

DRAYTON PLAINS NATURE CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
TUESDAY, September 21, 2021, 6:30PM
DRAYTON PLAINS NATURE CENTER, 2125 DENBY DRIVE, WATERFORD, MI 48329

- I. **Call to Order:** 6:35 pm, Murray Day
- II. **Introduction of Members, Staff and Guests:**
 - a. **Members Present:** Aubrey Golden, Murray Day, Mike Ristich, Jim Zampol, Terri Chapdelaine, Teresa Serowoky and Marie Hauswirth
 - b. **Also Present:** Alison Swanson, Josh Lumsden, Annie Humphrey and Tori Heglin
 - c. **Excused:** Sandy Pulk, Ian Ableson and Linda Zabik
- III. **Review and Approve Agenda**
- IV. **Review and Approve Minutes from May 2021 Meeting:** M. Day made a motion to approve minutes with corrections listed below, second by T. Chapdelaine. Motion approved.
 - a. II. d. change of to: or
 - b. II. e. change to install to: to have roll call vote. Move M. Day from Yes to No in votes.
 - c. VI. b. add after term: G. Couture. Add Motion before second by T. Chapdelaine.
- V. **Reports:**
 - a. **Director's Report: Alison Swanson**
 - i. Todd Somers, DNR Fisheries Division reported they are draining pond seven and eight for spraying purposes but they can fill seven back up for a few months if we'd like. Alison to get back to them about this.
 - ii. Six Rivers Land Conservancy's Nature Near You Photo Contest is accepting votes now. Please consider going to their website or Facebook and casting a vote.
 - iii. Budget has been submitted. The budget is in the red due to cautious approach to revenue projections due to lingering impacts to program registrations from COVID-19. Significant funds are needed to keep the aging Recreation Center operational. The department's operating millage will be up for renewal in 2024.
 - iv. Community Block Grant funds have been used and may continue to be available for Parks and Recreation repairs and improvements. The requests need to be in targeted areas/demographics.
 - v. Discussion on history of Waterford Township's involvement with the DPNC and how property became under the oversight of the Waterford Parks and Recreation Department. A DEQ grant was obtained in 2005 and property was put under a Conservation Easement to protect it in perpetuity.
 - vi. Waterford's Rotary Club has been working with parks and recreation to have a new playground installed at Rotary Park. Parks and recreation purchased play structure, Rotary Club is raising the funds to have it installed.
 - b. **Parks and Recreation: Tori Heglin**
 - i. Interpretive Center at Drayton Plains will remain open through September 26.
 - ii. Big Wheels was a wonderful success on Saturday, September 11 drawing in 40 more families than in the past. The Quiet Zone time of 1-2pm brought out a second wave of families whose loved ones with sound sensitivities were able to enjoy this event.
 - iii. Craft Show at Waterford Recreation Center on Saturday, September 18 was successful.
 - iv. Plans to run a modified Harvest Happening on Sunday, October 3.
 - v. Nature Camp enjoyed full registration this year. Art/science projects were varied (pollinator gardens, butterfly feeders, owl pellets, animal track identifiers, etc.) Daily hikes, habitat building and archery were some of the top activities. There was an emphasis on Michigan native species whether mammals or lizards, and a highlight on the many bird species that have been sited at the Drayton Plains Nature Center. Annie and Gavin both played important roles.
 - c. **Caretaker Report: Josh Lumsden**
 - i. Regularly cleaning up of fallen limbs and other storm damage on the trails and front of property. Plan to address leaning trees/limbs as resources allow.
 - ii. No timetable for the WWAM program to restart - will continue to attempt to find other community service people.
 - iii. Working with Terri and Gavin to dispose of invasive cuttings.
 - iv. Pressure washed the interpretive center and maintenance barn.

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

- i. Road Commission has approved the road bridge. There will be a temporary easement. Concrete bollards along hatchery road sidewalk will be removed during this project. It is still being discussed if we can move and store the pedestrian bridge for later. Alison will reach out to the Army Corps of Engineers.
- ii. Terri indicated that she had uncovered a letter noting that the Drayton Plains Nature Center was designated as a State of Michigan Historical Site by Greg Moss in 1984. Alison will check on this status.
- iii. Terri indicated that Gavin Fritz, Oakland University intern is doing an incredible job. He has been real good at identifying species. He has worked mostly on removing buckthorn and bittersweet. Special attention has been given to the prairie, because at this point we can have more success at containment.
- iv. We need to verify our method of removal of phragmites. Higher level of water in Pond #4 has kept down the growth of phragmites in this area. Would like direction from Ian at Six Rivers. Jim Z. mentioned there is some purple loosestrife in the cattails.

VI. **Old Business**

- a. Management Plan Review subcommittee is planning meeting Thursday, September 23 to summarize the notes. The plan is to have this finalized in October.
- b. Eagle Scout Bridge Restoration Project Update: Project has been completed by Eagle Scout, Walter Paliga. Oakland Press ran a feature article about how our community, businesses and Township came together to follow-through on the project after the structure had been vandalized in June. "The revamped version cost about \$1,100 due to wood and cement. I think it turned out a lot better than originally planned, a lot stronger," said the Eagle Scout, Walt Paliga (father of the Eagle Scout). This is "an example that there is a lot of good people in the world".
- c. Internship Update: Gavin Fritz will be finishing up his internship hours with us at the end of the month.

VII. **New Business**

- a. Drayton Plains Nature Center Halloween Hayrides have been cancelled for 2021. All hay wagons need to be rebuilt. Alison suggested that a version of a Trick or Trail event be considered for the future.
- b. Trail Cutting Schedule: should be on a bi-annual schedule. Need to get quotes on this.
- c. Controlled Burn Schedule: Would like to see one in March 2022.

VIII. **Roundtable**

M. Day: Drainage from Cooley Elementary School into DPNC has not been resolved with their new parking lot and retention pond construction. The runoff has just been moved. Alison can look into addressing this with the school district

T. Serowoky: The retention pond fence/gate at Cooley Elementary School was left open and unlocked.

A. Humphrey: Annie reports that she has been organizing and cleaning the interpretive center. She feels the digital microscope has been a great addition making this view of the world more accessible to children.

M. Ristich: Mike is interested in outreach programs for the schools.

J. Zampol: Jim inquired if the Autistic Program would be returning. Alison indicated that this has yet to be determined. Jim reviewed the status of rickety benches that are being addressed. Jim is working on taking out purple loosestrife.

A. Swanson: In regards to comments about a Dog Obedience class seemingly conducting class on a regular basis without notice or rental, Alison is working with the Recreation Board to determine a policy that would address these type of issues.

T. Chapdelaine: Most recent renovations at Cooley Elementary School is still presenting a drainage problem. Instead of the water flowing to the low area, it flows over and compromises the path. Another important note, the retention pond at the school has a gate that has been open with no lock in sight.

IX. **Public Comments** - none

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm by Murray Day.