

Lake Roland Nature Council
Executive Committee Meeting
May 6, 2020 at 5:30 PM
Meeting held via Zoom

Minutes from the April 1 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report:

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings 29,289.79

Total Current Assets 29,289.79

Fixed Assets 430,209.78

TOTAL ASSETS 459,499.57

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Other Current Liabilities 79,484.00

Total Current Liabilities 79,484.00

Total Liabilities 79,484.00

Equity 380,015.57

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 459,499.57

Staff Report: Jonathan said that schools were closed for the semester. Playgrounds might be re-opening. The beaver mount is done. Gero is working on a base for the mount.

Summer camp—We've had no word. Camp may be allowed to proceed, perhaps with a smaller enrollment. Immuno-compromised children or families with an at-risk person at home may wish to cancel. At the moment we have not processed directors and counselors. We can't even hire staff because the County has suspended fingerprinting.

A few pavilion rentals have been canceled. We're not sure what will happen with the Bikes and Beer event planned for later in May.

Environmental and Historic Preservation: Elise doesn't know if the Environmental Committee will meet in the coming months.

Trails: The County has put limits on what can be done.

Recreation: Nothing going on.

Fundraising: Very difficult in the current environment. Kurt said he did submit a grant request for \$4,000 for Art on the Trail.

New Business:

1. Zoom Conversation with LWLA: Earlier on May 6 the LRNC Executive Committee, Kay McConnell and Kimberly Warren from GGC, and Jenna Webster and Rebecca Kagle from Larry Weaner Landscape Associates met via Zoom. The topic for discussion was Phase II of the LWLA proposal for the Nature Center Landscape Design. The EC had submitted a list of questions on the proposal, and Jenna wanted clarification on some of the questions.

In the current meeting EC members shared their thoughts on the Phase II proposal and the meeting with Jenna and Rebecca. Here are some highlights.

Rebecca repeated that Phase I, the concept plan, was about telling a story, having a vision. Phases II and III are more practical. Jenna said the plan was “infinitely flexible.”

EC members remain concerned about planning a trail in a wetlands ecosystem. Jeffrey said it was unclear if we needed a Civil Engineer or a Permit Facilitator to look first at the site regarding permitting based on feedback from Jim Flannery. Jim Flannery can recommend a Permit Facilitator. Jeffrey added that the Nature Center was purposely built in a non-wetlands area to avoid permit problems with minor buffer concession per DEPS. The nature center was initially rejected when the original location that had been proposed was close to the center of the Landscape Plan. He also questioned how you can have a design without a budget or a design that does not take into account existing conditions and the costs that could be incurred by not cost effectively adapting the plan to these existing conditions. He would like to understand if the budget is going to be \$200K or \$2M to understand the fiscal reality of moving forward with the project versus a volunteer driven gradually built trail system leveraging existing conditions of the site, volunteer labor and council equipment, an approach that had been suggested at the infancy of the landscape planning process.

Elise said there were too many unknowns, and that constraints need to be restated.

Gero said they (Jenna and Rebecca) didn't understand the constraints of the site. Gero was impressed by the Invasive Species Management Plan, already provided by LWLA. He thought the Concept Plan should be revised to something that is actually doable.

Jenna had talked about three options for the Landscape Design project:

- Low-level volunteer
- High-level volunteer
- Contractor-based

We thought it was extremely important to have these three options presented in detail.

Jeffrey mentioned a wetland trail at Gordon's Pond, Cape Henlopen State Park in Delaware. RKK, a local (Baltimore) civil engineering firm is doing it. Jeffrey likes the design.

Jeffrey's comments on permitting. The County permitting process can be extremely difficult. And, anything done under a permit will require at times a contractor with specific licenses to work within the wetland area of disturbance. There are limits on disturbance.

Gero asked why the trail does not follow a fairly well-beaten deer trail that begins at the Light Rail Parking Lot. Jeffrey mentioned that it had been requested by county staff to have all access from the Nature Center from a security standpoint.

Overall, the EC was not opposed to proceeding on Phase II. But we want to make very sure we get what we need to make decisions about implementing the plan. Kurt brought up the possibility of rewriting the contract for Phase II to make sure we get the information we need.

2. Grants for Operating Relief: There are some grants available for non-profits that are impacted by the pandemic. LRNC is in a bind because summer activities such as camps and pavilion rentals produce revenue that we use year-round to support programming, maintenance, etc. This year there may be little or no summer revenue. Kurt and Jeffrey are looking for operating relief grants that fit LRNC's needs.