

Village of McFarland  
VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE  
August 6, 2020

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Rupert called the August 6, 2020 Volunteer Committee Meeting to order at 6:00pm via Zoom.

Members Present: Village Board Trustee Justin Rupert (chair), Village Board President Brad Czebotar, citizen member Ken Brost, citizen member Jim Mogden, citizen member Rachel Fisher-Kay, citizen member TJ Jerke.

Members Absent: Jennifer Tryzna

Staff Present: Senior Outreach Director Lori Andersen, Parks Superintendent Sayer Larson, Outreach Case Manager Katie Gletty-Syoen.

Guests: None

**Approval of Minutes:** Review and possible approval of the minutes of the June 4, 2020 Volunteer Committee Meeting.

- a. Motion by Brost, seconded by Czebotar, carried 6-0.

**Business:**

- a. Discussion of Volunteer Spotlight Recipient for Fall Outlook, Jim Amrhein (*name correction—Gletty-Syoen had referred to his last name as “Heaton” incorrectly*). Katie Gletty-Syoen reported that she has interviewed Jim Amrhein, who will be the Volunteer Spotlight recipient for the upcoming fall issue of The Outlook. Jim has been volunteering for restoration and conservation work within some of the Village of McFarland natural areas, particularly Marsh Woods Park. The article will highlight his years of service and accomplishments and educate readers about potential opportunities for volunteerism in our parks and natural areas. A photo of Jim in Marsh Woods Park will accompany the article. T.J. Jerke suggested that incorporating a video element for the Volunteer Spotlight, to be distributed via social media website might be a good option for spreading the word about our volunteers more widely. He mentioned that he would be happy to volunteer to assist with this process if needed. Gletty-Syoen will discuss the logistics with the Communication and Technology department.
- b. Review of Summer 2020 Parks Volunteering Program with Sayer Larson, Parks Superintendent. Using Sign Up Genius as a platform, community members had the opportunity to sign up to volunteer within certain parks, identified by Larson, as needing additional weeding. This year a new parks policy has been implemented to limit or omit pesticide application in areas that are heavily used by young children. To address the additional weed growth, the volunteers were instructed to remove and dispose of weeds growing in and around playgrounds and flower plantings in the following parks: Lewis, Cedar Ridge, Ridge View Tot Lot, Valley Tot Lot, Curling Club, Woodland Estates, and Brandt. All available slots were filled with volunteers. Gletty-Syoen would reach out to the volunteers to clarify appropriate precautions during COVID-19 (encourage mask wearing, socially distance at least 6 feet from other park patrons, only members of the same household may volunteer together, and

- individuals should not volunteer if they begin to exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have been exposed to someone who has had a positive test) and have volunteers fill out a Volunteer Waiver form (either electronically or via the mail). Larson would then reach out to arrange a time to meet with them in the park to provide any tools and materials; explain which plants should be removed; and describe how/where to dispose of materials. Larson shared a plant identification app with volunteers to assist them when pulling weeds. Larson explained that he purchased some weed removal tools for volunteers to use. One volunteer had some concerns about bees in the sandy areas. Larson explained to the volunteer that the bees in the sand are very docile Solitary Mining Bees, and very rarely sting. The bees tend to be found in dry weather in sandy areas. At this time most of the bees have moved out of the park areas naturally. Czebotar asked if the volunteers lived near the parks. Larson said that many of the volunteers did live in close proximity to the parks that they signed up to volunteer in. However, one family who had recently moved out of the McFarland Community chose to return to assist with volunteering in the parks. Gletty-Syoen explained that she had reached out to Stephanie Miller, Communication and Technology Director, to have volunteer badges made for parks volunteers to wear while working. This serves to educate the public about the volunteering program and allow park visitors to recognize volunteers engaged in purposeful activity within sensitive areas with young children. Gletty-Syoen and Larson encouraged the committee to consider purchasing shirts for volunteers with the McFarland logo on it so that volunteers would be more easily and clearly recognizable from farther away. Committee agreed that pursuing quotes for shirt printing would be a good idea. Gletty-Syoen will work with Miller to finalize a design and reach out to local printers for quotes. Fisher-Kay mentioned that her husband may have access to a shirt printing press and will follow up. Jerke asked if there was additional interest once all slots were filled. Gletty-Syoen explained that she had not received any email or phone calls once the slots were filled. Larson and Gletty-Syoen will continue to update the SignUp Genius on a monthly basis to address needs in the parks throughout different seasons. Fall and winter will include more woodland restoration and invasive removal options. Discussed that a time window for completion of the volunteerism would be helpful to encourage expedient work, as some of the parks were neglected for some time, and the weed situation was more difficult to manage. Larson and Gletty-Syoen suggested a two-week window for completion of the work, so that volunteers have some flexibility, but do not need to continue maintaining the area long term. However, if they wish, they may choose to sign up for the same park in the subsequent two-week time period. Andersen asked if the volunteers who met with Larson directly on site had a higher rate of efficient completion of the task, and Larson explained that he did not see a correlation.
- c. Discussion of Potential Fall Sustainability Fair: Gletty-Syoen reviewed some of the potential opportunities for outreach and collaboration for a Volunteer Sustainability Fair. A number of government agencies and non-profits have programs that would fit well into a day of educational lectures and workshops for residents of all ages. However, all of the programs identified are not currently offering in-person options,

but have either postponed programs or moved to a virtual format in response to COVID-19. Gletty-Syoen explained that she spoke with Christal Campbell of Dane County Land and Water Resources to inquire if the storm drain marking kits were available to check out to the public this season. Campbell notified that there will be promotion of the International Coastal Clean Up Day in Dane County via Dane County Land and Water Resources, and they are looking for host sites. The event will be taking place on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. All supplies will be provided including masks, garbage bags, gloves, and data collection instructions. Any waterways/storm drains/parks are eligible as sites for clean-up. Gletty-Syoen explained that we could use our current SignUp Genius platform to serve as a sign up for volunteers. We could limit our offerings and require the same social distancing protocol as for the Parks Clean Up. Czebotar asked about the number of people who would be needed to assist. Gletty-Syoen explained that volunteers would need to pick up supplies at a central site, which would be safest outdoors, and perhaps using a pop up canopy in the Municipal Center Parking Lot, and stagger pick up times to maintain social distancing. However, since we will not be offering food for safety/hygiene reasons, the set up would be quite minimal, therefore requiring fewer committee members. Larson agreed to work with Public Works staff to pick up any collected trash at designated sites within parks. There was some question about what the data collection would include and if weighing would be required, and if so, how that would be accomplished. Gletty-Syoen will reach out to Campbell for clarification for the next meeting. Sites that would be appropriate would be the same kayak clean up routes from previous Community Service Days (5 total), as well as park clean up in Lewis, McDaniel and Jaeger. If there is more interest, Larson explained that due to the heavy engagement in village parks this summer, there is continued need for volunteerism to pick up trash in many parks, and those could be included too. Czebotar motioned to have committee participate in Coastal Clean Up Day on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Jerke seconded the motion, carried 6-0.

- d. Review Fall Senior Outreach Volunteer Recruitment. Gletty-Syoen presented a working copy of a flyer to be distributed to kick off a fall recruitment event for more Meals on Wheels drivers for the McFarland Senior Outreach Nutrition Program. At least 5 new volunteers are needed, as many of our summer volunteers are transitioning out of their roles. Andersen explained that we could potentially add another route due to increased demand for MOW, which would increase the number of volunteers required. Gletty-Syoen explained that this campaign will attempt a strategy to broaden the scope of potential volunteers, and address community members who are working from home and may be available to deliver a MOW route during a lunch break. Fisher-Kay suggested the flyers be posted throughout town. Jerke encouraged the use of multi-media/video to publicize. Gletty-Syoen explained that we had attempted to start that process and were unable to identify any volunteers that would be willing to be featured on camera. However, she will reach out to current volunteers to ask about willingness to participate. Brost asked about the current limitations for volunteers. Andersen explained that volunteers must be under the age of 70 and should not be

volunteering if they have any medical conditions that result in additional health risk. Czebotar inquired about outreach for volunteers from beyond the Village of McFarland. Andersen explained that RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) of Dane County, with whom we collaborate for volunteer recruitment/training/insurance does do some county-wide recruitment. Previous Volunteer Coordinators had used web-based outreach portals to recruit volunteers. However, Andersen is cautious about bringing volunteers in from out of the community. Many of the consumers of MOW are vulnerable, and our process of screening volunteers is important for consumer safety. In the past, some people have used their volunteer role to solicit for their personal business, which is highly inappropriate. Fisher-Kay asked if youth could participate. Andersen explained that all volunteer drivers must be over the age of 18 for confidentiality and liability reasons. Youth could potentially assist within the vehicle but could not have any contact with the consumers. Andersen referenced some programs in other counties, which engaged high school students who were supervised by teachers to assist with MOW, however during COVID-19, that would not be possible.

**Schedule Next Meeting**

- a. Set meeting for Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 6:00pm

**Adjournment**

- a. Motion by Brost, seconded by Mogden, carried 6-0.

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Katie Gletty-Syoen**