

WISCONSIN POINT COMMITTEE Minutes

February 7, 2023 Regular Meeting



The meeting was called to order by Chair Bridge at 5:00 pm on February 7, 2023, in Government Center Room 204.

1. ROLL CALL AND MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Bridge, Jenny Van Sickle, Keith Allen, Deanna Erickson, Cherie Hagen*, Ruth Ludwig

MEMBERS ABSENT: Thomas Howes, Nick Danz

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Linda Cadotte, Jodi Saylor, Mayor Paine*

OTHERS PRESENT: Evan Larson (UW Plattville)*, Connie Evans (Wren Works Construction)*, Matt Steiger (WI DNR), Shelley Nelson (Superior Telegram)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. Wisconsin Point Committee (Meeting held November 15, 2022)

MOTION by Allen, second by Van Sickle, and carried to approve the Wisconsin Point Committee Minutes from November 15, 2022.

3. OLD BUSINESS

3.1. Nimaawanji'idimin Giiwitaashkodeng Project Presentation

Nimaawanji'idimin Giiwitaashkodeng: "Together we are gathering around the fire". Last year, the Wisconsin Sea Grant Program began a project to research fire history along areas in Wisconsin, MN Point and WI Point. The project gathers information from tree ring samples and weaves them together with oral history and knowledge to tell a more accurate story of people on the land and their engagement of the land and how fire fits withing that landscape. Over the fall semester, groups from Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College collected the samples and put together the tree ring portion of the data.

The committee discussed different options for how to use this data going forward. It can help to create a plan for managing the trees on Wisconsin Point to ensure there will be red pine trees for hundreds of years. One of the ways to manage is by fire and creating specific burn areas to encourage growth. The pine plantation area may be good spot for return fire as some of the trees are hollow and not spreading seed. Engagement now gives a long-term perspective.

Larson left at 5:55pm.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1. Animal Ordinance – Off Leash Dog area at Wisconsin Point (Action Requested)

MOTION by Bridge, second by Allen and failed to approve the off-leash dog area at Wisconsin with the inclusion of "Any area endangered species to be delineated (Piping Plover, etc.) at some time in the future".

Some committee members felt that creating a blanket leash law at WI Point could upset a lot of people who like to let their dogs run off leash on the beach.

Director Cadotte explained that the off leash areas came about because she has been asked to put up signage in parks saying that dogs must be under restraint/on a leash. The current ordinance did not clearly define. Public Safety discussed this and came up with the proposed definition of “under restraint”. The Parks and Recreation Commission then made the recommendation to designate off-leash dog areas.

Mayor Paine said that the functionally existing ordinance requires animals to be under leash. He said that if the committee does not accept what is presented, they would require leashes on all of WI Point. He strongly encouraged the committee to set aside whether the ordinance was enforceable while making the decision. This ordinance change would give the police the ability to enforce it if there is a problem animal. It also gives moral responsibility where people feel they can tell others what the ordinance is and encourage folks to follow the law. He said the debate should be whether dogs should be leashed on WI Point.

Some of the committee members brought up the ecological impact of allowing dogs to be unleashed at Wisconsin Point. It is a very important area for migratory birds as a habitat and a stopover. Even a dog that is well behaved can still really disturb migratory birds. Erickson feels that Lot 1 is the most active area for people which seems like an appealing place for dogs to be allowed to be off leash because wildlife is already disturbed due to amount of people that come through that area.

A vote was called for the motion and failed.

MOTION by Van Sickle, second by Erickson and carried to hold this discussion in committee to allow for the gathering of more information before continuing the discussion.

Van Sickle, Ludwig, and Nelson left at 6:27pm.

4.2. Federal funding opportunity for birding trail and cultural components

Matt Steiger, the WI DNR – Area of Concern (AOC) Coordinator for the St. Louis River. As part of the AOC work, they bring in quite a bit of funding from the Great Lakes Restoration and Initiative fund. That includes capacity for people, work in remediation studies and more. That comes from the US EPA. This past fall, in the new fiscal year, the Great Lakes National Program Office started to emphasize environmental justice in the AOC world more. With that, they are offering a more informal opportunity for funding was made available. A proposal is still required and there are guidelines for that, but it is a much less restrictive funding opportunity. Some notable AOC funded projects include the WI Point Dune Project, Piping Plover Bird Sanctuary Expansion, and Wild Rice Planting in Allouez Bay. The AOC has started to consider different ideas for proposals they could bring forward. Examples include a documentary style video about some of the wild rice restoration as told through Native American storytelling and, in Green Bay they are thinking of adding a pier and public access points in areas that have not had access.

Steiger and Director Cadotte have had some informal conversations about the idea of adding a Birding Trail between the lighthouse parking area and the Allouez Bay side, where the piping plover DNR island was constructed, to view the wetlands in that area. The idea is to connect those projects, increase access, increase public information and outreach. They have also considered, with the environmental justice focus, having stopping points with interpretive signage information that can help tell the story of the cultural importance of WI Point. Right now, they are trying to figure out the scope of a project.

The deadline to submit a pre-proposal for this fiscal year is March 1, 2023. The City would apply directly for the funds. There would need to be more buy in from other partners. They are trying to set up a meeting to discuss this with any potential partners.

Erickson suggested that from an environmental justice perspective, it is important to consider the close by neighborhoods to WI Point – Allouez and Itasca. She would love to see interpretative info about duck hunting for example. There is a concern about disturbance to any places that used to be home sites or places near the historic cemetery. Some of those places are marked and some are not. Cadotte said that there was a walk through with Broyhan to identify those potential areas. The trail would be all cord walk, so there would be no soil disturbance and the whole trail would be above surface. If we would be encouraging people to go through, there would be a very delineated area for them to follow. Part of the signage could include information about why it is important to stay on the boardwalk and minimize any impact of the culturally significant areas.

MOTION by Allen, second by Erickson and approved to support moving forward with this Federal funding opportunity for birding trail and cultural components.

5. RECURRING BUSINESS

5.1 Committee Member/Partner Updates – None

5.2 Future Agenda Items

5.2.1 Animal ordinance as it relates to WI Point.

5.3 Confirm next meeting date as May 9, 2023, at 5pm in Room 204 of the Government Center

1. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:48p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jodi Saylor