

Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council

Thursday, 08 October 2009

7 p.m.

Parkview Hills Clubhouse

3707 Greenleaf Circle

The recorded comments below are expressions of council members and are not approved policy until voted on. The statements were not recorded verbatim and cannot be used as quotes.

AGENDA:

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

a. Sign-In Roster

Council Members Present: Tim Holysz, Paul MacNellis, Bob Nagler, Chuck Ide, Bill Steinmann, Steve Kohler, Mark Hoffman, Bob Jorth, Cam Vossen, Frank Wolf, Kay Chase (alt. for Tyler Bassett), Duane Hampton

Guests Present: Cari DeLong (Council Coordinator), Cal Mastin, Carla Koretsky, Charles Emerson, Larry Harris, Paul Warnick, Philip Micklin

III. Adoption of 08 October 2009 Agenda

Bob Jorth moved to approve the 08 October 2009 meeting agenda. Tim Holysz seconded.

IV. Approval of 09 July 2009 Meeting Minutes

Bob Nagler moved to approve the 09 July 2009 meeting minutes. Tim Holysz seconded. All in favor. None opposed

V. Old Business

a. Comprehensive Trail System

Paul MacNellis / Larry Harris

- Larry Harris & Associates is working on designing a trail system for the preserve. The trails committee has been working closely with his team. Barrier free and emergency access trails, along with trail improvements, proposed observation areas, parking lot improvements, and trail closings were outlined by Larry Harris and Paul Warnick. Maps of the proposed trail system were passed out to the Council.
- Larry outlined the goals of the plans which are to minimize erosion, eliminate trail redundancy, improve ability to maintain trails, improve ecological integrity and improve the educational and recreational experience for visitors.
- Bob Nagler voiced his opposition to the plans. He stated that the Asylum Lake fund was set up to protect the property, not build it up. WMU does not have the money to enforce

these changes. This was not the original intent for the property. The property will become too popular, which will inhibit education and research.

- Paul MacNellis stated that the popularity of the property will go up; it has since it became a preserve. The trail plans are actually a reduction of impact to the property by reducing the number of trails and forcing human travel only to certain areas.
- Bob Nagler voiced concern that the proposed trail closings will be too expensive and difficult to enforce.
- Kay Chase stated that the endowment is because of the city. We have an obligation to provide education to the public by giving them access and adding educational signage.
- Carla Koretsky stated that installing signs to educate the public may go further than enforcement. Many people using the trails don't understand the impacts.
- Steve Kohler added that the more people recognize this property as a preserve the more it will be respected. These plans will improve the educational opportunities for the University.
- Chuck Ide stated that the only net difference of these plans in comparison to the existing trails is that some of the trails would be improved for emergency and barrier free access. There is a philosophical decision to be made. Right now the property is wild and no one is encouraged to go there. If we proceed with these plans it will become more park-like and encourage visitors.
- Chuck Ide stated that he has had dialog with the EPA about healthy aging communities and possible grant money to connect people to Asylum Lake. The older community needs a place to access and walk easily through the preserve. Barrier free trails would provide this.
- Frank Wolf stated that this plan should proceed over time in phases. We can then evaluate the changes and learn from our experiences. The best protection for the preserve is to make it valuable to the community.
- Larry Harris added that each one of these trails and choices will need to meet challenges. The dynamics of preserving an open area include giving and taking. This needs to be done stage by stage.
- Paul MacNellis encouraged the Council to look over the trail plans after the meeting and comment. The trails committee wanted to agree on the layout of the emergency and barrier-free trails since these are the backbone of the trails system. The emergency routes are important to have for liability reasons. The committee will move forward with Larry Harris and his team. Larry will be developing phases of development.

b. Ecological Assessment

Cari DeLong

Motion: Bob Jorth moved that the Council request the extra cost of the Ecological Assessment from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. Bill Steinmann seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

- Cari explained that the Ecological Assessment of Asylum Lake was completed by Native Connections this year. The project went over budget by \$3,078. Cari asked the Council for permission to request this difference from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.
- Bob Jorth moved that the Council request the extra cost of the Ecological Assessment from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. Bill Steinmann seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

VI. New Business

a. Kalamazoo Community Foundation Quarterly Report

Cari DeLong

Cari handed out copies of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation quarterly report and went over the details with the Council.

VII. Project/Special Committee Reports

a. Research/Education Committee

Cari DeLong

Cari reported on an application that had been approved by the Research & Education Committee since the last Council meeting. An application for analysis of soil microbial activity in the forest, old field and prairie habitats by Dr Rossbach of the WMU Biology Department was approved.

b. Operations Committee

Cari reported that there were two events on the property. The “Can Do” run on August 22, 2009 was held at Asylum Lake Preserve. A WMU Biogeography class visited the preserve on September 23, 2009.

c. PR Subcommittee

No report.

d. Trails Subcommittee

See “Old Business” section.

e. Construction Subcommittee

Winchell Entrance

Paul MacNellis

- Paul reported that a carpenter from S&T Construction will extend the handrail at the Winchell Entrance by six inches to make it easier to hold when walking up the stairs. We don’t need to request more money because there was money left over in the account.
- Paul also reported that native vegetation was planted along the Winchell Entrance and signage describing the plantings was installed. The understory along the top of the entrance was cleared and will be kept open in the future for safety reasons.

VIII. Public Comments

None.

IX. Council/Staff Comments

- Cari reported that she received a call from the Kalamazoo Armory. They would like their troops to practice orienteering and navigation techniques in the prairie area of Asylum Lake Preserve on October 17th. There would be around 25 people and they would not be carrying weapons.
- There were no objections from the Council to this activity.

X. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.