

Brooks Nature Area Minutes

January 18, 2024

Members present: Dave Phaner, Brian Huggett, Ian Campbell, Erin Skidmore, Margaret Steele, Patty Hoch-Melluish

Members absent: Janet Schoenmeyer and Justin Miller

Technical advisors present: Jim Coury

- A.** The minutes of the November 16, 2023 regular meeting were approved.
- B.** The January 18, 2024 agenda was approved.
- C.** No guests were present.
- D.** Dave Phaner presented the current balance for the BNA funds at \$39,666.04. This balance reflects payment of the invasive species management from the summer.

Brian Huggett's maps will have a "You are here" note added to two of them to correspond with the locations of the two sign boards along the trails. Patty Hoch-Melluish will have them laminated.

- E.** Margaret Steel still has the bat houses. They are ready to be installed. Locations need to be selected. The Purple Martin house has been installed. The group needs to get a thank you out to the family and a blurb in the Ad Visor.
- F.** Dave Phaner would like a group from the BNA Board to attend an Eckford Township meeting to give an update on how the Eckford millage funds were spent and potentially request additional millage funds in the future. Ideas for additional funds: equipment for BNA (tools, seeder), tree tags, invasive species treatments. Patty Hoch-Melluish will contact Eckford to see if we can get a date to attend an upcoming meeting.
 - Erin Skidmore gave a summary of the upcoming luminary hike, scheduled for Saturday, January 27 from 6-8 pm. Members volunteered for tasks including placing luminaries, parking, hot cocoa prep, cleanup. The event will take place regardless of the weather. Additional parking may be needed at the north gate entrance. Justin Miller will be contacted to help with any snowplowing, if needed.
- G.** Spring projects were discussed. Trail maintenance was the main priority along with clearing some areas to allow better views of the lake. There is one mulch pile at the west end of the Lakeshore Loop. We need to contact groups/individuals to get some help. Some past volunteer groups: Marshall HS National Honor Society; Olivet College; Eaton; Stuart Lake Association. New ideas: Common Citizen; MSU Alumni Club.

One idea for a Scout project is a storage area for BNA tools that could potentially be attached to the bathroom at the BNA. Dave will talk to Scout Leader Conklin to see if he may have an interested scout. The group also discussed doing some frost seeding of clover on the trails. Margaret Steele is looking into clover costs and a seeder. This would need to be done before April 2024.

Ian Campbell asked about planting native flowers in the prairie. This has not been successful in the past due to the grasses outcompeting the flowers. Jim Coury suggested that the area along the road north of the parking lot could be a potential planting area.
- H.** There is interest in promoting winter sports at the park. The group decided to see how the luminary hike goes and see if there is interest in offering another event.
- I.** There is a BNA Facebook page, but no one knows who has access to the site. Erin Skidmore contacted Cheryl Vosburg to see if she has any information. This would be a good venue to promote/educate the public about the park.
- J.** Adjourn at 6:05 pm
Submitted by Patty Hoch-Melluish