



ACME TOWNSHIP
YUBA CREEK NATURAL AREA STEERING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, May 26, 2004, 5:30 p.m.
Acme Township Hall
6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg MI 49690

Call Meeting to Order at 5:40 p.m.

Members present: D. Morrison (Chair), B. Carstens, V. Guntzviller, S. Malaski, R. Reinhold
Members excused: John Heiam, Jason Hullman, Matt McDonough
Staff present: S. Corpe, Recording Secretary

Reinhold stated that John Pulcifer and Dan Hanna have resigned from the steering committee.

- A. Discuss cost/placement of information kiosks:** Morrison had a picture of a 3-sided, roofed kiosk that costs \$1,200 installed. He had another picture of a 2-sided kiosk as well. Guntzviller like the idea of the 3-sided kiosk; one side could be used for historical information, one for pictures and information about bird mammal and vegetative species resident in the group and one for park rules. Morrison stated that kids love to have check-off sheets to take with them to try to find the various items. Donor names could also be placed there as well. Reinhold suggested that the steering committee also be acknowledged. A set of webpages was also discussed. The group decided that 1 2-sided kiosk (\$750.00 installed) for Bennett Road and 2 3-sided kiosks for Yuba Road and the US 31 Overlook would be good.
- B. Discuss removal of blacktop at Yuba Road access point:** Reinhold called MDOT and talked to Rise Rasch, manager of the Traverse City Service Center. Rieth-Riley is the contractor repaving US 31; their chief estimator is Tom. Reinhold proposed the idea that we could exchange a place to store their equipment on township property in exchange for removal of the asphalt at the Yuba Road natural area entrance, and Tom was interested enough to go take a look at the site. Unfortunately, he says he is unable to remove the surface for us because the brine pits nearby would make it too dangerous to maneuver the large equipment they have out here. However, if we can get the asphalt removed, they will take it away at no charge to us. If they brought their smaller equipment to remove the asphalt it would cost somewhere under \$12,000. Guntzviller spoke with someone else who thought it could be done for \$5,000 or so. Morrison suggested seeking a bid from SRW.

Reinhold has been thinking about the area from which the autumn olive was recently removed, and about past conversations about the value of grasslands in the natural area. He also imagines that before that area was a grasslands it was an orchard, and before that, something else. It raised the question in his mind: what kind of "natural" are we seeking to preserve? He spoke to Matt McDonough at the Regional Land Conservancy about this question, and Matt expressed the idea that much of the land characteristics we current see are actually an intermediate stage between the impact people have had on the land and the land returning to it's pre-humanity state. Reinhold thinks that since the land is in flux, it would perhaps be a good idea to come up with a mission statement that describes the original goal for people managing the area generations well into the future. A good statement could be distilled into about half a page.

Carstens would like to see a biodiverse ecosystem established. If allowed to return totally to nature, he believes that we would have endless forestlands. But a variety of habitats allows for a variety of different species to thrive. In some ways he laments the loss of the beaver dam because of lost opportunities for some bird species. He has read that increased

biodiversity allows an area to recover better from calamity. Reinhold agrees that the maximum level of biodiversity that will provide the maximum benefit to people is ideal. Carstens feels that there's a pretty good balance present on site right now. The entire group feels it shares a vision, and that it's important to get that vision down in black and white so that those coming after will understand and continue in the same direction. Reinhold will get some samples from McDonough.

- C. **Discuss removal of utility poles at Yuba Road access point:** Morrison has spoken with Cherryland Electric, which has agreed to pull all of the poles out. The question is whether we would like one or two left in place to serve the building. Tom Henkel says that right now he does not need power there, but the group wonders if there might be some usefulness to retaining the option for the future. Reinhold asked if the group will want to leave the building in place long-term at. Carstens feels it couldn't hurt to leave the pole in place, at least for the short-term. It would expensive to run the power back to the property if it is removed now and desired later. One pole will remain, and the rest will be pulled. The removed poles will be left on-site for re-use; Morrison will see if they will leave the wire too, as it is worth about \$0.50/lb.

There's a run-down fence near the Yuba Road access as well, composed partially of barbed-wire. The group would like Henkel to continue what he's doing in terms of a rail fence in the parking area (to keep wheeled vehicles in the parking area from entering the trail) along the road. He has been buying fenceposts from Chuck Walter at what everyone hears is a very reasonable price. The current metal gates are effective but also an eyesore, and it would be nice to replace them eventually as well. Morrison mentions it now so that any expected expenses can be considered during upcoming township budget expenses. Installation could be done by work bee to keep costs down and help build a sense of community involvement. Morrison will obtain a cost for materials.

Guntzviller priced memorials. Lessards charges \$2.00/sq. inch for bronze plus \$0.42/per letter. Trophy Trolley quoted \$384 for cast bronze for a 10" x 16" plaque plus a 10% metal surcharge. \$1,000 seems like a safe amount to request. Neither place performs the work locally. While Lessards seemed a bit more expensive, Guntzviller also felt like they sounded more knowledgeable. Carstens suggested calling Matt McDonough to see who created the plaque at the Pyatt Lake area, as he feels this was a nice one. Corpe mentioned that when making purchases, we should be sure to make use of the township's tax-exempt status. Cast aluminum is another option, but everyone felt bronze looked better and the price differential is not significant.

- D. **Other needs for Funding:** Reinhold spoke with Rise Rasch about putting in a driveway for the overlook and what would be involved from the MDOT perspective. Stamped engineering drawings are needed. In 2006 a bicycle path/shoulder widening will occur, and this would be an ideal time to create the driveway so that the work won't have to be torn out and redone. We may be able to use the same contractor as MDOT. The right-of-way in this area is 150' wide, so any driveway within 75' of the centerline would have to be paved. Reinhold received an estimate from Jim Minster at Gourdie Fraser for having the engineering plans done; he recommended a budget of \$2,000 to be on the safe side. Using the same contract as MDOT might save us some money. We have plenty of time to plan and seek a possible grant funding source.

The group will possibly wish to purchase some trees and shrubs to be planted as well. They reviewed a list of materials available locally through Resource Recovery. The group would like to ask for \$1,000 to cover trees, shrubs and grass seed.

Based on earlier discussion, the group feels they should also budget about \$1,500 for the bronze plaque also, to be on the safe side, but will make an effort to come in under this figure.

The group also felt that budgeting \$3,000 for the design work for an overlook driveway and parking area would be a good idea. \$500 for materials for the creek remediation discussed at the last meeting was also discussed (aircraft cable and stakes to create areas to trap silt to narrow and speed the creek.) An estimate for removal of the asphalt at Yuba Road is \$10,000

The total budget request the steering committee will make of the Board is \$20,000. First priority will be the donor recognition plaque, the kiosks and the tree planting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.