

MEETING OF THE POLAND FOREST BOARD
Tuesday, March 22, 2017
Poland Village Hall

PRESENT: James Brammer, Frank Krygowski, Mark Thompson, Elinor Zedaker

GUESTS: Linda Srnec and Leah Wilson (Village Council), Charles Rumberg and Lauren Schroeder (Forest Foundation) and about 20 other citizens

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 P.M.

Elinor asked for a moment of silence in memory of the passing of Elaine Mazur.

GARLIC MUSTARD PULL and STREAM CLEANUP will be Saturday April 15, 9 AM till noon.

WEBSITE PROPOSAL: Rob Dunham of Tailored IT Solutions presented an outline and an offer regarding development of a website for the Forest. The site would be for smartphones as well as PCs. Many options could be decided over time: maps, nature information, location awareness, history, general and specific donation buttons, etc. This site would be separate from, but linked to the Village website. Rob is offering a very large discount, with initial setup and training costs less than \$600, and a monthly cost of about \$210. Support level might later be reduced, possibly reducing costs to less than \$50 per month.

Linda noted that the Village website will see changes soon. Frank asked about funding sources, and suggested we rank in priority order a list of all proposed Forest projects and expenses, including this website. Elinor, Mark and James all praised this potential for communication. James asked for examples of other websites by Rob's company. Elinor asked Rob to send us a sample, saying we'll take it from there.

FOREST ORDINANCE, POSSIBLE FOREST LEVY: Linda Srnec noted that Council is in the process of revising the ordinance governing the Forest. Council may place a levy on the ballot to finance the Forest, which would provide perhaps \$12000 per year. When asked, almost everyone present indicated they would support such a levy.

COLLEGE ST. AND GUTKNECHT ENTRANCES: Charles Rumberg (Foundation president) noted that the Forest Board has been slow in making requests for the Foundation's \$150,000 funds. He and Mark feel the two main entrances need significant facelifts. Charles had contacted a landscape architect and displayed a possible plan for the Gutknecht (Indian Trail) entrance, including enhanced signage, a picnic table, paving, etc. The cost estimate is \$30,000 for that entrance, and similar for the College St. entrance. One visitor questioned that spending, and asked about other needs for the funds. Charles had considered donating the cost, but the Foundation is waiting for a list of requests from the Board. Mark mentioned the Zedaker Pavilion chimney, fence repairs, etc. and said we should get a list of all projects with quotes. Frank asked that quotes related to entrances be detailed as individual items as opposed to the entire design package. Mark agreed.

FOREST VOLUNTEERS: Mark said the Forest has relied heavily on volunteers, but this is a potential liability problem. He said Solicitor Macejko says nobody should do any work without the Board's permission. A proposed multi-page permission and waiver form was circulated. Elinor noted that the contractor that repaired the Bremner Shelter produced evidence of insurance, workman's comp, etc. Mark proposed recruiting volunteers in three classes, perhaps 1) using no power tools, 2) using chainsaws etc., 3) using heavy equipment. Frank

asked that certain simple volunteer acts *e.g.* returning a boardwalk that has shifted out of position, be considered below the radar. Mark said that if someone were caught doing that, there would be a penalty. Bob said it's a liability issue. Elinor asked Frank to communicate with the Mayor, councilwoman Wilson and solicitor Macejko about this.

PROPOSED FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN: Frank noted that the plan has perhaps 20 separate suggestions and recommendations, and that the merits of each would have to be considered individually. Only one is marked "Mandatory." Elinor and Mark said nothing in the plan is mandatory.

NEW BUSINESS: DEER OVERPOPULATION: Bob Elias presented a Wall St. Journal article describing the ecological detriments of excess deer. Bob noted that controlled bow hunts may be the only remedy.

OLD BUSINESS: TRAIL MAPS: Frank noted that the Friends of Poland Forest will soon need to reprint Forest maps, but the rules printed therein need revision. Elinor asked each Board member to examine the rules for revision. Mark suggested that the Friends print in small quantity because of potential future changes.

MINUTES: The minutes of the February 28, 2017 meeting were approved.

REMARKS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Pete Sicafuse said the Forest Board, not Village Council, is in charge of the Forest. He said the Board should not listen to others, but should make decisions based on what's best.

Richard Ciotola said the Forest is owned by Village residents, and their opinions must be taken into account. He asked that detailed records be kept of any Forest related expenses paid by the Village. Linda said those are available and mandated by the state. Elinor said they could be made accessible through the proposed website.

Philip Pillin asked who will maintain a website, and said more Forest visitors would include more vandals. He suggested asking whether Indian Trail residents would allow a picnic table. He suggested if people are upset regarding the Forest, there will be no donations, and that we should examine what Mill Creek Metroparks has done.

Lauren Schoeder noted the vigorous debate regarding Forest philosophy, and says the Miller management plan is a mistake. He presented a handout evaluating the plan, said Forest management is complex, and that the Board must seek community help by forming a Citizens Advisory Committee. Elinor said such a committee would be considered.

Ginny Meloy was disappointed that the meeting had no discussion of bank erosion, path and trail problems, flooding etc. and asked about funding related repairs. Elinor said a consulting company is developing proposals. Mark said no report is available yet, but that flooding is caused by the entire watershed and is a difficult problem.

Ray Novotny asked for clarification on the potential levy, and was thrilled that a levy is planned. He noted that similar levies passed in Ashtabula and Portage counties. He offered to help get information from those counties. Robert Dunham noted that almost all visitors he queried in the Forest would be willing to donate for the Forest.

Martha Morgan advised accepting community input. She asked the Board to comprehensively list projects requiring funding, and allow the community to develop consensus on the top seven priorities. The Board's decisions should be governed by such data.

John Serraino would like to see things done, but there isn't money. If we want change, we'll need a levy, and liability is a worry. Frank noted that an Ohio Supreme Court case conclusively removes liability risk caused by recreational use of public space owned by a municipality, and that the relevant case brief has been supplied to Village Council.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Krygowski, secretary pro tem.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY APRIL 25, 2017 at 7:30 P.M.