

Minutes of the Meeting: March 3, 2023

Board members present: Brian Wetcher, JoAnn York-Gilmore, Tabb Stringer

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Jonn Lunsford, Darby Jordan

Guests: Asa Dean, Mark, Jennifer

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:03PM

Minutes: February minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

None

2023 Budget Discussion:

Jonn was in attendance to give a budget overview. There are several funds under the Parks & recreation Department, including the ACFL. This fund receives revenue from the quarry lease and the Conservation Easement Project interest. These funds are used for the maintenance of the forest lands, to purchase additional land, support the partnership with Transition Fidalgo and the Friends of the Forest, and other ACFL expenses and projects.

Currently the City is funding other Public Works capital projects so Parks needed to use reserve funds to cover staffing costs. This will most likely happen in 2024 as well. This means major parks projects are on hold unless they are donor funded, such as the Trestle and Skate Park.

Discussion ensued about how projects are selected. Jonn suggested that the Forest Board discuss their priorities and what projects they would like to see happen.

Discussion continued about the history of the A Avenue dumpsite.

Jonn shared that the Parks Foundation has received a donation for the Little Cranberry dock and shoreline improvement. The first step is to get a report from a biologist and then there will be an opportunity for public comment. The goal of this project is to protect the shoreline and contain the users to certain areas. Jennifer expressed concern that there is not a permanent restroom in the area.

Mark asked about how the Parks department and the City are managing the forest lands and the possibility of fire. Jonn informed the group that the fire department just acquired a brush truck, the parks staff is going through training to be of assistance in the event of a fire, and the city is working with neighbors to minimize the risk of homes near the forest lands.

ACFL Plan Update:

Bob presented the corrected schedule of study sessions for the forest plan update. Dividing up the plan in this way will allow time to get it completely reviewed by the Board and provide time for public comment. It will also give

time for other business that the Board needs to discuss at regular meetings. A vote was taken with all three Board members present voting yes (Tabb, Brian & JoAnn).

ACFL Dams Update:

No update

Friends of the Forest Update:

Asa was in attendance to give the Friends of the Forest update. The half-day day camp last month was a success and they will be offering a day camp for middle schoolers during Spring Break. They have started a Naturalist Club allowing for deeper study on various subjects in the forest lands. Earth Day will bring a “Bio-Blitz” utilizing the app called “inaturalist”. The goal is to get more people outside on their own schedule and not all in the same place. The annual meeting will be next Thursday at the Depot, and a joint work party will be this weekend, the 4th at Heart Lake.

The MOU between the City and the Friends is in draft form, copies were provided to the Board for review.

Parks Commission Report:

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

The conversation about the budget was also had with the Parks Commission. These commissioners have also been asked to come up with a list of priorities and projects they want to see completed.

The Trestle is back open and is seeing lots of happy users.

ACFL Trail Committee Report:

Bob reported that he and Steve had met with mountain climber Jim who is quite involved with the climbing community. As a whole, the group is good with self-policing and ensuring safety of their groups and equipment. The annual Dallas Klope clean up will be on April 15th.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his written report. He did share the new flyer for plant identification of Pipsissewa vs Spurge Laurel. This will be posted at various trailheads.

Bob had nothing to add to his written report.

Other Business:

None

Adjourn at 7:35pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan