

Man Mound Park – Yellow Thunder Memorial Planning Group

Initial Meeting

March 28, 2019

10:00 am to 11:00 am

West Square Building, Room 213

Membership/Attendance:

Peter Vedro, Sauk County Board Chairman

David Riek, Sauk County Highways and Parks Committee Chairman

Kristin WhiteEagle, Sauk County Supervisor/Ho-Chunk Nation Legislator – absent

Tom Kriegl, Sauk County Board Supervisor

Alene Kleczek Bolin, Sauk County Administrative Coordinator

Matt Stieve, Sauk County Parks Director

Paul Wolter, Sauk County Historical Society Executive Director

Rob Nurre, Wisconsin Archeological Society Vice President

The following is a summary of the actions and discussion of the initial meeting of the Man Mound Park – Yellow Thunder Memorial Planning Group. Although there have been several names used for this effort, this name has been derived from various messages that have been sent out in preparation for this meeting.

Peter Vedro was elected as Chair, Paul Wolter was elected as Vice-Chair, and Rob Nurre was elected as Secretary.

It was made clear that the Man Mound Park – Yellow Thunder Memorial Planning Group (MM-YT PG) is not an official Sauk County government committee. Although many of the group's members are Sauk County supervisors and staff, and that it is dealing with two properties which are currently managed as Sauk County Parks, these properties are, in fact, privately owned and leased to Sauk County by the private Sauk County Historical Society (SCHS). However, as the MM-YT PG does include a majority of members of the Sauk County Executive and Legislative Committee, we must be careful not to violate open meetings laws in communications and meetings. It was suggested that the MM-YT PG function as a committee of the SCHS. It was further suggested that the MM-YT PG function as a joint committee of the SCHS and the Wisconsin Archeological Society (WAS), both of which are non-profit 501(c)3 organizations, as was the arrangement for several decades after the Man Mound Park property was originally acquired in 1907. No decision was made.

Riek specifically noted that he does not represent the Sauk County Highways and Parks committee on the MM-YT PG as he has not been authorized by that committee to do so.

Discussion began with the purpose and goal of the group, and framing of what the group will be responsible for. Vedro stated that the work of this group relates to a goal to enhance and enlarge the Sauk County Parks program as part of economic development and on-going “place-making” initiatives, as well as the “One Sauk, Naturally” initiative of Sauk County and the Ho-Chunk Nation. Nurre noted that, while Man Mound and Yellow Thunder are currently managed as county parks, they both have significant cultural and historical features that are unique from

those which are commonly found county parks and thus have specific management issues. Particularly, Man Mound has been designated by United States Department of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark. It was also noted that, while related, the planning process for the Man Mound Park and the Yellow Thunder Memorial properties will likely need to be considered as separate projects. No specific statement of the goal, mission, or vision of the group was adopted.

There was significant discussion of enhancements that could be made at Man Mound Park including possible acquisition of the former one room school house for use as a visitor center, additional lands to buffer the area from future development, and relocation of the road off the effigy mound. Rather than making these a specific part of the mission of the group, the thought was that these possibilities should be considered as a part of the planning process.

There was some discussion of learning from the planning process of other similar effigy mound sites. Two were specifically mentioned; Serpent Mound in southern Ohio and Effigy Mounds National Monument in Iowa. It was suggested that group members consider other such sites that could be used as examples for the work to be done here in Sauk County. It was suggested that the outcome of this process include both elements of a “master plan” that would focus on the big picture elements of these sites as well as a “management plan” that would focus on the details of specific work to be done at each site.

Currently there has been \$7,000 allocated for the planning process for Man Mound Park and the Yellow Thunder Memorial properties. This money comes from funds provided by the Ho-Chunk Nation to Sauk County in lieu of property taxes. Although no budget has yet been discussed or established for the full planning process, it was indicated that it will require substantially more funds than the \$7,000 allocated, particularly if outside consultants are engaged for this process. The suggestion was made that if each of the parties involved in this planning process and represented on this group, Sauk County government, Sauk County Historical Society, Wisconsin Archeological Society and the Ho-Chunk Nation, were to provide funding then matching funding could be sought from local, state, federal or philanthropic sources. Kregil suggested that the \$7,000 could be used to hire a coordinator to work with the MM-YT PG in developing the planning process. Vedro and Nurre indicated that they would explore additional funding possibilities.

While much of the ambitious agenda for this initial meeting was not discussed in detail. The general discussion touched on many of the topics on the agenda.

The next meeting of the Man Mound Park – Yellow Thunder Memorial Planning Group has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 23 from 11:00 am to Noon.

Rob Nurre, Secretary
April 8, 2019