the minutes list of the Wildlife Sanctuary Board.

Casey would like to purchase a ready-made storage unit to place at Duck Park for the kayak/canoe rental. There was discussion about the board's long-standing desire to have a permanent structure built into the hillside in front of the launch with a viewing platform on the roof. Roger and Judy will follow up with city engineering and with the Lions club possibility of taking on the project. Crowdrise was suggested as an online possibility as well. Casey agreed that he could manage with his present practice of trailering the kayaks in and out for this summer if needed.

The meeting continued following the agenda.

2. Approval of the May 18, 2017 minutes:

Vernie motioned, seconded by Elizabeth that the May minutes be approved. The motion carried.

3. Updates

Although Adam was not present, Steve Schulz joined the meeting at this point and said that due to on-going vandalism in the sanctuary, especially Island Park, three trail cameras were being

installed to monitor activity on the Island.

4. Sign Project on the Island

Terry reported that he now has nearly all the tree project signs in his possession. After discovering additional vandalism, he removed the remaining signs. Discussion followed on how to secure the signs more adequately. It was agreed that Terry will contact Stevens Company to obtain plates that are the same size as the signs to use as back-plates. The plates can be attached to the plaques and then to the posts using longer, stronger screws. Currently, vandals are able to just jerk the plaques free of the posts.

Elizabeth will obtain two 4x4 posts to place at each end of the “non-trail” which was brushed last year, but needs signage to indicate “not a trail”.

5. Bylaws:

The board noted that the bylaws were approved in May.

6. Island Maintenance update

Chris Stevens notified Roger that he will get a crew together this summer to help with Island maintenance. The robotics team will help, too. Elizabeth will coordinate this with Melissa.

7. Sanctuary Borders

Vernie stated that she has the DNR report on the boundaries which is erroneous. She’ll give the report to Adam for corrective action.

9. Board Member Vacancy

Roger reported that Melissa Doubek has resigned her position with the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary after serving actively for more than nine years. The board was saddened by her decision, but happy that Melissa is helping with the plans for the River Center. It was agreed that Judy will send Melissa a thank you letter for her many years of service.

There are now two vacancies on the board. One of these must be a city resident; the other may be from outside the city. Brois Gerber has applied to become a member from within the city. He was unable to attend the present board meeting, but will be invited to attend the July meeting. It was noted that the board vacancy was published in the paper recently together with vacancies on other city boards.

10. Pamphlet Distribution

Members took the Wildlife Sanctuary pamphlets that were left and promised to distribute them. We may need another printing by fall/winter especially to distribute at the welcome centers through MDOT by spring 2018.

11. No Wake Issue

The board was unanimous in disapproving the general ignoring of the no wake law on the river. It was pointed out that it takes very little to create a wake and the on-going disregard of the law and lack of enforcement is causing increased erosion on the river. The sanctuary is a place for quiet (not noisy) recreation and a refuge for wildlife. The board needs to keep this in focus whenever considering any activity within the sanctuary and take a strong stand on activities that impinge on quiet recreation and/or wildlife habitat/protection. It was suggested that as a help to

law enforcement, a citizen watch group of riparian owners along the sanctuary could help. Folks living along 11th Avenue could be helpful. It was agreed that the board will develop a strong policy on the no wake issue going forward.

12. Campaign and Marketing for the River Center

Due to illness, Susan Nielsen has resigned as chair of the campaign committee. She will, however, remain as a member of the River Center Board. Brian Bartosh, who chairs the marketing committee, has agreed to combine the campaign and marketing committee into one and he will chair the combined committee. The combined committee has had one meeting; jobs have been assigned to members and the group is moving forward.

13. Round Table

Vernie: Bernie Lamp III is the correct contact to see if the Lions Club will undertake the kayak storage project at Duck Park mentioned above.

Terry: what about the sculpture the Arts Council is planning to erect in Duck Park; will it interfere with either the set-back area or the sign for the set-back. We need to know where the Arts Council plans to place it.

Tom: plans to do some clean-up on the water with his group as soon as calendars can be synchronized.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29.

Minutes taken and submitted by
Judy Kalmanek, Secretary
Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board