

Minutes for 1000 Islands Environmental Center Committee Meeting on Thursday, October 17, 2024

Members Present Pautz, West, White, Jakel, Breitzman, Hietpas, and Van Berkel

Not Present Eggleston, Manion

Also Present Brad Garrity, Cassandra Kohls

White called the October Committee Meeting to order at 6:38 PM. A quorum was present.

Public Appearances None

September 19, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes

Corrections were requested by Van Berkel to include Hietpas and Breitzman as present and to correct the spelling of Breitzman and Jakel. Van Berkel moved to approve the corrected minutes from September 19, 2024, seconded by Jakel. Motion carried.

Financial Reports

The Committee reviewed the September Financial Report. Breitzman inquired about a clothing purchase, which Garrity explained was for the assistant naturalist's hiking boots. The City declined to pay, so staff repaid the funds, which will return to the budget. Hietpas suggested seeking future funding from the Friends of 1000 Islands if needed.

Van Berkel asked about the 201 restricted and 101 funds and expressed a desire to discuss CD interest income with Finance. He also inquired about lobbying the County and Public School District for appropriations. West confirmed a \$15,000 contribution from KASD, and Garrity confirmed a \$10,000 contribution from Outagamie County for the 2024 budget. Garrity and Director Vosters will attend a budget meeting with the Outagamie County Finance Department on October 22, 2024.

Van Berkel moved to approve the September Financial Report, seconded by Breitzman. Motion carried.

Correspondence

The Committee reviewed the September Donation report.

Friends of 1000 Islands Report

Hietpas reported that the Friends ran a food stand at Focus on the Fox, offering hotdogs, chips, and meal deals. Leftovers soda was resold, and leftover meat was frozen for Eagle Days. A new logo and website were designed by Jill Selig, who was also appointed as the new marketing person.

Naturalist's Report

Garrity reviewed the CD maturity report. Van Berkel inquired about the October CD, which Kohls confirmed is in progress. The Golden Investment account was discussed, with Garrity stating that the City wants the funds spent and the account closed. Various possible uses for the funds were considered. Hietpas suggested expanding trails into the Hoersch property, while Garrity proposed a phased approach to upgrade the trail system beyond the Nelson Overlook, prioritizing an update to the Conservancy Zone Plan first. Sub-categories for the restricted fund will be developed to simplify donor choices, with a focus on the 1000 Islands Endowment Fund as the primary donation route. Memorial bench donations are currently on hold due to a lack of available sites to accommodate new donor requests.

The 2025 Tree Sale will resume, with orders accepted beginning in February and seedling distribution planned for late April 2025. The CIP timeline was reviewed, with Hietpas requesting a 4-wheel drive truck. The KHS Environmental Activism Club may assist with the playscape project, planned for 2028. Pautz suggested forming a sub-committee.

Education Update:

Field trips are ongoing, with staff developing programs that differ from what has been done in the past but still meet standards. Good feedback was received from teachers. Plans include reinstating the maple syrup program and building cross-grade connections. The spring program schedule is due in mid-November. Program evaluations have been challenging to collect, so staff may use the last 10 minutes of programs for evaluations. Pautz recommended eco challenges to reconnect with the community.

Focus on the Fox:

Attendance was consistent with previous years, with many volunteers. Hietpas praised the event's organization, and Garrity thanked Kohls for her efforts.

Building and Grounds:

A pre-construction meeting was held with Radtke for the boardwalk reconstruction project, planned to start in late October. Phase 1 is expected to be completed by January 15th, with a pause for Eagle Days. Phase 2 will resume afterward. Some of the existing boardwalk material can be recycled, and ash trees will be removed before installation of the new boardwalk.

Siding:

The current siding on the nature center building is warped and rotten, requiring replacement. The siding materials will be purchased before the end of the year. The Street Department will begin the siding installation project in January 2025. The estimated cost for materials is \$12-15,000, with labor costs not charged to the 1000 Islands budget.

Bathroom Updates:

The current bathroom sinks are at the same level, and the caulking around the drop-in sinks eventually failed, causing water to leak under the countertop and damage the counters. To enhance accessibility and functionality, new two-tiered, solid surface sinks will be installed in both restrooms, with the project expected to be completed by the end of the year. The lowest bid was \$7,000, which exceeds the \$5,000 budget, but the City has approved the additional cost.

Grounds:

Community Service Workers have been tackling invasive species. Japanese knotweed and barberry have been removed near the trails in the Upper Woods, with plans to cut phragmites seedheads in winter. Buckthorn was treated when cut, and damaged deer exclusion fencing was removed. The goats from Mulberry Farms did an excellent job of browsing this fall. Gonnering will cut down the remaining brush in the goat fence area.

Old Business None

New Business

Mayor Penterman has appointed Kym Carlson to the Committee, pending review and approval by the Council at their November 6 meeting.

Nomination of Committee Chair:

Van Berkel nominated Diane White for Committee Chair, seconded by Pautz. Motion carried.

Nomination of Committee Vice-Chair:

Breizman nominated Deb Jakel for Vice-Chair, seconded by White. Motion carried.

Good of the Center

Volunteer Lisa Miller has been covering the front office every other Friday morning. Additionally, both Breizman and Miller have been periodically helping with Saturday office coverage during the staff transition. Regular staff will take over Saturday coverage again in November.

Gonnering has installed aquarium stand panels that attach with magnets, allowing for easy access to replenish water and carry out mechanical repairs.

Social media feedback has been positive, with Garrity noting that Kohls has been effectively highlighting programs, events, and field trips.

Pautz gave an update on the pending grant application, and Garrity offered to accompany Pautz to the meeting with the Community Foundation.

Next Committee Meeting

The next Committee Meeting will be on November 21, 2024, at 6:30 PM in the Nature Center building.

Adjournment

There being no further business, White moved to adjourn the October 17, 2024, Committee Meeting at 7:59 PM. Seconded by Hietpas. Motion carried.

Cassandra Kohls, Administrative Assistant