

Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board Minutes July 20, 2017

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

Members Absent: Adam Poll, Susie Austin, Jackie Walchek, Christian Stevens

Resource Members: Karen Enterline, Mark Beins, Boris Gerber

1. The meeting was called order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Roger Witherbee.

9. Board Member Vacancy

The chair opted to open the meeting with this agenda item first.

The meeting began by Roger asking Boris to introduce himself to the Board. Boris and his family spent his working years in Connecticut, returning to Alpena many summers. In July 2016 Boris retired to Alpena—to his wife’s family home on Gilchrist Avenue across from Duck Park. He frequently walks/runs in the area around the Sanctuary and appreciates the unique treasure that the Sanctuary is.

Judy made a motion, supported by Terry and carried that Boris be appointed to the vacant (in-town) position on the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board. The motion carried and will be forwarded to City Council for appointment.

2. Approval of Minutes of June 15, 2017

A motion was made by Terry, seconded by Vernie that the minutes of June 15th be approved. Motion carried.

3. Updates

In Adam’s absence Roger gave the following updates:

The city is planning to install trail cameras on Island Park to assist in controlling vandalism.

The TBAC sculpture of the two herons will be placed at Duck Park across from the hospital near the Duck Park sign.

4. Sign Project on Island

Terry reported that he is in the process of having the tree signs backed with larger, stronger material to discourage vandalism. He thinks the signs will be completed in a week or two. Judy noted that one of the signs is in Susie Austin’s car; she will retrieve the sign from Susie and make sure Terry gets it.

5. Artist in Residence

Mark has ordered the sign for Sandra Murchinson’s piece and has the signs already for Mick Grochowski’s pieces which are hanging just outside council chambers. Mark stated that he will continue for another year as coordinator of the Artist in Residence Program. He plans to start the process for artist selection much earlier this year.

6. Island Maintenance

Terry has erected the “not a trail” signs at the site where brush was used to block that area last year. So far, the non-trail is not being used. He noted, too, that the old tree posts that are low to the ground seem to be easily removed.

7. River Rats Update

In Susie's absence Judy read Susie's report. There has been a successful turnout so far. The first session had 24 children, the second (rainy day) 10 and yesterday 20. Next week is plant identification, the following week learning about animal tracks (Michelle will bring her fox). This a.m. (July 20th) the weather cooperated enough for the first pre-school story time. There were two children for the three stories, short hike and search for caterpillars and butterflies. It was suggested that we re-do the poster/schedule for River Rats so they can be put in the pamphlet rack at Duck Park. Judy will follow through on this with Susie.

8. Canoe/kayak Storage

Roger contacted Rotary who are unable to take on another project until the splash park is completed. However, Lions are considering it and Roger is waiting to hear from Bernie Lamp.

10. River Center Update

The River Center received the full amount of the grant application from USDA Rural Development for \$45,000. Some other funds have been donated, too. This includes \$59 from mostly children's donations at the July 4th booth at NOAA.

Judy shared a printed copy of the architectural artist rendering of the River Center. Plans are for a large print to be made and replace the signage at Duck Park on the River Center site.

11. Round Table

It was suggested that the board put up signs at the various boat launches into the sanctuary to tell boaters/kayakers that they are entering the sanctuary which is a no-wake zone.

What do we do about speeding boats? The best approach is to write down the boat's number and call the sheriff. They cannot do anything without the boat number. The current no-wake signs are old--some are no longer readable. We need to ask Adam about posting new no-wake signs.

The project to plant a bee garden has been postponed indefinitely. The students talked with both Roger and Heather Rawlings (USF&W) who helped the girls understand that they did not have enough information and understanding of what the garden would involve.

With the history that all of the Eagle Scout projects done at Island Park having succumbed to extensive vandalism, the question was raised as to whether the board should establish a policy of no more Eagle Scout project allowed there.

The board has received an invitation from James Shultz to attend his Eagle Scout Court of Honor celebration. It will be held on Sunday August 6, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. in the hospitality room of St. Paul Lutheran Church. There will be a dinner following the ceremony. Those interested in attending should RSVP by Friday July 28th to James at 989-464-5371 with the number planning to attend.

The board received a congratulatory note from Representative Sue Allor for being awarded the Conservation Partner Award from Huron Pines.

Minutes taken and submitted by
Judy Kalmanek, Secretary