

DRAYTON PLAINS NATURE CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
TUESDAY, May 17 2022, 6:30PM
DRAYTON PLAINS NATURE CENTER, 2125 DENBY DRIVE, WATERFORD, MI 48329

- I. **Call to Order:** 6:32pm, T. Chapdelaine
- II. **Introduction of Members, Staff and Guests:**
 - a. **Members Present:** Aubrey Golden, Jim Zampol, Terri Chapdelaine, Marie Hauswirth, Teresa Serowoky and Mike Ristich.
 - b. **Also Present:** Ian Ableson, Josh Lumsden, Annie Humphrey, Alison Swanson and Tori Heglin.
 - c. **Excused:** Linda Zabik, Sandy Pulk (present via phone), and Murray Day
 - d. **Guest:** none
- III. **Review and Approve Agenda:** Motion to approve M. Hauswirth, second J. Zampol. Motion approved.
- IV. **Review and Approve January minutes:** Motion to approve March minutes with one grammatical correction by M. Hauswirth, second by J. Zampol. Motion approved with correction.
- V. **Reports:**
 - a. **Director's Report: Alison Swanson**
 - i. **Monthly April 2022 Report** submitted at meeting. Please see attached document.
 - ii. **Seasonal Job Recruitment:** We are having a very difficult time securing staff, specifically for the camp program. We have decreased our maximums to be in a better position to accommodate our enrollment.
 - iii. **Rotary Park Ribbon Cutting** for new playground will be June 7 at 12 noon. Parks and Recreation purchased the new play structure and the rubber mulch for this project. The Waterford Rotary Club with the help of many generous donors are covering the installation cost. We would like to use this arrangement as a model going forward for other park playground that need to be replaced.
 - iv. **American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA):** One million dollars has been allocated by the Township Board to the Waterford Parks and Recreation Department through the APRA funds. These funds must be used by December 2026. Several park projects are being considered given the aging infrastructure at most parks. We plan to apply for matching grants to help these funds go further. The Michigan DNR has grants available and their next deadline is March 2023
 - v. **AmeriCorps Volunteers:** Alison met with Jeff Moeur, AmeriCorps, to learn more about their Community Based Learning Projects. Their 2023 project application deadlines have not yet been announced. As a participating community, we would be required to provide lodging with a kitchen and shower facilities for 8-12 individuals for 3-8 weeks during the course of the project.
 - vi. **Parking Lot Milling Projects:** Millings will be dropped off, rolled and compacted at the Nature Center parking lot and other parks Monday-Wednesday next week.
 - vii. **Caretaker at Hess-Hathaway Park:** Upcoming projects include carpet installation and abatement of the ceiling tiles in the screened-in porch. Job to be posted and filled by the end of June.
 - b. **Parks and Recreation: Tori Heglin**
 - i. **Nature Center Opening and Classes:** Nature Center opened on Friday, May 13 and will remain open until Sunday, October 2 (Fridays, 1-5pm and Saturdays and Sundays, 10am-2pm). Annie Humphrey, Nature Center Attendant will be offering 8 classes May through September. Classes can be adapted and are appropriate for all ages. Annie will be selling pins for \$2 at the Nature Center, and is planning on expanding on a Nature Center shop.
 - ii. **Seasonal Position Flyer:** We have promoted these opportunities through our department e-blasts, Facebook and the Township's Facebook and board packets. We have purchased lawn signs and magnets for our park vehicles. We have reached out to our school districts and six local private schools. We are trying to utilize *Handshake* which is a recruiting platform for higher education students, and made individual efforts with some colleges. We would greatly appreciate any assistance from our committee members in our promotion efforts. Flyers and information will be forwarded.
 - c. **Caretaker Report: Josh Lumsden**
 - i. Ramping up Community Service work through 3 Children's Village workdays, 1 youth probation workday and 1 volunteer group workday.
 - ii. Looking for solutions to increase mowing productivity. Another piece of mowing equipment (one that could take down trunks with 3' diameters) was proposed as well as reducing the amount of land mowed. Impact of ticks, native grasses, and the slope of the ground in certain areas, rain garden and pollinator gardens were discussed. An e-mail will be sent out to establish a sub-committee to work on reducing the area needed to be mowed. The Waterford Garden Club will be invited.
 - iii. Tools were purchased to allow for increased productivity of the volunteers.

- iv. Debris including railroad ties, pallets, ladder, etc. have been removed from the Big Woods and Pine Flats area.

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

- i. Terri questioned what could be adapted to increase the rental revenue of the Nature Center. It was suggested that the ongoing availability of an indoor restroom impacted renter's decisions.
- ii. Prescribed burn on Saturday, May 7 in the Woodland Prairie was deeper than last time and 1/3 larger than before.
- iii. Phragmites removal funding was not awarded to Drayton Plains Nature Center this year. Ian will try to determine if we could adjust our approach for funding to increase our opportunity through Oakland County Parks in the future.

VI. **Old Business**

- a. **Prescribed Burn-May 7, 2022:** David Borneman and his four person crew were highly proficient performing the 7.8 acre burn. Josh Lumsden and Jim Zampol assisted Tori Heglin in handling any questions from park visitors. Our experience was the community was well-informed and appreciative of the process and goal. This burn was funded through a grant from Oakland County Parks and Oakland County CISMA.
- b. **Garlic Mustard Invasive Species Pull:** Ian, a technician, 2-3 volunteers and Tori are scheduled to work this program Friday, May 20, 9AM-12PM.
- c. **Earth Day at Drayton Plains Nature Center – Saturday, April 23, Ian Ableson:** Ian and Annie facilitated 2 hikes, each with 8-9 registered. Others joined them on the trail. Presentation focused on the Pine Flats and the DNR Fishery.

VII. **New Business**

- a. **Property Owner Issue:** A new property owner does not want nature center patrons cutting through his property to access Georgeland Dr. He has put up "no trespassing" signs on his property. Alison is following up with Code Enforcement on a complaint they received from a park patron who used to utilize this private property as a cut through to Georgeland Dr.
- b. **Dams:** DLZ will be making repairs and performing maintenance on the dams. This is coordinated through Kristin Goetze, PE, DPW Engineer.
- c. **Vandalism:** Alison reported that two sixth-graders vandalized the pavilion, signs, posts, and several other items on March 23. The review of this action is in progress with the Waterford Police Department. Damages totaling just under \$400 are being asked to be paid in restitution along with each individual performing 10 hours of community service. Our cameras were instrumental in identifying the vandals.
- d. **Interpretive Sign Donation:** We have received six new green metal posts with panels attached to display rotating interpretive signage at the nature center. These signs were locally made and donated generously by Mike Hauswirth. We are so thankful for this donation. These new signs are a welcome addition to the property.
- e. **Boot Brush Station:** We need to have the boot brush station installed. This was received through an Oakland County CISMA grant. Consensus is to install it near the parking lot so it can be used when patrons arrive and leave the property. Also getting it within the camera sightline.

VIII. **Roundtable**

J. Zampol: Cooley Elementary moved their dumpster and debris blows onto the Nature Center grounds. Jim has a concern with the water level dropping in Pond 10. Alison will follow up with Chris G. from WRC on putting boards back into Dam 3.

IX. **Public Comments – none**

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm by T. Chapdelaine.