



AIRPORT PROPERTY STUDY GROUP

Attendees: Helen Baldwin, Glenna Dejong, Kelly Roche, Keith Charak, Scott Kierzek, Daniel DeFranco, Rick Bauer, Jon Vanderbeek, Ken Butler

Absent: Scott Dean

Start time: 12:01pm

Motion to begin meeting: 1st Dejong, 2nd Roche

Intro- Jon Vanderbeek

- 170 acres all one parcel purchased in 1930's
- Abandoned in 1940's
- 1960's snowmobile club leased
- History of trails, hiking, hunting and snowmobile

Beach to Bridge concept- connecting 1000 acres

Township dog park has created trails for cross country- Daniel DeFranco/ Ken Butler

- Gifted land by the 196 construction
- Looked at opportunity for cross country
- Expand dog park area- 6 acres of off leash fenced in
- Restore some of the natural areas- add in boardwalks without disturbing the natural setting
- Have a trail at 63rd that would connect to airport property
- Glen Haevner- land excavation and trail creation, knows the trail system at the airport property
- Matt Lebondowski- designs parks for the townships
- Ken mentioned Pigeon Creek as a model for our community- what's the size of this park??
- Dumpsite owned by the city in township land- exit 41 landfill- another 30 acres, has not been tested

Rick Bauer- cross country coach

- Special ed/ PE teacher and track coach
- Cross Country- 5k (3.1miles) course and MS is 2 miles- 7 runners, first 5 score for the team
- #1 money maker for state is MHSAA state finals, set up is lots of visitors that stay for extended period of time - they spend money when they are at the meet
- Very successful program with both girls and boys teams, regional championships and many collegiate athletes- the name of Saugatuck will sell invitational
- Needs of Program:
 - 2 practice locations
 - the State Park- can't do fast paced work there, gravel loop off limits on Saturday
 - School- traffic, need to change terrain to limit injuries
 - Need Workouts on grass

- Never had a true home meet- have to share with Fennville at Fenn Valley
- Have to ask local businesses, lost revenue
- What would a course mean:
 - Increased Revenue: \$10/car, \$150/team, T-shirts sales, Concessions
 - 65-70 schools would come to a meet
 - Hosting regionals

Needs for course:

- parking area for 500 cars
- 200 Yard starting line
- Trail is 10-20 yards wide
- Equipment: mower, rollers
- Markers and signage- with QR codes
- Structures- keep equipment, award ceremonies

Costs for meets:

- Chip timing system- \$5000 estimated cost
- Portable restrooms
- Trash removal
- Maintenance
- Flagging- at the meet to keep people out of the wrong areas

Example of other course in the state:

Shepherd (100 acres)

- Best course in MI, could use as a model
- \$35,000 income for 1 invitational

Holly Invitational

- Rent the land from the city
- Bills: \$21,000
- Cash in: \$55,000
- Course is 110 acres
- No restaurants, hotels sold out so not a lot for spectators to do and still popular

Dances with Dirt- all day race, check it out as another way to use the space

What would be the xcountry use:

- Practice
- Meets: 5-6 meets per season, would include a regional meet, and an invitational
- Meet day is til 4pm, practice is 3-5pm
 - Questions asked if it would need to be closed to the public for meets

Other Uses:

- Trail Relays
- XC skiing
- Showshoe
- Hiking
- Summer Race

Academic Uses:

- Freshman bio

- AP Environment

Drawback:

- Removal of trees
- Upkeep costs
- Wetland issues

Key drivers to pursue this as a community:

- Education
- Profit Center
- Conservation
- Health/Outdoor public use

Next steps:

What does a roller cost?

Quotes on maintaining the land- Daniel DeFranco- ODC or others could contract work

Set up next meeting

End time: 12:58pm

Motion to adjourn: Roche 1st and 2nd Dejong

Location: Saugatuck City Hall

Date: 2/9/2023

Time: 12:00PM