

MINUTES

Ashland County Forestry and Recreation Committee

Ashland County Forestry Dept. Office
304 West Michigan St., Butternut, WI 54514

August 4, 2016

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Gary Mertig at 8:00 AM.

Members present: Gary Mertig, Kathy Schutte, Pat Daoust, Marty Vitek and Carl Kubley.

Others present: County Board Chairperson-Pete Russo, ACSA-Bill Chandler, DNR Liaison-Tom Piikkila, DNR Team Leader-Eric Serrine, Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce-Mary McPhetridge, ATV Trail Midgets-Barb Wegner, Forest Adm.-Chris Hoffman, Assist. Forest Adm.-Matt Schultz, Forester-Jerome Wotachek, Secretary-Marion Pohl, Don Achterberg and Al Schoch.

The minutes of the July 7, 2016 meeting were approved with a motion by Carl Kubley, second by Pat Daoust. Motion carried.

Barb Wegner, a member of the Butternut Trail Midgets ATV Club, came to the meeting to update the progress the Club has made by getting connecting routes from Butternut to routes in Price County. Barb said because they are getting the routes connected, Price County included the Butternut area routes on the Price County ATV map. Barb gave the Forestry Office some of the ATV maps. Barb said she would like to see a route through Ashland County and would like some of County F open to connect to Mercer.

Mary commented that paper maps should be made also, as there are constant changes with the ATV routes in townships. Bill also commented that if there was a permanent ATV trail through Ashland County, he would put that on the snowmobile map.

Landowner, Don Achterberg came to the meeting to discuss access to his 120 acres in Sec 29 & 32, T43N-R1W. His land borders the newly acquired land of Ashland County.

Mr. Achterberg explained that he was building a road on his property to access a bear bait. During construction a DNR Conservation Warden stopped the project because the road was being constructed through a wetland and Mr. Achterberg did not have the necessary permits to construct such a road. Gary told Mr. Achterberg that this was not a County issue and needed to be discussed with the DNR. Mr. Achterberg then asked if he could use his ATV on an Ashland County Forest logging trail that is closed to motor vehicles to access his land and bear bait. Gary said Mr. Achterberg and Chris would need to discuss the access. Gary also said the Committee cannot make a decision either, because this subject is not on the agenda. Chris commented this would set a bad example letting Mr. Achterberg use that piece of land using his ATV. Chris wants to have this access situation on September's meeting agenda. Kathy S. said she would like to have a map to see what exactly everyone is talking about.

Kathy S. asked for a moment of silence for Elmer Lippo, Town of Marengo supervisor who died in the July 11, 2016 storm. A moment of silence was honored by all.

Chris discussed the Butternut Area Park Association's request of \$4,000 for a fence project. At last month's Committee meeting the request was tabled as the example used in the grant application read that the BAPA should only get \$2,000, but the Committee had given another association the full amount they asked for recently and thought the grant language should be changed first and approved, and then approve BAPA's request. This will be on the August meeting agenda. Chris said in the grant application, there is a line that states "the Committee reserves the right to determine the size of any grant...". Chris said the Committee could have given BAPA the \$4,000 last month according to that statement. A motion by Gary Mertig, second by Pat Daoust to give the Butternut Area Park Association \$4,000 towards their fence project.

Yays - Gary Mertig, Pat Daoust, Marty Vitek.

Nays - Kathy Schutte, Carl Kubley.

Motion carried. Kathy said she was not opposed to the project, just the amount of money given towards the project.

Next, Chris discussed the changes to the grant application. Chris read the changes.

- 1) The grant applications will have to be received by March 31st.
- 2) The grants received will be reviewed.
- 3) The grants will be awarded in May.

Chris said he would send a letter out to the organizations that have received a grant in the last 5 years to advise them of the grant application changes. Chris is also proposing a cap limit and creating a non-lapsing account for the budget line item Recreation Account 23.51120.5834 for money left over each year. The money over the cap would go to the general fund. Kathy said she knew of one organization that wanted to apply for the grant, but found the grant too hard to understand. Kathy said she will have this organization apply for a grant in 2017. After some discussion, a motion was made by Marty Vitek, seconded by Carl Kubley to approve the new language of the grant application for money from the Recreation account.

Yays - Gary Mertig, Carl Kubley, Marty Vitek, Pat Daoust.

Nays - Kathy Schutte.

Motion carried.

Chris asked for approval for the resolution to create a non-lapsing account of the budget line item Recreation account - 23.51120.5834 for money left over each year. The non-lapsing amount of monies to be carried in the account shall not exceed \$21,000. Should the fund amount exceed \$21,000, the excess money would be returned to the General Fund on an annual basis. A motion was made by Pat Daoust, seconded by Marty Vitek to approve the resolution to create a non-lapsing Recreation Account and to present the resolution at the next county board meeting. Motion carried.

Snowmobile/ATV Trail Business - Bill C. only trails south of Mellen are okay. The trails north of Mellen are gone and so are the bridges due to the rain storm of July 11, 2016. Chris said FEMA has come to the area and has been assessing the damages. Chris explained Federal money would cover 75% of costs, the State would cover 12½% and the County would be left with 12½% to pay. Chris and Bill will also be assessing the damages on the trails and locating bridges washed away to see if they are repairable or not. Marty V. suggested the National Guard may be able to use a helicopter to get to bridges that are inaccessible. Bill said he would look into that.

DNR Liaison's report - Tom P. reported that the Fish biologist has shocked area streams and lakes to do fish surveys. Tom said he has been cruising timber, the DNR dozer has been doing work on the county forest and the DNR has helped with the clean-up after the storm.

Forest Adm.'s report - Chris discussed High Conservation Value which means a rare and unique timber stand. There is one stand of hemlock near Mellen that is designated as HCV. Chris said the county does not want that designation in their 15-Year Plan as there are second party values in place. Chris is presenting a resolution to make that amendment to the 15-Year Plan (to not include the High Conservation Value stand). A motion was made by Pat Daoust, second by Marty Vitek to approve the resolution and present the resolution at the next county board meeting. Motion carried.

Chris said there is little logging activity due to wet conditions in the woods and the mills are full.

The vouchers were approved and signed with a motion by Kathy Schutte, seconded by Carl Kubley. Motion carried.

The next Forestry and Recreation Committee meeting will be Thursday, September 1, 2016, 8:00 AM, Forestry Dept. Office, Butternut, WI.

The meeting was adjourned with a motion by Marty Vitek, seconded by Carl Kubley. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:23 AM.

Submitted by
Marion Pohl