

Friends of Hashawha and Bear Branch (FHBB)
FINAL Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2022, 7pm
via Google Meets
friendshbb@gmail.com

Attendees:

Michelle Scott (Chairperson)
Nicole Bowman (Vice Chairperson)
Chris Markle (Treasurer)
Sarah Franz (Secretary)
Maggie Kunz (Public Affairs Officer)
Robert Scott
Alison Malachowski
Jessica Horning
Rachel Hall
Diana Roman
Jessica Horning
Jenna Mele (Bear Branch Nature Center)
Dawn Harry (Bear Branch Nature Center)
Brad Rogers (Bureau Chief of Parks, Carroll County Recreation and Parks)

While attendees were waiting for Brad Rogers to join, the following items were discussed:

1. Introductions of first-time attendees.
2. Jenna provided updates for the nature center and animal care:
 - a. New volunteers coming in for summer camps, programs, gardening. The barred owl "AD" had a checkup and is improving. Unfortunately, the corn snake Bubbles passed away today. The Trout in Classroom program (Trout Unlimited and MD DNR) is going well and will be posted on Maryland's webpage. Rainbow trout is raised and released as a public program.
3. No updates for Maple Sugarin' – Nicole needs to meet with Dawn and Jenna and needs answers from the County.
 - a. COVID-19 will impact how many activities can be conducted, especially inside the nature center. Hike to the maple trees and other outside activities would be possible. However, it was agreed that hosting the pancake breakfast inside should be cancelled. Alternatives such as a pancake kit were discussed. It was agreed that the entire event should be held outside. Other activities that can be hosted outside – bird program, maple sugar activities: cookbooks, leaf rubbings, find a maple tree kit, maple candy, scavenger hunt.

At this point, Brad Rogers joined the meeting and the discussion switched to the items below:

1. Introductions with Brad Rogers (Bureau Chief of Parks) and the FHBB Executive Board.
2. Questions to for Brad:

- a. What is the County's vision for Hashawha and Bear Branch? **Build environmental education, keep up with exhibits, gaining 4 ½ acres of real estate, new pavilion.**
 - b. Are there projects already in the planning stages within a year's time? **Projects listed in item A above are expected within the next year. Funds are and bid packages out for some of these projects (pavilion or paving of parking lot and road at nature center).**
 - c. How can FHBB help with the County's plan for the park? **Upkeep of exhibits, tree planting, landscaping of new real estate area. In the near future, a boardwalk and signage around the pond is planned and will need FHBB assistance.**
 - d. What does the County NOT want the FHBB to do? **Brad could not really think of anything specific, as it seems like both the County and FHBB are working toward same goals.**
3. Maple Sugarin' Festival
- a. Division of labor and revenue. **Specific revenue items include parking fee, hike, pancake breakfast, and maple syrup. Brad suggested to first decide on what will be offered and what will be charged, then determine available resources and decide who will be responsible for each task. It was noted that if pre-registration is conducted via RecDesk for the hike, arrangements can be made to split the revenue between the County and FHBB. Walk-ins will pay cash at the door and it will go to the FHBB directly. Dawn asked if pre-registration for the hike should be conducted due to COVID-19 limitations. Brad responded yes to limit attendance. However, the Winter Guide has already been released which states that pre-registration is not required. It was discussed and agreed that a notice will be created that pre-registering (even the day-of) for the hike is required. However, there will be additional hikes scheduled for those who walk-in.**
 - b. Maple syrup purchase. **Funding questions should be directed to Jeff Degitz (CPRP Director). Brad will check with Jeff and get back with FHBB. If county supports cost of syrup purchase, the FHBB will have funds to start other small projects.**
4. Create an understanding between the County and the FHBB regarding use of facilities, staff support and managing revenue.
- a. Umbrella MOU or per event/ program/ project agreements, in writing? **Brad doesn't recommend doing a MOU due to the amount of work and limitations involved towards the FHBB. Piney Run had something already in place, so the County is working with what they have. However, FHBB doesn't have one and it doesn't seem fair to create something that won't work program to program. Brad recommends that as events come up, a discussion is had to determine what the County and FHBB need to do for each event. A contract for each event will be created between the County and FHBB. Michelle asked what are the steps in writing the contract and making decisions? Brad stated that Dawn is the point of contact to ask and answer questions and create a contract for small programs. However, larger events such as festivals would need to be escalated to the County to hash out a contract.**
5. Noted how the park benefits from FHBB members:
- a. Gardens

- b. Seed collective project
 - c. Support animal care
 - d. Managing the Egg Hunt and future events
 - e. Collaborating with the County for Maple Sugarin', Monarch, and other festivals
6. Confirm that Dawn is the contact person for the County at this park. **Yes. Brad doesn't have any specific questions or directives for FHBB at this time. He stated that Dawn is a great point of contact for FHBB. He is looking forward to finding common ground on completing projects and keeping things moving forward at the park.**

Next Meeting is February 3, 2022 at Bear Branch Nature Center.