

Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board Minutes
March 21, 2019
Alpena City Hall

Members Present: Terry Gougeon, Boris Gerber, Karen Enterline, Vernie Nethercut, Roger Witherbee, Tom Orth, Judy Kalmanek

Member Absent: Susie Austin, Elizabeth Littler

Staff: Adam Poll

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Terry Gougeon at 4:01 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Roger, seconded by Boris that the minutes of January 17, 2019 be approved. The motion carried.

Additions to the Agenda:

The agenda was accepted as presented.

City Update:

Adam noted that Terry made the annual report to City Council on Monday, March 18th. This included a presentation of the 2019-2020 budget. The increase to create the erosion demonstration plot was part of the presentation as was the problem of sledding on Island Park. Adam said that Mayor Waligora had some questions about the sledding and may attend the next meeting of the AWSB for an explanation which he can use when questioned.

River Center Update:

Judy reported that the TBRC Board has contracted with Christie Perdue of CP Consulting to conduct a financial feasibility study at a cost of \$20,000. The previous feasibility study did not include a discussion of finances for the project. Christie will begin the work as of April 1st with a completion date of July 31st. Many electronic files have already been sent to her as she begins the work.

On March 25th a Skype meeting will be held with Rich Cook of California who has agreed to conduct a wine festival to raise funds for TBRC. The plan is to hold the festival during one of the summer months.

Roger and Judy continue to make presentations to various groups throughout the watershed. Board member Beverly Bodem is quite instrumental in setting up meetings to update residents of the watershed about the project. A number of presentations are scheduled during April.

Mich-e-ke-wis Public Input:

Vernie attended the public meeting concerning the future of Mich-e-ke-wis held at NOAA. The meeting was well attended, mostly by people who live across from the park and who do not want any development there (other than paving the street). Steve Schnell of NEMCOG facilitated the meeting and asked 4 questions of those assembled which he wrote on large white boards. He began the meeting by stating that the idea of a RV park there has been abolished and it is no longer in the master plan. There were no conclusions and a follow-up meeting is being planned where 4 or 5 scenarios will be presented.

Vernie encouraged the Board to voice their opinion on creating a sledding (not a toboggan) hill there for wintertime use. The idea was proposed during the meeting, but we need to push for it if it is to become a reality. Emails should be sent to Steve Schnell (sschnell@nemcog.org).

Wood Duck Houses:

Terry read the email from Ducks Unlimited who have built 23 lovely, serviceable wood duck houses. They want to put some on poles on or near Island Park and some additional ones in the sanctuary. It was agreed by the Board that a maximum of 4 could be placed, probably on the southeast side of the Island) and that some others could be placed on the small islands in the sanctuary. Other boxes could be placed on the shore along Lake Besser, ACC, the hospital. The Board agreed that the boxes should not be placed in the main waterways of the river since the ducks would not use them. Terry will follow-up with Ducks Unlimited.

Island Park Maintenance:

There is not much to report since not much work can begin until the snow is gone. Roger and Boris agreed to help cut the jack pines that are falling across the trails. These will be used to block access to the non-trail that is being used for sledding and runners. One of the early projects, besides tree removal, will be Island cleanup.

Further Remarks from the Table:

It was agreed that we need to provide information, perhaps articles and media releases about how sledding contributes to the erosion problem on Island Park. Sleds compact the soil and prevent the new plant growth which will stabilize the hill and prevent further erosion.

The plan to remove the sign naming the site Sportsman's Island was discussed. A bench seat across the steel beams would eliminate the need to remove the beams and provide a resting place for people at the top of the stairs. One of the problems could be vandalism of the bench. However, this area is well traveled which will help deter vandals.

Tom wants to meet right after Easter to do the planning for frogbit removal. Judy will send Tom the map of invasive species in the sanctuary done by Huron Pines in 2016. As we do trash clean up along the shores, we'll also note any additional patches of frogbit. Our work this year will be to work on the outside limits of frogbit.

There is a plan for a team from Loyola University to come to Alpena in June to begin large scale removal of the invasive cattails and the frogbit. This group has worked on the frogbit problem along the St. Mary's River at Munuscong Wildlife Area. Their work has definitely proven a relationship between the cattails and frogbit. The team uses a water harvester to cut and remove the cattails. The debris from the annually dying cattails and frogbit creates a blanket that destroys fish habitat.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on April 18, 2019 in City Hall at 4:00 p.m.

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 4:53 p.m.

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