

**DRAYTON PLAINS NATURE CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021, 6:30PM
VIRTUAL MEETING**

- I. **Call to Order:** Murray Day, called meeting to order, 6:37pm
- II. **Introduction of Members, Staff and Guests:**
 - a. **Members Present:** Aubrey Golden – Waterford, MI, Marie Hauswirth - Waterford, MI, Murray Day – Waterford Township, MI, Mike Ristich – Waterford Township, Jim Zampol – Waterford, MI, Terri Chapdelaine – Waterford, MI
 - b. **Not Present:** Sandy Pulk, Gerard Couture, Linda Zabik
 - c. **Also Present:** Alison Swanson – White Lake Township, MI, Tori Heglin – Rochester Hills, MI, Josh Lumsden, Southfield, MI, Ian Ableson, Stewardship Manager, Six Rivers Land Conservancy – Orion Township, MI
- III. **Review and Approve Agenda:** Motion approved.
- IV. **Review and Approve Minutes from January 2021 Meeting:** Corrections: T. Heglin-FISMA should be CISMA; T. Chapdelaine-Slate should be slats; I. Ableson – he was not at ice-skating meeting but was at Army Corps meeting. Motion by T. Heglin to approve the agenda with corrections, support by Terri Chapdelaine. Motion approved.
- V. **Reports:**
 - a. **Director’s Report: Alison Swanson**
 - i. Staff is working on hiring for seasonal maintenance, day camps, nature center attendant, farm attendant, and field attendants for athletic fields.
 - ii. Programs will be running with COVID safety precautions in place. We will be focusing on outdoor planning as much as possible. Exercise programs are moving outside again, and the pavilion at the Nature Center will be utilized.
 - iii. There will be a camp at the Nature Center. With the camps, we are limiting our numbers to address safe distancing and other COVID protocols.
 - iv. Alison is looking at new display cases for the lower level of the interpretive building. Touch table needs to be replaced.
 - v. Two memorial benches will be installed.
 - vi. Individual is interested in making a donation for a new map, possibly for the entrance to the covered bridge over the river to the ponds.
 - vii. Recreation Center was re-opened on January 25.
 - b. **Parks and Recreation: Tori Heglin**
 - i. Saturday, March 6 we had the “Unplugged” event with nature hikes at 11am and 12noon. Ian Ableson and Murray Day were our featured presenters. With their backgrounds, we were able to offer a strong, informative program on the habitat and the history of the park. We had 22 registrants whose ages were 6 to 87 years old. Josh Lumsden was very helpful as a “rear” guide making sure all of our participants were between our lead guides and the last person in the designated group. The trail was icy and challenging in spots, so it was good to have everyone between our presenters and staff. Presentation was videotaped by Tori on Media Network equipment (their staff will be editing).
 - ii. One more winter RAPP event (Revenue Assistance Partnership Program through Oakland County Parks and Recreation) scheduled. *Habitats, and Movement* on March 21 at Drayton Plains Nature Center. We will be hiking, not snowshoeing due to the weather.
 - iii. Josh and I are meeting with a plumber to ensure toilets and urinal in interpretive building will be ready for the spring opening of the building.
 - iv. Map of the Nature Center area is being updated with access points, benches, etc. It was suggested to include dams (3).
 - c. **Caretaker Report**
 - i. Added new slats to observation towers and will paint this summer.
 - ii. Getting the chainsaw back from Todd, Park Staff in order to resume trail cleanup. All the trails are currently passable, but cleanup from the trail trimming that took place in the fall will resume.
 - iii. There is still no WWAM planned for the 2021. Will be getting help from individuals doing community service.
 - iv. Wood chips will be spread on the main trail from the parking lot to the covered bridge soon. Winter weather and maintenance vehicle traffic have made it a little muddy/rutted.

d. **Friends of the Drayton Plains Nature Center: Terri Chapdelaine**

- i. Audubon Society started a new group, where they actually have a liaison to do community service outreach for groups like us. They want to coordinate a weekend or Saturday for invasive species removal.
- ii. New evidence of beaver activity. Terri is interested in adding species to our management plan for all the different categories. We may not be documenting all of our discoveries that show the value of the property (should include broad population, insect population, vegetation, mammals). Ian indicated updates are usually every five years.
- iii. Ice rink in pond was not successful this year, but learned a good deal. This project will be revisited in 2022.
- iv. DNR Fisheries Division will be adding clay material to banks of ponds used for rearing walleye. The EGLE permit has been received to proceed with project. We do not have update on scheduling of this.

VI. **Old Business**

- a. Management Plan Review subcommittee will have their first meeting on March 25, 5:30pm at the Nature Center Interpretive Building.
- b. Ian Ableson reminded us of his offer to lead a Garlic Mustard pull sometime in May. Terri will reach out to Oakland Audubon. Friday, May 21 is being set aside with a time to be determined.

VII. **New Business**

- a. The Township is coordinating an Earth Day Clean Up event on April 24 from 8am-2pm. The Nature Center is one of the locations. Information is on Township website.
- b. Alison reached out to Erica Clites, Oakland County CISMA; an invasive species survey from 2019 was shared. Our goal is to get some mapping done for invasive species on the property. Winter mowing of phragmites was discussed. Updated plan is very valuable to management plan and key to grant funding.
- c. Looking forward to next spring for a controlled burn of the prairie.
- d. Larry Larson, a person with a long history with the Nature Center, donated a Memorial Bench for the area by the Hatchery Dam a few years ago. He is proposing funds for a new trail map by the covered bridge. He is interested in highlighting what he calls "Eight Pond Isle" on the map, because it has unique features. There was a discussion on naming request issues. Alison feels that the committee should vote on any naming suggestions.
- e. Terri asked if we ever have a tour of the property from a Facilities Manager point of view. The structural concerns of the nature center and log cabin should be reviewed. Last year, projects being discussed included new shutters, topline facing over the frame and railing of the balcony area, men's bathroom window, front sign, putting the gazebo on a slab, and cabin roof. Furnace is being addressed. Alison to follow-up on this.
- f. Concerns with liabilities were discussed that are across the street from the Historical Society: asphalt sidewalk presents a major tripping hazard and the gates by the experimental ponds where this is a 3-4 foot drop. In addition, the wings of the dam have no railings. These issues require follow-up with the responsible entities WRC (Water Resource Commission) for dam and Waterford Township Development Services for sidewalks.

VIII. **Roundtable**

Tori Heglin mentioned some people were taking off for the trails before our "Unplugged" event. They complained that the trails are beat up due to plowing/snow removal, and do not allow for safe winter sport enjoyment. Exposed dirt can trip one up if they are cross-country skiing. There are usually only limited opportunities to enjoy winter trail sports in our area. Alison indicated that we should bring this up again next fall. It was suggested that some trails could have certain designations. There is a mapping system that can be used (overlays can be utilized). GPS on phone can be used for mapping. Ian indicated that Oakland County uses a phone application for invasive species data (ARC Collector).

IX. **Public Comment** - none

X. **Adjournment** 8:08pm