

Minutes of the Meeting: January 5, 2023

Board members present: Brian Wetcher, JoAnn York-Gilmore, Kit Gerwels, Tabb Stringer, Nathan Schwarck

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Guests: Ellie Kravets, Steve Anderson, Dan Senour, Tom Glade, Marlene Finley

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:00PM

Minutes: December minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Board Chair Discussion:

Kit is the current Board Chair and Brian expressed support for the continuity of leadership and for Kit to continue. Kit agreed, all were in support.

Public Comments:

Marlene asked about the Forest Management Plan and where it was in the approval process. Bob stated that it was completed and approved in November of 2021 and is available online for public viewing.

Marlene also asked for an update on the Little Cranberry boat launch. Bob shared that Jonn Lunsford and Travis Anderson are working on this project, and that it is currently just a concept. GeoEngineers is currently working on a biologist's report. After it is received, the permitting and public comment process will be put together. This project was started by a citizen with a request and a donation in order to improve the existing boat launch and focus the use area in order to limit the destruction of the shoreline. There will be many opportunities for public comment as the process moves forward. Steve Anderson suggested that the ACFL maps should have a number or letter for each of the bridges in the forest lands. He feels this will help when reporting issues to staff.

ACFL Plan Update:

The current plan was approved in November of 2021. The hope is to have it updated every 5 years and it is mandated to be updated every 10 years. In starting the process now, the goal is to have it done and fully approved by November 2026. On this timeline, the suggested plan would be through the Board and initial public comment by November of 2025, to the Planning Commission by December of 2025, and to Council by May of 2026.

Marlene requested that there be a climate and habitat program as part of the new plan. Ellie shared that the Friends of the Forest are doing just that in cooperation with Transition Fidalgo. (see Ellie's report below)

It was decided that the Board will begin reviewing the current plan and at the next several meetings, start discussion on any changes and updates.

ACFL Dams Update:

No update at this time.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Ellie was in attendance to give the update for Asa. The Friends have lots going in the new year-hikes for all ages, a naturalist club meeting in March and April, summer camps and field trips with the Boys and Girls club.

Ellie also spoke about her monitoring project working with Transition Fidalgo and the difference between the two approaches. Transition Fidalgo is very science and skills based with lots of training and a long-term commitment. The Friends' project is aimed to be less intense and allow for access to the general public.

The program began with wetland and water quality observations and testing at 3 sites each month. This has proven to be very ambitious with volunteers and testing onsite. Ellie is proposing that the testing be done every 4-6 months and the macroinvertebrates study be done at the Depot instead of onsite. Bob will speak with Jonn about this and bring it back to the Board.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting, sharing the following:

The Trestle fundraiser has already raised \$165,000 to repair the Trestle. All permits are complete with the exception of the additional piling removal. There is a citizen donor who has stepped up to cover the cost of lights and cameras out on the Trestle.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

There is no equestrian representative replacement yet.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his written report.

Bob had nothing to add to his written report.

A question was asked about the A Avenue crosswalk. This is a Public Works project creating a safety corridor on A Avenue, 37th Street and D Avenue. This crossing will have a crosswalk and flashing lights.

Other Business:

Steve Anderson asked about the Shannon Point area and access to Washington Park. He stated that it was a railroad right of way in the past and wanted to know if there were any plans to develop this area. At this point, there are no plans to develop that area.

Adjourn at 7:35pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan