

Brooks Nature Area

Minutes

September 26, 2024

Members present: Justin Miller, Patty Hoch-Melluish, Erin Skidmore, Ian Campbell, Brian Huggett and Janet Schoenmeyer

Members absent: Margaret Steele

Technical advisors and volunteers present: Jim Coury and Lauren Bruggeman

- A. The minutes of the July 18, 2024 regular meeting were approved.
- B. The September 26, 2024 agenda was approved.
- C. Board member applicant Lauren Bruggeman was present.
- D. Patty Hoch Melluish reported the current balance in the BNA fund as of September 26, 2024: \$30,810.20
- E. There were two applications for the BNA board position. Lauren Bruggeman was recommended for the open position based on her prior service and attendance at BNA meetings and events.
- F. Patty stated that the Groesbeck family gifted BNA \$100. Fredonia Township gave BNA \$6,000 that was spent on a shed, two garbage receptacles and a bench. Eckford Township gave BNA \$3,200, which was spent on invasive species treatments, tree signs and tools, (one shovel and two loppers). Janet Schoenmeyer said that she would send thank you notes to the Groesbeck family and to Fredonia Township. She sent a note to Eckford Township on March 26. Patty remarked that a photo op in the AdVisor would be a good way to advertise the gifts we have received from our generous donors. She will be working with Justin on ordering some acknowledgement signs to be placed on the Fredonia donations.
- G. Erin Skidmore reported that feedback from board members is still needed to update the Management Plan. She added that accurate acreage measurements are also needed. Brian Huggett stated he would help with that issue. Erin stated that the deadline to contribute information is October 18. The BNA Management Plan will be included in the Parks and Recreation Management Plan and will be presented to the Council at their November meeting. Patty stated that she was sure Ben Lark would volunteer to read the plan to add suggestions if needed. Jim Coury stated that Patty, Erin and Brian did a great job working on updating the Management Plan. There was discussion of the BNA's protection as a city park. Justin Miller will research and get back to the group. Findings should be included in the Management Plan.
- H. Patty stated that she and Jim Coury had attended the Stuart Lake Association picnic September, 17. Some of their members told her that they wished there was a BNA board member who represented Stuart Lake, who could keep them informed of what was discussed at the meetings. Patty reminded them that any Stuart Lake resident was welcome to attend any BNA board meeting. Darren Gwin was present at the picnic and informed Patty that he would be willing to continue maintaining the main BNA trails when his parents are no longer able.
- I. Erin asked if board members knew of anyone that has access to the BNA Facebook page. Justin Miller stated that Diane Graves doesn't have access, but not sure about Cheryl Vosburg. He will contact Cheryl to find out. Justin suggested the present web site be deleted and then start fresh with a new one.
- J. Patty created new signage and laminated a large BNA map. She agreed that most of the park signage needs to be replaced.

Patty added that BNA needs a trail counter. Discussion of ways to raise money for the park: Brian stated that there is no CRP. CSP is the new farm bill's name. He will check it out to see if we could qualify for that program as a municipality. Jim Coury stated that it would help if there was a way to remind Stuart Lake residents that money for BNA would be a great memorial gift. Ian Campbell spoke of some raising money ideas he saw at the Dahlem Center in Jackson. Justin added that BNA may have to pay for (or share the cost with the park funds) for the controlled burns in the future. Lauren Bruggeman suggested Firekeepers Casino as a possible source of funding for the burn.

Janet Schoenmeyer read Don Jewett's email that stated all the bird houses had been cleaned out and repaired. Don placed a few mouse guards to keep the houses available for the birds during the winter. He added that there had been a good response from tree swallows and bluebirds this year. The purple martin house is down and will need to be placed in the shed. Don also worked on the red gate by the south exit. It needs to be raised a bit and a stop/keep post has to be placed on it. Janet reported that she and her husband Jim helped Don clean out about 20 of the birdhouses on September 10. Don cleaned out the remainder.

- K. Justin Miller reported that he would place signs informing visitors of deer hunting season and that the BNA will be closed starting November 15. He will also place notification in the AdVisor. Further discussion is needed to address the newly extended firearms season and how to manage park usage during this time.

L. Adjourn

Janet Schoenmeyer