

Trumbull Nature Commission Virtual Meeting
Tuesday, December 14, 2021
7:30 pm

Present: Chairman Emily Shufrin, Commissioners Jack Boynton and Olia Yelner

Also Present: Sheryl Baumann and Kevin Malone from TNAC

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by a motion by Mr. Boynton, seconded by Ms. Yelner, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Boynton to approve the minutes of September 21, 2021 as written. Seconded by Mrs. Shufrin and approved with an abstention from Ms. Yelner.

TNAC Q&A

Mrs. Baumann shared her report with the Commissioners and is attached to the minutes. She noted the following:

1. Received \$75,000 from the Department of Economic and Community Development Office of the Arts Directed Local Funds Grant for the current fiscal year and the following fiscal year. It is to be used for operating purposes, not capital expenses. They are already in progress with some of the initiatives using the funds. This includes replacement of the Sunflower garden fence and excavation of the Butterfly Garden with new fresh soil and a new fence. This work is a combination of Peppers Landscaping doing the excavation, D.R. Charles delivering the soil and Mark Ceneri and Pam Roman installing the fence.
2. The roof and flashing have not been addressed at this time but the building was power washed.
3. The Town will be addressing the downstairs basement area with regrading of the entrance pathway to the garage door. No schedule has been set for this repair.
4. Fiscal year for the TNAC is calendar year. Grant money will cover over 100% this year. The State fiscal year is July 1 through June 30. The Annual Report will have a large discrepancy because they just received the funds. This year's funds must be spent by June 2022. She is hoping the funds will continue in the future.
5. A new visitor experience program is being developed called the Science Adventure Passport. Families will be able to go to various locations around the property and do experiments regarding energy. They will be making a human sundial and learning about trees around the tree ring as well as other unique experiences.
6. TNAC has a good relationship with Goodwill Northern/Western Connecticut in providing vocational training for individuals who have been unable to find work. They help clean, put together projects for various programs, landscape maintenance and it gives them real world experience.

7. Another grant was received from the Horizon Foundation for \$15,000.
8. Received 104 nature and science books.
9. Henkel is working with TNAC to assemble nature explorer kits for underserved Bridgeport youths which will include a draw string backpack for the first grade classrooms containing hand lenses, bug viewers and other material so that they can go out and observe nature. They will be using the \$10,000 grant money to put together the kits. Henkel will also be visiting a third or fourth grade classroom in Trumbull with their Sustainability Ambassador Program. This shows the students what they do in their company and practice in their own lives.

New Business

1. Mrs. Shufrin welcomed Olia Yelner as a new Commissioner and introduced the members of the Commission. She noted she would like to increase the number to a full Commission.
2. Building and Grounds Update – includes the following:
 - a. Remove the plastic residue from the classroom window
 - b. Repair the kitchen sink and the garbage disposal
 - c. Basement door replacement
 - d. New lighting throughout the building
 - e. New retaining wall outside the basement doors
 - f. Siding
 - g. Back door of the garage
 - h. Septic (needs to be cleaned)
 - i. Ramp replacement in the front of the building

Mrs. Baumann noted this is a town building and, as a town building, would like it to be considered for inclusion in the Capital Five-Year Plan so that needs can be addressed on a planned basis as necessary. Safety issues should be addressed at this time with the wall and the ramp being the most pressing.

3. Ms. Yelner introduced herself noting that she is an attorney and she and her family were introduced to the Nature Center by attending a birthday party. Since then, it has become one of their favorite places and she was pleased to join the Commission.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Boynton to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 pm. Seconded by Ms. Yelner and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk

Patrons of the Trumbull Nature & Arts Center

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Subject: Report to Nature Commission: December 2021

TNAC Building and Grounds:

- Building
 - o Organization system put in place for program and field trip supplies to better facilitate program management
 - o The exterior of the building was powerwashed
- Grounds
 - o Sunflower Garden
 - Old garden fence was removed
 - New garden fence was installed
 - Stained pressure treated wood materials were used to increase longevity
 - o Butterfly Garden
 - Old butterfly garden was excavated to provide a fresh slate for a butterfly/interpretive garden
 - Fresh soil has been added to the garden
 - A new fence is being installed
 - Fence material is black wire attached to pressure treated wood posts to both increase longevity and offer protection from predator animals while allowing the gardens to be viewed by visitors
 - o The fence includes a wide gate for accessibility
 - o Meadow
 - Meadow rehabilitation project is proceeding
 - Over 3 days in November, trees that were blocking the meadow from the sun were removed
 - Invasive shrubs and vines were removed
 - Seed planting will be the next step

Fall School Visits Held:

- Three visits were made to Read School in Bridgeport for Kindergarten and Grade 1
- Two visits were made to Middlebrook School in Trumbull for Kindergarten

Fall Programs Held:

- All fall programs were successfully completed
 - o TNAC participated in the Trumbull Arts Festival
 - Community Art Project was initiated, children painted 90 feathers
 - o Sunflower Seed Harvest was held on September 25
 - o TNAC collaborated with the Trumbull Health Department on a walk in Beach Memorial Park led by Instructor Mark Ceneri on October 2
 - o TNAC collaborated with the Trumbull Health Department for a Spooktacular Trail Walk on October 25
 - o Trumbull Community Women Shredding Event October 16

- Native American Storytelling October 16
- Wreathmaking December 4

Upcoming Field Trips/School Visits

- Scheduled 3 Trumbull grade 2 visits to date
- Scheduled 2 Middlebrook Kindergarten visits to date
- Scheduled 1 Trumbull Tashua grade 3 visit
- Scheduling Bridgeport scholarship-paid visits and field trips

Program Development:

- New programs are being developed to increase visitors to TNAC and bolster TNAC's school visit programs
 - Henkel Sustainability Ambassador Program
 - TNAC is coordinating this program with Henkel
 - Henkel to visit one Trumbull school's 3rd or 4th grade classrooms in spring 2022
- Mobile Pond Ecology Lab program
 - Students will work in teams to mimic an authentic scientific lab experience
- Science Adventure Passport
 - Families will visit TNAC for a unique experience that will immerse them in Environmental STEM activities along the TNAC trails
- 2022 weekend programs are being planned

Volunteers

- Goodwill of northern and western CT participants continued to volunteer semi-weekly
 - Their service is complete for 2021, and they plan on returning in spring 2022
- Trumbull teens volunteered at the Spooktacular Trail Walk event
- Eagle Scout candidate Matt Tyburski is working on a firepit to replace the current rock firepit in TNAC's grassy area near the meadow

Fundraising

- Awarded \$15,000 grant from the Horizon Foundation for scholarship-paid visits/field trips
- Received \$2,100 grant from the Mallett Foundation
- Received \$533 donation from Stop & Shop through their Community Bag Program
- Giving Tuesday on Facebook resulted in \$500 in donations
- Received a donation of 104 nature and science books from DK Publishing/Penguin Random House with a retail value of \$1,399.97

Submitted by:

Sheryl Baumann

Patrons of the Trumbull Nature & Arts Center

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