

Brooks Nature Area

November 17, 2022

Members present: Recreation Parks and Recreation Superintendent, Justin Miller, Dave Phaner, Patty Hoch-Melluish, Brian Huggett, Ben Lark, Erin Skidmore and Janet Schoenmeyer

Members absent: Margaret Steele

Technical Advisors present: Jim Coury and Don Jewett

- A. The minutes of the July 14, 2022 regular meeting were approved.
- B. The November 17, 2022 agenda was approved.
- C. Visitor: Boy Scout Dominic Dent attended the meeting.
- D. Dave Phaner introduced and welcomed new board member, Erin Skidmore.
Dave stated that BNA monies as of November 17, 2022: \$40,436,55.
Brian Huggett displayed maps of BNA property highlighting different aspects. He welcomed board members to take any version and add any feature such as the benches, parking lot and observation deck. He noted that the wetland was put on the map, but that area is not officially part of BNA. Justin Miller will email City Manager Derek Perry to ask what action should be taken to make the wetland officially part of BNA.
- E. Discussion
 - a) Boy Scout Dominic Dent introduced himself and explained his project for an Eagle Scout badge. Dominic would like to build a kiosk with invasive plant information with a brush on the bottom so visitors can wipe off their shoes to eliminate spreading invasive plant seeds. He will work with an organization in the spring to make sure the described invasives are growing in BNA. His goal is to complete the project in the spring of 2023. Board members were enthused and agreed to the project. Ben Lark suggested a QR code on the kiosk.
 - b) Don Jewett stated there is a total of 35 bluebird houses in BNA, He added that the number of bluebird nests has doubled this year. There are now four sets of pairs of birdhouses in close proximity. Don brought up the problem of difficulty with access to the martin house. He hopes to work something out with Darwin Gwin in late spring to clear a path.
- F. The summer projects of keeping trails open, removing invasives and installing bat houses will need to continue to be worked on.
Patty Hoch-Melluish proposed closing the Woodland Loop. Many of the ash trees are dying and prone to falling. The trails are almost completely covered up with plant material. Discussion ensued about moving the road next to the woods out a few yards. One existing bench would have to be moved. Roger and Diane Graves would need to be informed of the move, since they donated the bench. A few signs identifying the Woodland Loop would need to be taken down. All agreed on the proposal.
- G. Patty gave an update on the Eckford Twp. County Park Millage Fund Survey. The survey will be sent to Stuart Lake residents in January, 2023. Patty spoke of some of the items or work that the BNA would benefit from, if the monies were awarded to the park. Justin Miller stated that one of the items; trail cam counters are very inexpensive. Ben Lark added that they need to be placed out of reach from vandals.
- H. Dave said that Aaron Couch's Eagle Scout project was completed. Aaron replaced parts of six existing benches with composite material. Janet Schoenmeyer wrote Aaron a thank you note in August.
- I. Ben Lark discussed the need to continue planned burns in the spring. Ben plans to talk to City Manager Derek Perry and ask him if he will speak to the Marshall Fire Chief for cooperation in this endeavor. On another subject, Ben presented Jim Coury with a gift of mud boots for all of Jim's conservation work throughout the years on behalf of the BNA.
- J. Dave announced the BNA closed on November 15 and will be closed for two weeks due to firearm hunting season.
- K. Adjourn. Submitted by Janet Schoenmeyer