

Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board Minutes May 18, 2017

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

Members Absent: Jackie Walchek, Christian Stevens,, Melissa Doubek (excused)

Resouce People: Karen Enterline, Mark Beins, Catherine Stedman, James Schultz, Michelle Sobek (late)

The meeting was called to order at 3:59 by Chairman Roger Witherbee.

1. Additional Agenda Items:

Several additions were made to the agenda: revisions to the tree guide pamphlet, YVC bird houses

2. Approval of the March 16, 2017 Minutes

A motion was made by Vernie, seconded by Susie to approve the March 2017 minutes. The motion carried.

3. Updates: Adam

Adam reported that there will be new signage going up around town. They will be similar to the ones pointing out Duck Park only smaller.

4. Eagle Scout Sign Project–James Schultz

James was happy to report that the project is now complete. He outlined information on the installation process, gave the chair a flash drive with the signs on it and a document giving the contact information for the vendors. That way, if duplicates are needed in the future, the information is available.

Board members indicated that two of the posts may have already been vandalized and the signs taken. James will check into that and report to Roger.

The board agreed to amend the August 2015 minutes to add a clear statement that the board did approve James' Eagle Scout project so that it is clearly stated in those minutes. Judy will prepare an amended minutes for August 2015 and email them to James to fulfil the conditions of his badge.

James plans to invite all the board members to his Eagle Scout Award ceremony. An invitation will be sent to Roger who will send it on to the board.

5. High School Bee Project

Roger and Elizabeth met with the students to discuss the project of having native plantings that will attract bees. The students were not yet at the point of implementing the project so it will be on hold for now.

Just prior to this board meeting, Ken Nielsen gave Judy a print out showing a series of decorated bird houses that were made by YVC. The board were happy with the bird houses; however, some concern was expressed that it is already too late this year to erect them. Rather, the board

would like to have them ready for early spring next year (early April 2018). The bird houses that were made and donated by a scout troop several years ago have nearly all vanished. Terry has cleaned and re-installed the 3-4 that he could. Judy will contact Brooke Mainville at the Boys and Girls Club and tell her the board's thoughts on the project.

6. Artist in Residence—Mark Beins

The committee under Mark's direction has chosen the 2017 artist-in-residence for the Wildlife Sanctuary. Sandra Murchinson will work in Alpena beginning June 1st through June 17th. Again the board is grateful to Avery and Marcia Aten for housing the artist in their carriage house.

Mark will work with Diane Speer to publicize the artist presentations. Sandra will give a lecture of her work in the Sanctuary at 11:30 (June 17th) at the Besser Museum and her completed work will be exhibited there at that time. Mark plans to ask Sandra to give a walking lecture on how she works. She will give a demonstration of her work technique at Art-in-the-Loft on June 10th. Mark noted that much of Sandra's work is focused on biodiversity.

As in the past, there will be a pot-luck dinner at Witherbee's house on Friday, June 2nd to welcome Sandra and acquaint her with the board. Roger will send out an email and ask board members to indicate what dish they will bring for the dinner. Susie suggested giving the artist a welcome basket highlighting items from Northeast Michigan. Board members who wish to help with the basket should contact Susie.

The board expressed gratitude for the excellent work that Mark has done to further this program.

7. Sanctuary Boundaries

Although there has been no formal resolution, the consensus of City Counsel is that the borders of the Sanctuary are from the Bagley Street Bridge at Sytek Park on the west to the US 23-N Bridge at Chisholm on the east side. Vernie motioned that we accept these boundaries, seconded by Tom and carried. Tom has already secured a number of maps that show conflicting boundaries which he passed along to Mary Beth Stuzman, CEO Convention and Visitors Bureau who will follow up with various agencies to make the needed corrections.

8. Canoe/kayak Business

Casey Stutzman has agreed to carry on the canoe/kayak rental in the sanctuary. He plans to have the business open for Memorial Day weekend. There was discussion about a temporary, seasonal storage shed being housed at Duck Park for the kayaks. Tom recalled that the board had approved the rental of such a shed when the former owner of the business asked to do so. Concern was expressed that the building not obstruct the view of the Sanctuary. There is general support from the board for a permanent storage facility that could be built into the hillside by the launch with a viewing platform on its roof.

9. Bylaws—approval

Adam stated that after the first revisions made there has been no further input from the board on corrections/additions. Judy made a motion, seconded by Terry that the Bylaws be approved. The motion carried.

10. Island Maintenance Update—Terry

The clean up on May 13th had a small turnout; however, major work was accomplished. Terry

stated that the Jack pines overhanging a couple of the trails were removed with some difficulty! The stairways and the paved trail were cleaned. Very little trash was reported an indication that most people are caring about the Island.

11. Board Member Vacancy

The current vacancy on the board needs to be filled with a city resident. Adam was contacted by Boris Gerber, a recent resident of Alpena with family roots here. The board was interested in becoming acquainted with Boris and Roger will invite him to the June board meeting.

12. Web Site

Roger updated the board on the promo video for the River Center that has been commissioned with Stacy Vanorman. One of the needed corrections was the matter of the website. Judy purchased an additional domain: ThunderBayRiverCenter.org which has become the official site for the River Center. It is connected to the two original domains: rivercentralpena.com and .net. All three will lead the seeker to the website. Susie created a new Facebook page for the River Center and linked it to the website and the Wildlife Sanctuary Facebook page. The River Center page on the city website has a donate button that doesn't work. The River Center's Campaign Committee would like the River Center page on the city website removed and just have a link from it to the Thunder Bay River Center site. Susan Nielsen, campaign chair will contact Adam about this concern.

13. Award from Huron Pines

The Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board was awarded the Huron Pines Conservation Partner award for 2017. The award reflects the many years the two groups have worked in partnership on both the Wildlife Sanctuary and Thunder Bay River. On hand to accept the award were Roger Witherbee, Vernie Nethercut and Judy Kalmanek.

Board discussion centered on where to display the award. It was decided for now to house the plaque in the first floor display case at City Hall. Judy will obtain the press release/photos of the event from Huron Pines and send them to Diane Speer.

14. Round Table

–Elizabeth told the board that she and Judy have edited the tree pamphlet to match the signs James did on Island Park. She noted that the tree signs themselves should be numbered, too, to help people using the pamphlet. It was suggested that the city logo be removed and replaced with the Wildlife Sanctuary logo and the city website added. This should be done for all nine current interpretive pamphlets. Elizabeth and Judy will work in this.

–Susie said that River Rats will start on June 28th and run each Wednesday through August 2nd for 1 ½ hours. The final of the summer will be Science in the Sanctuary on August 9th. In addition to River Rats, there will be a pre-school story time on Thursdays at 9:30. The stories will echo the theme of that week's River Rats topic. Susie plans a Summer Solstice celebration with drumming for June 21st in the evening. She is in the process of starting a walking club, too. Vernie agreed to help Susie with advice on publicizing the summer programs.

--Terry suggested that we need a sandwich type board to announce when work or events are taking place in the Sanctuary. Once the wording is agreed upon, Adam will obtain the sign(s).

Bark is needed for the trails and Adam will obtain that, too. A question was raised about the signs for the Island with the small non-verbal icons. Susie admitted to dropping ball and will re-connect with the vendor to complete them

–Judy noted that it is time to resurrect the newsletter after a year long lull. She’ll send out an email shortly asking board members for input. The format will be similar to the past.

The next meeting of the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board will be on June 15, 2017.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Minutes taken and submitted by
Judy Kalmanek, Secretary