

Lakeshore Nature Preserve Committee
Minutes Oct. 26, 2010
APPROVED

Present

Bill Barker, Gary Brown, Katrina Forest, Kennedy Gilchrist, Sisi He, Rhonda James, Melissa Jeddeloh, Kevin McSweeney, Anne Readell, Laura Shere, Sissel Schroeder, Janine Veto, Susan Will-Wolf

Also present

Cathie Bruner (Preserve), Roma Lenehan (Friends), John Magnuson (Friends), Dave Mickelson (Friends), Marcia Schmidt (Friends), Bryn Sriver (Preserve)

Minutes

The minutes from the September 28 Meeting were approved with a few small grammatical changes.

Public comment

Kennedy Gilchrist announced the guest speakers for upcoming Friends Board Meetings: Jack Kloppenburg on the GreenHouse Residential Learning Community, Daniel Einstein on Preserve mounds, Gary Brown on water erosion issues. For more information email Gilchrist at: kwgilchr@wisc.edu

Kevin McSweeney announced the Nov. 1, 2010 launch of the UW-Madison Arboretum's interactive on-line map. He thanked the Preserve for pioneering the concept. To visit the Arboretum's new map go to: <http://uwarboretum.org/map/>

Gary Brown announced the first Preserve Stakeholders Meeting to be held tonight, October 26, 2010 from 5-6:30 PM in Room 132 in the WARF building. He encouraged all Preserve Committee members to attend. Gilchrist said the meeting had been well advertised including its admission in *Wisconsin Week*.

Picnic Point project update

Brown provided the following update:

The project area includes the east end of Picnic Point and the fire circle. A major donation of \$750,000 will be used to renovate the fire circle, control erosion and invasive species (especially down to the lake because you can't currently see the lake), and improve the overall area for gatherings.

Brown and Alan Fish met with the donors many times to talk about details; they met again last month. They are currently looking at "Option H."

A couple public meetings have already been held on the proposed project; the next public meeting will be held on Nov. 9th. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Brown said he'd like to have a motion on the concept plan at the November committee meeting to get clear direction from the committee. After that construction drawings will be ordered. The bid will probably go out in late spring/early summer.

Brown defined the problem at the point as severe run-off and compacted soils caused by high use. One goal of the project is to keep site use concentrated in one area to prevent users from spreading out over the entire point. Brown stressed that the project is designed to accommodate the current traffic at the point, not increased traffic.

The fire circle will be similar to the Gard circle [at Muir Knoll] but larger. It will be 30 feet in diameter and would accommodate 80 people. They chose 80 people because that's 2 "houses" from UW Housing. About 45 people will be able to sit around the circle. The other 5 fire sites on Picnic Point are smaller and can't handle as many people.

In previous meetings Brown heard people wanted the circle pushed off to the side. He said for this option they actually sunk it into the ground a little bit. Since it's "snuggled into the hillside" it fits well with the space and provides much more open views of the lake.

The trail splits so that runners can go out and back without interfering with the gatherers. The trail will be constructed of packed limestone screenings just like the current path. The turf grass that's out there will go away with the new design and it will be replaced by a more native landscape.

The design also features a hardened walk with naturalized stone steps that go down to the water. At the water there will be a small sea wall where people will be able to sit on the large stones that are already there. There will be another small accessible seating area for looking out over the lake for those who can't get down stairs.

The lake safety pole will be moved back into the woods on the north side of the point. The lake safety pole uses a red light to warn boaters of approaching storms. The light needs to be above the tree tops.

Discussion followed:

Will-Wolf wanted to know how the donors felt about the lower impact design that was just presented. Brown told her that in general the donors are comfortable with the design; they are talking about small details now like the plaque dedication.

Gilchrist noted that the bike/ped paths looked narrower which may encourage bikers to get off their bikes at the Point. Brown added that bikes could still turn around at the point; there are no bike racks.

Magnuson predicted that people will still want to walk down to the water. Brown said the reason people try to get down there now is because there is no view. He hoped that with the right amount of removals and landscaping they could keep people from creating paths down to the water.

Forest asked if the project would try to replace soil that has eroded over the last 20 years or so. Brown said there will be no dredging or replacing soil, just preventing further erosion.

Will-Wolf asked if we have money for maintenance. Brown answered that 20% of the

donation will be set aside for the stewardship fund.

Magnuson asked how far the restoration would extend from the tip of the point. Brown said the project would just deal with the opening at the point, but noted that some restoration is already happening between the point and beach.

Magnuson also asked the question, “if there’s no dense vegetation for birds will this be an issue?” Will-Wolf said the tip of the point is windy and not as desirable for bird habitat anyway so if we keep the restoration to the tip it’s ok.

Mickelson thought there was talk of having the biggest circle just inside the gate and the smallest at the tip so that big groups wouldn’t have to go all the way out to the tip of the point. Brown said there are 6 scattered fire sites along the point and acknowledge that in the master plan the biggest circle is just inside the gate for large groups and classes. He argued that the end of the point is the destination for most people and that people will still go there even if they do not develop the space. He added, “We want to develop it as best as we can and as naturally as we can.”

Magnuson and Will-Wolf congratulated Brown for his good work with the donors, by taking them away from the high profile design they initially wanted.

Forest asked who the donors were. Brown reported that it was the Ebling family who has already donated a great deal to the University.

Later in the meeting McSweeney asked what will happen with any coarse woody debris that’s removed as part of restoration work. Bruner said we usually compost this material or use it to line trails; invasives get ground up and put back on trails. McSweeney asked if we had explored putting that material into the lake to create habitat. Magnuson said limnologists call this “coarse woody habitat” and buckthorn is too small and won’t stay put. McSweeney said the Arboretum got a permit from the DNR to fell overhanging trees into a lake for habitat at Finnerud Forest. Brown said shoreline cuttings at Picnic Point will probably go into the water. Brown assured Will-Wolf that the DNR be consulted.

Upcoming budget process and schedule

Barker said the stakeholder meeting tonight will give the public a chance to weigh in on where our priorities should be next year.

Brown introduced the project proposal process. If someone wants to initiate a project they can find the project proposal form on the Preserve website. They must submit the completed form by Dec. 1 for it to be considered in the budget negotiation process. He said projects will be reviewed in the following order: what was planned but didn’t get done this year; new initiatives by staff; new initiatives by Friends, public, staff, students. The committee will prioritize the proposals.

The committee will see the first draft of the budget at the Nov. 30 meeting. Then they’ll have to weave in proposals that are submitted by the Dec. 1 deadline. The second draft of the budget will be presented at the second stakeholder meeting to be held in late January.

Update on the Picnic Point Bike Issue

Barker announced that he is going to meet with, Jonathan Patz, the chair of the UW bike/ped committee on Thursday Oct.. 28th. He assured the Preserve committee that the bike/ped committee would have no power over the decision on whether or not to allow bikes on Picnic Point; he wants to collaborate with them on the conversation for a transparent process.

Discussion followed:

Suzy said she thinks there's a mismatch in the current policy that bans bikes from the paved paths and shunts them to the gravel path where they can cause more erosion problems. Barker countered that the tip of the point is a major destination for bikers. Gilchrist pointed out that bicycles are technically "vehicles" and maybe we should require bells on bikes. Readel asked for clarification on whether or not we've decided to pursue the bike issue. Barker said no decision has been made yet on whether or not we want to pursue it.

Priorities for Vegetation Management

Will-Wolf presented the revised draft report on Preserve priorities for vegetation management, *DRAFT: Priorities for Near Term Vegetation Management in Lakeshore Preserve*. She explained that the planning and implementation subcommittee added the words "near term" [as opposed to "long-term"] to the title. They also added the Class of 1918 Marsh to the prioritized list in response to comments at the last meeting. They also created an alphabetized list of places in the Preserve that the subcommittee considered for prioritization.

Barker asked where the subcommittee addressed things other than plants. He stated that he doesn't like botano-centric restoration that leaves out insects and other animals. Will-Wolf determined that none of the criteria specifically mentioned plants. Magnuson asked if we could change "vegetation management" to "ecological management". Will-Wolf agreed to this change. Forest moved to accept the document with the suggested change; the motion was seconded by Readel. The motion passed.

Barker thanked the subcommittee for their effort; he recognized that they put a lot of work into it. Will-Wolf hoped that the approved list of priorities would be forwarded to the development subcommittee to seek funding. She noted that we have a number of projects in the \$30,000-50,000 range that we can point donors to. Brown agreed that we don't have the resources to start something new without new money.

Will-Wolf moved to adjourn the meeting; Forest seconded the motion to adjourn.

Adjournment

Submitted by Bryn Sriver