

Story County Conservation Board
October 10, 2016
Story County Conservation Center, Ames, Iowa

0. Chair Craig Meyers called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS

Craig Meyers – present
Nancy Franz – present (phone)
Allen Weber – present
Ted Tedesco – present
Jim Pease – present
Wayne Clinton – present

STAFF

Mike Cox
Jolene Van Waus
Jerry Keys

GUESTS

Jessica Reynolds
Rick Sanders
Leanne Harter

0. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS

Chair Meyers announced that the update on transfer of federal lands would be moved ahead of the action items.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Guests introduced themselves.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Pease, to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2016 board meeting. MCU.

6. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Franz, to approve claims and receipts. MCU.

7. TRANSFER OF FEDERAL LANDS TO STORY COUNTY

After former county attorney Stephen Holmes prepared an informational packet and met with Army Corps of Engineers staff earlier this year, Supervisor Rick Sanders contacted Senators Grassley, Ernst, and King to request their assistance. All three made follow-up calls to the Corps.

Story County has received a proposed memorandum of understanding from the Corps, which Story County Attorney Jessica Reynolds distributed to the board. The Corps proposes to transfer the land to Story County within one year at a cost of \$272,000.

Discussion followed on work that can be completed by the county, the status of prior surveys and environment site assessments, and costs incurred by Story County subject to the Corps' review. Reynolds will address questions to the Corps via phone call and will present proposed changes to the memorandum of understanding to the board of supervisors—hopefully at the November 18, 2016 meeting.

Sanders said that, if the conservation board is interested in pursuing the acquisition of the land and the board of supervisors is in agreement, the county would present a counter offer to the Corps of Engineers. Sanders feels the county has done everything possible to resolve

this issue and added that Conservation would not be expected to fund the acquisition from its budget.

Meyers asked if the board was in agreement to the approach presented by Sanders and Reynolds. All board members were in consensus and asked that the county proceed.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

Director Cox noted growth of Dakins Lake camping revenue for the months of July-September. The grounds maintenance and building maintenance expenses lines have exceeded their budgeted amounts due to culvert repairs on the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail and repairs at the ISU Research Park houses. Cox added that work is still needed at the smaller house.

9. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

Meyers noted the Halloween Hides and Creepy Caches, O.W.L.S., and Partners meeting. The next board meeting is November 14; Meyers and Pease stated they will be unable to attend. Cox anticipates having bids for the Hickory Grove shower building/storm shelter available for discussion at this meeting.

10. CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OF C2C IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Story County Outreach and Special Projects Manager Leanne Harter presented the proposed C2C implementation matrix scheduled for approval at the November 8 board of supervisors meeting. Harter explained that the matrix is the to-do list to track progress of the C2C Plan and can be reviewed in conjunction with the C2C plan or as a stand-alone document. Funding amounts are only assigned to immediate goals and will be reviewed each year.

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Franz, to recommend that the Story County Board of Supervisors approve the C2C Implementation Matrix. MCU.

Harter was also pleased to announce that Story County received a Class 7 ranking from the Community Rating System (CRS), enabling a 15% discount on flood insurance for incorporated residents of Story County.

Board members thanked Harter for her presentation and all her work on the C2C Plan.

11. CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OF HICKORY GROVE PARK SHOWER BUILDING/STORM SHELTER PLANS

Director Cox distributed photos of a shower building at Woodbury County. Story County is saving some money by using the same design at Hickory Grove. Upon the board of supervisors' approval of the proposed schedule, bids will be opened on November 8, recommended for award by the conservation board on November 14, and approved by the board of supervisors on November 15.

Cox commented that the cost opinion is more than the amount budgeted. Depending on bids received, additional funds may be requested from the conservation board and board of supervisors. Some potential cost savings in finish site work (paved sidewalks and parking spots) were identified and placed in the alternate bid package. Cox anticipates demolition of the current shower house this winter with the new shower building completed by spring.

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Weber, to recommend that the Story County Board of Supervisors approve Hickory Grove Park shower building/storm shelter plans and to solicit bids. MCU.

12. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FY18 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PLAN
In reviewing the proposed SCC plan, Cox commented on items completed in FY17 and noted items that would be requested in FY18. The board expressed their appreciation of Cox's work on this document.

MOTION by Weber, SECOND by Tedesco, to approve the Story County Conservation FY18 Capital Improvement Plan. MCU.

13. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT FOR WETLAND MONITORING AT DAKINS LAKE

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Pease, to approve an agreement with Terracon in the amount of \$3,350 for required wetland mitigation monitoring at Dakins Lake. MCU.

14. CONSIDER AFFIRMATION OF STORY COUNTY CONSERVATION STRATEGIC PLAN

The board reviewed the document which incorporated board and staff comments and progress notes by the director. Formatting will be adjusted after changes are approved, and Cox stated he would like to present a more comprehensive document next year.

MOTION BY Pease, SECOND BY Weber, to affirm revisions to the Story County Conservation Strategic Plan. MCU.

15. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Jerry Keys gave an update on the environmental education program.

Keys reported that the program experienced its first year at full staffing level in many years. This cohesive unit offers a variety of school and public programs. More co-sponsored events occurred last year, and service learning projects increased with assistance from the Outdoor Alliance of Story County, which provided bus scholarships to schools.

Nature camps continue to be popular, and the new Zombie Camp was well received. Youth participants used a dichotomy key to identify zombies and their habitat during an overnight event at McFarland Park, and zombie volunteers enjoyed their roles as well. Keys read a letter from a FLOAT V participant thanking the staff for a memorable experience.

OnCell site recordings were updated by the Ames High School Bluestem Institute as a volunteer project. The outreach coordinator utilized social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and You Tube) to reach a larger audience. Changes were made to the Conservation website to make it more mobile friendly.

The fourth Wild Women of the Woods was held last weekend. The event was expanded to include two nights of camping and had 70 registered participants. Keys added that the event is also a good way for the entire environmental education staff to work as a team.

Three grants are ongoing: the natural playscape at McFarland Park, funded by the Story County Community Foundation, and two pollinator garden projects, funded by REAP. Work continues on NGSS alignment, with staff identifying programs needed.

Staff met with Jean Eels, E Resources Group, to share ideas for ISU Research Park programming. EE is also working with libraries, ISU Extension, and Prairie Rivers of Iowa to offer new programs including aquaponics, Master River Stewards, and Landscaping for Life.

Goals for EE staff in the coming year include Service Enterprise Certification, staff trailing, and volunteer visioning.

The board thanked Keys for his presentation and his entire staff for an exemplary environmental education program.

16. GENERAL UPDATES

Director Cox gave updates on the following:

- The board is invited to the ISU Greenbelt Park Master Plan charrette on Wednesday, October 12, from 10:00 AM-3:00 PM.
- As discussed earlier in the meeting, work is still needed at the two ISU Research Park residences. Painting, new carpet, and new flooring are needed at the smaller house as well as removal of the swimming pool and pool house. Cox feels that the infrastructure is good, the house is energy efficient, and that it would be best suited as a residence.
- Approximately 200 people attended the open house at Jordan Wildlife Area. Fundraising is going well, with only \$30,000 left to obtain towards acquisition of the property.
- Cox is working through more alignment issues on the Praeri Rail Trail Extension through Zearing. Although the Colo-Nesco school board has agreed to design changes that will bring costs down and the City of Zearing remains very supportive, the goal for construction next year may not be possible. Cox will review the CIRTPA grant agreement in case dates need to be adjusted.
- Story County Facilities Management will be replacing the floor in the lobby and rebuilding the deck at the conservation the last week of October. It has been quite nice having this department take over maintenance on the building. The list is long, and the entire Facilities Management staff have been good to work with.
- SCC will present a session on the Hickory Grove Watershed Improvement Project at the upcoming Iowa Water Conference.
- The final concrete pour on McFarland Park's Touch-A-Life Trail will occur this week. Building and improving the trail has been a project spanning several decades.
- Cox and Leanne Harter have reached out to ZOR Inc., the firm which completed the Squaw Creek Watershed Management Plan, to do more watershed assessments. Several watershed projects are identified in the county's strategic plan.

- Prairie Rivers of Iowa finished work on a grant for the Squaw Creek Watershed and just received a grant for Kegley Creek watershed assessment.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Pease, that the meeting be adjourned. MCU.
Chair Meyers adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Recording Secretary

Story County Conservation Board