

MINUTES
KICKAPOO RESERVE MANAGEMENT BOARD
KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE VISITOR CENTER
February 18, 2021

- I. 7:00 PM Meeting called to order by Chair Richard Wallin.
- Board members in attendance via Zoom: Bill Quackenbush, Tina Brown, Scott Lind, Julie Hoel; via meeting room: Richard Wallin, Travis Downing, Paul Hayes, A.J. Mann. Absent: Dave Maxwell, Susan Cushing. Staff via Zoom: Marcy West, Jason Leis, Jonel Kiesau. Staff via meeting room: Erica Cronk. Audience via meeting room: Lonnie Muller, Episcopo News. Audience via Zoom: Julia Buckingham, Kickapoo Valley Forest School (KVFS) Lead Teacher.
 - Motion by Hayes/Downing to approve the revised Agenda. Unanimous.
 - Compliance with open meeting law: West -Yes, revised agenda posted in compliance with State law of more than 24 hours' notice.
 - Hoel/Brown motion to approve January 21, 2021 minutes; motion carries.
- II. Budget Report -
- West - [Governor's Budget Recommendation reviewed on screen]. February 16th Governor released budget proposal – works through legislature next. Hope to have budget finalized by June for the State – new Fiscal Year (FY) 22 beginning July 1, 2021. Governor recommends adjustment requested including health insurance and fringe benefits. Instead of requesting supplemental budget each spring these adjustments will help cover costs. Governor proposal for statutory change from Department of Tourism to Department of Administration (DOA). Administrative services (aka Shared Use Services) from Tourism were transitioned back to DOA including payroll, human resources, legal services, and IT.
 - Review current FY Revenue/Expense Summary Report on screen. West – DOA improved formatting on reports; parentheses now show as negative amount. Accounts Receivable (AR) line shifted to better reflect baseline balance. Cronk: we have issued 556 annual passes so far in 2021; same time last year we were at 420 passes.
- III. State Guidelines regarding public access in relation to COVID 19; plan for re-opening Visitor Center.
- West – Guidelines provided by DOA, Dept. of Health and Governor's Office. Updated guidelines reflect meetings of up to ten people and gatherings of up to fifty people if a variety of procedures are met. Initial indication is we could open to the public April 5th assuming case numbers go down and vaccines go up. State has certain requirements that will need to be met before opening. Required to submit plan detailing how we will keep staff and the public safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Considerations include plexiglass, spacing, masks, hand sanitizer, and open windows in warmer months. Brown – would temperature checks be an option? West – may be difficult with small staff but will look into it. Hoel - what about vaccines for staff? West - will watch vaccine intake form and share with staff as needed.
- IV. Education Program Update:
- Kiesau - [review 2021 Summer Camp offerings on screen]. Brought back camp favorites as well as added new offerings. New camps in 2021 include Artdoors, Junior Ranger, and KickaPedal. Camp registration opened Monday, February 8th, 2021. Five camps have filled and two with a waiting list; 136 students registered so far bringing in almost \$15,000 in camp registration. Plenty of spots still available. Received one scholarship request so far for \$60. Dick – will you be offering school trip visits at all this spring? Kiesau – putting school groups on hold for now waiting for more State directives. Kiesau will continue checking in with instructors to see where they are at with returning to teach.
 - Kiesau has been researching COVID plan for running camps. American Camp Association is a great resource as well as watching webinars. Offering camps almost entirely outdoors will offer level of protection. Camps will observe the 2 of 3 code, meaning at all times you need to have two of these three things happening: Outside, Masked, Distanced. If indoors, then you must be masked and distanced.

Kiesau got instructors on eligibility list for vaccine and sent link to register with the County – may depend on vaccine supply. Lind – will you have parents sign waivers? Kiesau – yes, some form of waiver requiring mask wearing unless receive doctors note. Cannot mandate vaccines.

- Forest School Update: Kiesau - enrollment for Forest School is open until February 26th. Twenty-four students have completed enrollments form; not yet enrolled. Accepting thirty-two students total. More than likely, will not have to go to a lottery style of enrollment. Held informational enrollment workshop this month – well attended from the public. Building Committee for KVFS broken down into sub-committees: Design, Fundraising, and Siting; committees meeting almost weekly. Design Committee is narrowing in on Newenhouse design and will soon have 3-D video to share; putting finishing touches on wall structure on roof lines. Siting Committee met this week – [review site C option on screen]. Flagged sites A and B and found it is too tight to fit all four buildings. Leis proposed new site C. Siting committee reviewed this week and agreed they liked the new site. Easily fit four buildings and within timeline. Leis: handicap accessible trail already established and based on contouring could add additional handicap trail access. New site more level and would require less excavation than other sites. Closer to power source (Visitor Center) and near septic tank next to garage. Kiesau asking KRMB to consider this new site C. Hoel/Hayes motion that KRMB except this third option site C for potential Forest School location. Motion carries.

V. Land Management Committee Update:

- Review and approve updated Commercial License Agreement [review Agreement on screen]. Leis – change to agreement from last meeting on Page 5 (b) Remedies (iii) where it reads 10(a)(iii); added additional (i). Whereas before it read 10(a)(ii), attorney updated to 10(a)(iii). Downing/Lind motion to approve updated Commercial License Agreement. Motion carries.
- Update regarding option to purchase property near Hay Valley Road/Bridge 6. West – Landowner willing to sell land East of river above Bridge 6 and a sliver on the West side – Northern Monkshood site. Approximately 23-26 acres. West held virtual meeting last week with Abbie Church from Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC) and current landowner. MVC willing to apply for stewardship grant funding as well as federal grant to purchase land and protect N. Monkshood – appraisal process – land purchase. MVC not interested in long term maintenance of property. MVC would transfer land to Kickapoo Reserve Management Board. Possible action would take place in 2022.
- Plan for Old 131 Trail protection project near Bridge 16. Leis – contacted Paul Krahn from Trout Unlimited. Krahn willing to develop plan – both sides of river and complete permitting. Suggested 80 loads off rock will be needed. Leis and Krahn agreed we can reduce number of loads. Need a permit to store rock – will not happen this winter. Want to haul rock at same time excavator is there doing work. Vernon County Zoning requesting a hydrologic study before work can begin; study costs anywhere from \$5,000-\$15,000. Will damage blacktop if work is performed in the summer. Need to get trail shoulder evened out to prevent edge breaking off when dump trucks coming in and out. Trail will likely be closed for 4-5 days to complete project.

V. Other issues:

- Exhibit upgrade timeline and draft interpretive plan. West – work group has been meeting regularly. Went through first draft of Interpretive Plan and provided feedback. Second draft of plan will be presented at February 25th design meeting. Education & Tourism committee will review second draft of plan at their March 4th meeting and bring formal recommendation to March Board meeting for approval. Next step will be the design phase. Need to consider impact construction will have on groups/events. Construction will begin in the Fall/Winter with project slated for completion in the Spring of 2022.
- Community flood recovery update and collaborative programs.
 - West – Monroe County Climate Change Taskforce monitoring and gauges – linking with National Weather Service and Emergency Management – new gauge in Ontario; working with USGS.

- KRMB supported initiation for four Villages (Ontario, La Farge, Viola, Readstown) for Economic Development grants that were awarded as a region. Ontario working with MSA engineering firm – land purchase – using buy out money from FEMA. La Farge working with Bayer Becker Engineering – plans for main street project this summer and possibly relocating sub-station. West attended Village meeting and expressed concern over levees siting cost and federal funding as an issue. Viola also working with Becker firm – identified development. Readstown working with SHC Consulting firm out of St. Paul – attracted three new businesses. Communities can apply for other infrastructure and economic development grants.
- Three new studies in the Kickapoo Valley – Recently awarded Environmental Protection Agency grant – Cissy Ma studies alternatives to sewage treatment plants in small communities – contacted by Village of Readstown. Alternatives to using farm fields or constructed wetlands to reduce phosphate discharge without expensive plant upgrades. Private firm - Applied Technology will study and present alternative options to communities. Second study involves National Science Foundation and UW-Madison – Caroline Gottschalk Druschke studying dynamics of stream restoration and flood resiliency. Over \$600,000 awarded to study flood resiliency in Kickapoo and Coon Creek watersheds – upland actions to be done to take energy off high velocity flooding or intensity and protect communities and reduce amount of erosion in the process. Will be working in the area this summer. Final project is with UW-Madison – Grassland 2.0 – Randy Jackson leading the study - working directly with farmers on alternative agricultural practices that can help reduce intensity of flooding or improve/reduce amount of erosion. Identified Kickapoo as a learning hub for study. Multi-million-dollar grant - already working with group in Tainter Creek and Coon Creek watersheds; partnered with Valley Stewardship Network.
- West – congrats to Julie, Bill, and Dave on their recent Board appointment confirmations.
- Calls for Suggestions of Future Agenda Items – none.

Next KRMB meeting March 18, 2021. Quackenbush/Cushing motion to adjourn; motion carries.
Meeting adjourned 8:05PM.

Recorded by: Erica Cronk