

Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board Minutes
August 17, 2023
Alpena City Committee Room

Members Present:

Terry Gougeon, Tom Orth,, Catherine Stedman, Judy Kalmanek, Elizabeth Littler, Vernie Nethercut, Lisa Kruse, Boris Gerber,

Member Absent: Lucille Bray, Larry Jahns

City Liaison: Montiel Birmingham

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Terry Gougeon at 4:02 p.m.

II. Additions to and Approval of the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda and the agenda was approved upon a motion by Tom, seconded by Vernie and carried.

III. Approval of Minutes of July 20, 2023

The secretary failed to send out the minutes of the July 20, 2023 minutes. Approval of these minutes was tabled until they could be reviewed. A copy of the July 20, 2023 minutes is attached with these minutes.

IV. Public Comment

No others, beside the board members, were present; therefore, there were no public comments.

V. City Report- Montiel

A question had been raised during the last meeting about whether volunteers, especially those handling sharp tools needed to sign waivers prior to volunteering. Montiel checked with Steve Shultz who said that was not necessary. Other city volunteers do not sign one; they have personal insurance and the city has insurance which covers city sanctioned volunteer events/activities. Montiel is working on updating the City Recreation Plan. A change from the past is that the City, Alpena Township and Alpena County are working jointly on a united recreation plan which will cover all three entities. In preparation for beginning the plan, Montiel researched past surveys and pulled references to Duck and Island Park which she shared with the AWS Board. Some comments related to sledding and respondents indicated their hope for a sledding area in town. Other questions were related to the TBRC—when it would happen, suggestions, for programs and wish for restrooms.

VI. River Center Report

Judy reported on the progress being made on implementing the Land and Water Grant which was received in December 2022. All needed supplemental files have been appended; the contract signed and the first report underway which is due September 1, 2023. The application to MI Community Center, through Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) will be submitted for review on Friday (8-18-2023) although it is not due until 8-31-2023. Sending it early will enable the grant coordinators to review it prior to final submission.

Two preliminary bids were received following the joint AWS, City and TBRC meeting in June.

The TBRC Board has already reviewed them. Judy will attach them with the minutes for review and input from the AWS Board. One is for a permanent modular building; the other is from Bruce Dietz (a sworn statement) for a stick built center.

The first Reel Fun Northland Challenge was a successful event. About 500 folks participated on a beautiful day. The Northland CEO would like to make this an annual event for Northland in support of the TBRC. A comment was made that many people did not know about the event. There was nothing on the TBRC website or FaceBook page; although there were many posters place around town and the event was published by Northland through their media.

VII. Other Business Reports

Island Park Management Plan Montiel asked how often it is updated and whether it has or needs to be approved by City Council. Elizabeth noted that the last update by the AWS Board was done in 2019 and will be due next year. To the best of anyone's knowledge, City Council has not been asked to approve the plan. Many of the *Action* items have been completed in the plan.

Appropriate Use of the Island It was suggested that quiet recreation be defined and included in the updated management plan. The current list of recommendations and actions needs to be reviewed as well. The new list needs to be integrated with the City's plan for its other parks. The current City recreation plan does not mention the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary. However, Montiel will ensure that it will be in the new plan. The Board will be asked to supply more detail to include in the new recreation plan.

Vernie had asked previously and again for members to list what they considered quiet recreation. The list suggested included walking, hiking, birding, dog walking, fishing, photographing, observing nature. The list is not all inclusive and needs to be expanded. Additionally, there are usually several small weddings that take place, Tinkergarten (for very small children and babies) has occurred as has an art in the park session. Neither of these were approved events by either the City or the Board. A comment was made that we don't want to have too many rules that will discourage use of the Island or Duck Park, but we do need guidelines. It was suggested that these guidelines need to be published on social media.

Social Media Lisa has undertaken to coordinate the various FaceBook, Instagram and websites into a unified, single-sourced promotional piece that includes the Wildlife Sanctuary and the TBRC. Judy noted that Scott Gasparin (resource advisor to TBRC) has agreed to help with the project. Prior to beginning, Lisa had asked for a copy of the City's policy on social media which Montiel sent out to the Board. Judy will ensure that Scott receives a copy so that he and Lisa can coordinate their efforts. Currently, TBRC has a website (of long standing), FaceBook page, and Instagram account. Additionally, TBRC has a Reel Fun Ice Fishing Tournament website which enables fishers to purchase tickets online. The AWS has a page on the TBRC's website. It was agreed that all of these should be integrated into one entity, if possible. Probably Lisa and Scott should become Social Media Administrators (SMA) in order to proceed with their work. Montiel will see if that's possible.

VIII. Park Maintenance–Terry

August 9th Event The event was to remove frogbit and the only Huron Pines member who showed up was Amber Hubbard. She cancelled the event. Catherine and Judy had already planned to take the YVC kids to the Island to remove spotted knapweed which they did. This invasive plant is pretty well subdued for the time being. However, both Catherine and Judy

agreed that next year's efforts should be focused on leafy spurge which has spread dramatically on the Island. Prior to pulling in 2024, they plan to meet with the YVC and teach them about leafy spurge.

Buckthorn Event October 4th Terry asked how many folks could help with the buckthorn. Huron Pines is sponsoring the event. The comment was made that if local volunteers are needed, the event needs to be held on a Saturday. Several board members work and wouldn't be able to come on a weekday. That is true for a number of potential community volunteers. Terry suggested that the City's chipper could be used and the woody debris hauled away in a City truck which all thought was a good idea. Terry will contact Amber and see how many Huron Pines folks can come that day.

IX Additional Remarks from the Table

Montiel had walked the Island and noted several maintenance issues: the railing leading to the lower west deck is very loose and a bit dangerous; there is spray painted vandalism on the deck, on the railing at Eustis Overlook and just some general clean up that needs to be done on the main paved trail.

X Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the chair at 5:15. The next meeting will be held on September 21, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Committee Room.

Minutes taken and submitted by
Judy Kalmanek, Secretary
Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board