

South Woods Park Association
Membership Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2019

The Annual Fall Banquet and Membership Meeting was held on October 24, 2019, at J's The Other Side restaurant in Ripon. The evening included dinner, a presentation by Lisa Reas of the Green Lake Sanitary District (GLSD) and Melanie Kalmerton of the Fond du Lac County Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD), and a membership meeting. The dinner and presentation were enjoyed by 33 SWPA members and community members.

The membership meeting was called to order by President Rich Diemer. The Secretary's minutes from the May 4, 2019, Membership Meeting were distributed to everyone present; the minutes were approved with no additions or corrections.

The Treasurer's report was distributed to attendees for review and read by Nathan Nye. Cash on hand in the BMO Harris checking account was \$6,591.11 plus two CDs at BMO in the amount of \$13,000 for total assets of \$19,591.11. Recent large expenditures included \$850 for general liability and directors and officers insurance (cost covered by donations) and a payment of \$1,000 to the Ripon Education Foundation for the Bob Rosenberg South Woods Education Grant (cost covered by memorial donations). The Treasurer's Report was approved by the membership.

OLD BUSINESS:

Bob Rosenberg South Woods Education Grant: Today was the first visit to the Woods for the Barlow Park Elementary first graders. They will be visiting the Woods two more times and will then act as ambassadors at the Spring Wildflower Walk.

Management of the Woods: The Board is exploring the possibility of adding a trail to the south parcel east of Crystal Creek. Marjorie Kenyon-Cler and Joel Cler completed maintenance work along the trails in preparation for the visit by the first graders. Dan Johnson worked with the Boy Scouts to perform maintenance work along the entrance trail.

Invasive Species: Legacy Land Restoration is spraying in the Woods this fall; next spring will be the last planned spraying event. Volunteers have worked this fall to remove buckthorn. Lumen Charter High School and the Boy Scouts have assisted with invasive species removal efforts. The next grant application is due April 1.

Erosion Concerns: Melanie Kalmerton and Lisa Reas gave presentations prior to the meeting regarding the efforts of the Fond du Lac County LWCD and GLSD to address erosion concerns resulting from runoff on the west side of South Woods. This is a joint endeavor between the SWPA, the GLSD, Allan Brooks (neighboring landowner), and the Fond du Lac County LWCD. Construction was recently completed and the exposed soil will be seeded this fall or next spring.

The entry trail was relocated to higher ground adjacent to the existing trail and water bars along this trail were maintained.

South Woods Guide/Booklet: Several booklets have been published throughout the history of the SWPA, and Skip Wittler has expressed interest in working on an updated version. He is currently completing a plant survey in South Woods, and this could be interesting information to include in a publication. Tami Conlon said she may have a template Skip can use.

Membership: The SWPA currently has 55 lifetime members, 25 annual members, and 38 lapsed members. We would like to increase community support through programs like the Bob Rosenberg South Woods Education Grant. Rich Diemer is working on a letter campaign for active and lapsed members.

SWPA Organizational Documentation: The SWPA became a 501(c)(3) organization in 1985, and we are currently in compliance. Rich Diemer and Nathan Nye are working together to make sure we are in compliance with State requirements.

NEW BUSINESS:

Allan Brooks Land Sale: Allan Brooks has offered to sell the SWPA the 1-acre parcel that abuts the Woods and that we currently lease for \$1 per year. Allan said he would offer this parcel to the SWPA at the cost he purchased it for in the early 1980's, with the SWPA covering all costs associated with the sale (legal, surveyor, etc.). Membership discussion followed, with several members recommending that we try to do as much of the paperwork as we can ourselves to minimize expenses. A motion was made to accept the land purchase offer presented by Allan Brooks; this motion was seconded and passed.

Membership Dues: Kristen Rasmussen is finishing the SWPA website which will allow members to pay dues online and allow for anyone to make online donations. It makes sense to evaluate the current dues structure and make any changes prior to the website going online. Discussion followed focusing on the elimination of lifetime dues while honoring existing lifetime memberships, adding family memberships, and completing fundraising in lieu of having annual dues. A motion was made to discontinue the lifetime membership while honoring existing lifetime memberships, to keep annual dues at \$15 per person, and to offer a family membership for \$25 per year. The family membership would include two votes per family. This motion was seconded and passed.

Insurance: The SWPA Board spent a considerable amount of time this past year evaluating the need for insurance as well as the various options that are available. The SWPA carried general liability coverage up until 2016. At that time it was decided that insurance was not needed because the WI Recreational Immunity Statute would cover recreational uses on the property. Since then it was recognized that while the Statute covers liability associated with recreation activities, it does not cover the cost of defending ourselves.

Attorney Tom Moniz attended one of our Board meetings this past year and emphasized that the Statute does not cover the costs of defending ourselves; he said it was good practice to have general liability and directors and officers insurance. In addition, he said not all activities in the Woods may be considered recreational (examples discussed were invasive species work and activities in the parking lot).

Drew Diedrich of Diedrich insurance attended a Board meeting this past year and gave an overview of the various policies that are available. At this Board meeting a decision was made to move forward with purchasing insurance for the upcoming year. Rich Diemer solicited quotes from four agencies, and Diedrich Insurance seemed to be the best option. The total cost for liability and directors and officers insurance was \$850; this was paid for through donations specifically earmarked for insurance. The coverage will extend through next August.

Following Rich's update regarding insurance there was discussion amongst the members. It should be noted that the Board was not unanimous in this decision, and several Board members question the need for the coverage in consideration of the overall cost to the organization and the level of risk involved. Moreover, there is still some concern as to what we actually are getting in exchange for the money we are paying. In addition, there was discussion regarding whether the Board has the approval of the membership to make insurance decisions. Todd Berens provided an example of a lawsuit that was waged against another conservation-related organization he is involved with that involved an injury. Audrey

Conant made a motion that the Board get the insurance that is needed, find a way to pay for it, and make the decision for the following year in spring. This motion was seconded by Todd Berens and passed.

Elections:

- Secretary: A motion was made to nominate Marjorie Kenyon-Cler for the position of secretary. This motion was seconded and passed. There were no other nominations for this position and Marjorie was elected as secretary.
- Treasurer: A motion was made to nominate Nathan Nye for the position of treasurer. This motion was seconded and passed. There were no other nominations for this position and Nathan was elected as treasurer.
- Director – 2 Year Term: A motion was made to nominate Ann Nye for the position of director. This motion was seconded and passed. There were no other nominations for this position and Ann was elected as director.
- Director – 1 Year Term (Remainder of Marjorie's Term): A motion as made to nominate Ben Grady for the position of director. This motion was seconded and passed. There were no other nominations for this position and Ben was elected as director.

Upcoming Events:

- Invasive Species Removal Efforts – This Saturday at 7 am
- Spring Wildflower Walk – May 2, 2020; Time TBD

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Nye

11/18/2019