



Groen Visioning Committee

Tuesday, October 6, 2015 – 10:00 a.m.
Charlton Township Hall
10775 Rowan Avenue
Johannesburg, MI 49751

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Burt called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present —John Burt, Matt Nowak, Butch Fleming, Gina Marchio, Kevin Kennedy, Roger Latuszek

Others Present —Robert Fleury, Willard Brown

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Nowak, seconded by Marchio, to accept the minutes of May 2, 2013. Motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Updates/Reports

1. Preserve Update

Burt gave an update on the annual Groen Trust Fund Board meeting. Prior to the next phase of the project, several items must be finished including a funding agreement, an updated conservation easement, and an agreement concerning the staff that will become County employees.

Burt detailed Mrs. Groen's wishes including having the main house be a museum; the hilltop house being a classroom and check-in building; and the carriage barn being used to display equipment used by Mr. Groen. The Trust Fund Board indicated that Mr. Groen had made comments about not wanting to fix up the Echo Valley Lodge building. Nowak and other members of the Visioning Committee indicated that while the lodge isn't on the historic register, it is of locally historical significance. Many people visit the Preserve to see the lodge, especially local that had frequented the lodge or gone on school picnics there in the past. They would like the Trust Fund Board to reconsider their position on the building. Burt indicated that the County's Building Official visited the building a few years ago and said that the stonework and roof supports were in good shape. Burt will have the Building Official come there again to give an updated opinion.

B. Planning Topics

1. Facility Planning

The Committee discussed the potential need to expand existing parking by the barn area to accommodate greater usage.

Burt will have the Building Official visit the facilities to help with planning for ADA accessibility.

There is an ability to build new facilities if needed in the future.

2. Future Activities

The Committee discussed various activities they would like to see, including:

- Don Sklarczyk is storing the Township's old 1948 firetruck. Nowak hopes a space can be found for it at the Preserve.
- Nowak discussed Wi-Fi grants with the County Library Director. There may be grants to put in Wi-Fi at the property which would most importantly help with safety by allowing people to generate a map of their current location, and to allow new used like QR Codes which allows people to scan symbols at information signs to pull up information on a variety of topics.
- The Library has indicated they would be willing to station books on nature at the Preserve. People could check out the books and return on site or to any library return box.
- The Committee will need to create an updated plan for trail usage.
- Nowak thanked Marchio for putting on the various classes at the Preserve. Latuszek informed the Committee that the Trust Fund Board will allow up to 6 classes per year to be held at the hilltop house prior to the next phase. Latuszek asked Marchio to look at buying tables and chairs for the building. She will get a price for Burt to build into the budget. We will have to find out the maximum capacity from the Building Official.
- The Committee would like to move forward soon with tractor rides for seniors and fall tours. They would also like sleigh rides in the winter. Latuszek indicated that Ed Cummings is looking for an appropriate wagon.
- The Committee would like the Parks and Recreation Department to take over doing the geocaching.
- The Township would like to eventually have sidewalks installed from downtown to the Groen gate so school kids could easily walk to the Preserve.
- Latuszek is working on costs to put in food plots.

3. Set Tour Date

The Committee discussed taking a tour of the facilities either later this fall or in the spring.

Burt adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.