

Minutes for 1000 Islands Environmental Center Committee Meeting on Thursday, April 17, 2025

Members Present Hietpas, Jakel, Eggleston, Manion, White, Breitzman, and Van Berkel

Not Present West, Pautz, and Rumbuc

Also Present Brad Garrity, Cassandra Kohls, and Terri Vosters

White called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM. A quorum was present.

Public Appearances None

March 20, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes

Manion motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Seconded by Hietpas. Motion carried.

Financial Reports

The amended February Financial report was reviewed. Van Berkel noted a \$6,000 loss on the Community Foundation Endowment statement. Van Berkel moved to approve the amended February Financial Report. Seconded by Jakel. Motion Carried.

The March Financial report was reviewed. The Park and Pool Capital listed was confirmed by Vosters to only include 1000 Islands projects. Eggleston motioned to approve the March Financial report, seconded by Breitzman. Motion carried.

Donation Report

White noted the increase in collection bin funds. Garrity noted an increase in visitors and the Luminary Hike helped. Manion motioned to approve the Donation Report, seconded by Jakel. Motion carried.

1st Quarter Usage Report

Van Berkel expressed surprise at the number of non-Kaukauna schools that attended. Garrity noted an increase in attendance from Green Bay Area schools, attributing this to press releases that were distributed in that region.

Eggleston moved to approve the minutes; Breitzman seconded. The motion carried.

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

Hietpas reported that planning for the Art Fair is underway. The maple syrup season has concluded, with approximately 11 gallons produced, which is less than last year. The previous two years were also not good for maple syrup production, possibly due to a lack of snow. However, enough syrup was made for next year's Pancake and Porkie breakfast and to provide to the landowner who allowed us to tap their trees. Maple syrup will be available for purchase at \$8 per pint and \$12 per quart in the Nature Center gift shop, reflecting a slight increase of \$0.50 over last year. Garrity researched statewide maple syrup costs to justify the increase. Hietpas reported having sufficient help from staff and volunteers. Jakel inquired about the total number of trees tapped, and Hietpas will gather that data for next year.

The Art Fair is scheduled for Sunday, May 18, 2025. Friends of 1000 Islands members will meet next Monday to finalize details. Vendor spots are still available, and raffle donations have been collected.

Naturalist's Report

Garrity reported that River Jam is seeking volunteers. Volunteers will be paid \$12 per hour, with the money going to a non-profit of their choosing. Members were encouraged to volunteer to support the Friends of 1000 Islands. 1000 Islands will migrate to the City's website and will receive a payout for the remaining balance of the contract with our current website hosting vendor.

The sugarbush program is gaining popularity, with the XYZ senior citizen program recently attending a maple syrup program at 1000 Islands. Funds are being collected for memorial benches, with a batch order planned for May. Benches will be installed on the boardwalk. Some settling is occurring in the bridges and boardwalk, and Radtke will return to make adjustments in a few weeks. Trail signage will be purchased from the Bureau of Corrections, and staff will explore grant funding for the signage.

Snow removal options for the boardwalk will be piloted next winter, as sizable snow accumulations currently prohibit use. The Nature Center siding project has been completed by the Street Department, and Garrity commended the Street Department for their timely completion and quality of work. The project was under budget, and a new exterior sign will be installed on the building. Graffiti on the Overlook will be painted over.

Admin and Finance Sub-Committee

The Community Foundation year-end summary and Golden Investment quarterly statement were reviewed. Van Berkel noted that the Committee will need to decide how to utilize the \$13,000 balance in the Golden Investment account. Garrity suggested discussing this at a future Admin Finance sub-committee meeting.

Education Sub-Committee

A Sign-up Genius will be created for Spring-Summer Programs to recruit field trip volunteers. Goat watcher sign-ups will be available soon, with the link shared on Facebook. River View Middle School will return for water testing and crayfishing activities on Earth Day. Gonnering was called upon to assist with teaching invasive species sessions to 275 students from West De Pere over the course of two weeks. Last summer's intern, Maddie West, will return this summer. The Summer program guide has been released. The first section of goat fencing has been installed. Fox Valley Technical College students will partner with 1000 Islands to assist teaching programs during the field trip season. Pautz is working on a potential eagle nest camera for the 1000 Islands property.

Building & Grounds

The project discussion meeting has been postponed to May 5, at 9:00 AM. Manion suggested holding an Admin-Finance meeting back-to-back on the same day. Vosters mentioned that Department head Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) discussions will begin on April 24, and a 5-year calendar will be discussed.

Old Business

None

New Business

John Neumeier presented an overview of the Outagamie County-Land Conservation Department (OC-LCD) proposed practices to address washout areas and riverbank erosion, including the installation of a step pool system to address the ravine. Native seeds will be purchased to restore habitat. The project is targeted for Fall 2025-Winter 2026. The City has budgeted \$100,000 for the restoration, and the GLSNRP (Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program) grant would extend the budget to \$430,000. The City aims to provide in-kind contributions and letters of support from various Committees. Estimated agricultural runoff is 37 tons of sediment into the Lower Fox River per year. Van Berkel inquired about cost-sharing. Neumeier indicated a \$30,000 City contribution would be required: \$10,000 from US Fish and Wildlife for native seeding, \$10,000 from volunteers for in-kind labor such as spreading wood chips, and \$10,000 from OC-LCD for administration. Hietpas asked about the longevity of the practices. Garrity stated the practices are engineered to last 10 years. Eggleston asked about the grant application deadline.

Neumeier stated the deadline is the end of April, and we should know by mid-summer if the grant is accepted. Van Berkel motioned for the Naturalist to write a letter of support for the project and grant application; seconded by Hietpas. Motion carried. Manion suggested contacting the City Attorney regarding the removal of a citizen's deer hunting stand from the project area.

Vosters presented a draft of the By-Law updates, having researched the Committee's history and consulted with the former Naturalist/Director, Nowak. Ordinance 1857-2022 is outdated and is currently being reviewed by the City Attorney for language updates. Manion noted that the new staff are collaborative and plan to work closely with the City. Vosters mentioned that the Committee will serve in an advisory capacity rather than creating policies and procedures. Hietpas voiced concerns about the Committee losing its authority. Vosters proposed that the relationship between the Committee and the City should be collaborative. A draft of the updated ordinance will be presented at the next meeting, which will have an impact on the By-Laws. Hietpas suggested making the Site Manager position full-time, and Vosters recommended discussing this at the Admin-Finance Sub-Committee meeting to include it in the City's People Plan.

Good of the Center

Gonnering is seeking used pots and pans for the new mud kitchen under construction. Hietpas suggested utilizing the pans already available on site. The mud kitchen will also include a balance beam and stepping stones. Additionally, Van Berkel's concept of an indoor touch table will be explored.

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on May 15, 2025, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Hietpas moved to adjourn the April 17, 2025, Committee Meeting at 7:50 PM. Seconded by Breitzman. Motion carried.

Cassandra Kohls, Administrative Assistant