

Story County Conservation Board

October 12, 2020

Story County Conservation Center, Ames, Iowa via conference call

1. SPECIAL NOTE TO THE PUBLIC: Due To Recommendations To Limit Gatherings To No More Than Ten (10) People In Order To Help Slow The Spread Of The COVID-19 Virus, Public Access To The Meeting Will Be Provided Via Conference Call To The Meeting.

Members of the public who would like to call in:

Dial 515-603-3144 Enter 895791# when prompted for the access code

2. CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

3. ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS

Jim Pease - present

Christine Laumer – present

Nancy Franz – present

Craig Meyers - present

Ted Tedesco – present

Linda Murken – absent

STAFF

Ryan Wiemold

Marianne Harrelson

GUESTS

4. STATEMENT EXPLAINING WHY A MEETING IN PERSON IS IMPOSSIBLE OR IMPRACTICAL, PER CODE SECTION 21.8.1

5. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

7. STAFF REPORT – Luke Feilmeier, Hickory Grove Park Ranger, submitted a written annual report that highlighted the past year, in-progress and future projects.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 2, 2020.

September 14, 2020. MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Meyers. MCU.

9. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS

MOTION by Franz, SECOND by Tedesco. Pease indicated there were two payment made to Snyder and Associates and wanted to know what projects they are working on. Harrelson explained that they are working on the HOINT Phase 1 and Phase 2. Meyers wanted to know if the claim to Wapsi Valley Archaeology was for the Corps of Engineers land. Harrelson confirmed. MCU.

10. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

11. CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

Pease commented that it was great to see all of the programs that we have added to the calendar. The next board meeting is scheduled for November 9<sup>th</sup>.

12. ACTION ITEMS:

- A. Action Forms  
Vegetation Management Aide seasonal new hire effective 10/13/20, John Weber@ \$11.50/hr. MOTION by Franz, SECOND by Laumer. Pease wanted to know how long this position was for. Harrelson indicated that he would work through February. MCU.
- B. Consideration Of Approval Of Agreement Between Iowa State University Of Science And Technology Extension And Outreach Conference Planning And Management And Story County For The 2021 Iowa's County Conservation System Fall Conference. MOTION by Meyers, SECOND by Tedesco. This agreement is the same as the previous agreement with only the date change. MCU.
- C. Consideration Of Entering The Headwaters Of The South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority. MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Laumer. Pease indicated that he would like us to become a member of this WMA. MCU.
- D. Consideration Of A Letter Of Support For A Headwaters Of The South Skunk River Watershed Management Authority Planning Grant Application. MOTION by Franz, SECOND by Tedesco. Pease noted that Director Cox has spent a lot of time working on this grant. The letter includes the promise that we will provide a cash match and in-kind match. MCU.

13. ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

- A. Discussion and Consideration Of Discontinuation Of The Story County Trails Advisory Committee. MOTION by Franz, SECOND by Laumer. Wiemold explained that this committee was started in 1991 and they created by-laws. The original vision of the group was to provide input and planning for trails direction for SCC. They have done a great job and we have come a long way. The committee has not met in over a year and during that time, SCC staff has reflected on where our resources are going and how we are working on trails. We decided that the original vision for the advisory group is not as relative now as it was in 1991. We now have dedicated and trained staff that can handle the original functions. There has been low engagement and meeting attendance. We would like to switch from this planning-based approach and get more action based. We really want to focus our efforts on recruiting and engaging volunteers. We need to change our direction and focus our resources in a direction that is more productive. We have many different plans for our trails and we want to get to the accomplishment stage. We will still look to the members of the Trails Advisory Committee to help us achieve these goals. Derek Seward, Trails/Natural Resource Technician is working on a portal that we can post on our website or social media that would allow the public, if they have a trail related item or some trail related input, that they would like to share with us, they can click on a link and send us a message. We still expect many of the members to be out on our trails actively and they will still report any feedback. We would like to be able to get more input from the county and the public as a whole instead of just one specific user group. MCU.
- B. Review 10 Year Capital Improvement Plan – Franz was glad to see that we are getting closer to redesigning the tent camping area at Dakins. She spoke with Park Ranger Simcox and he has some really great vision to make this area a much better park/camping experience. Pease questioned what the areawide master plan was. Wiemold explained this is for park planning. We tried to accomplish some of this last year with the

feasibility study, but we still need some questions answered and we need specific plans for some of the parks. We need to develop long term plans for Hickory Grove and McFarland Park. Pease also asked if the amount for the Skunk River water trail accesses is budgeted correctly. Wiemold provided information about the restoration work to be completed on the Bundy (Sleepy Hollow) property. Pease wanted to know if the amount for the property across from McFarland was included in this plan. Franz suggested that we separate out the land acquisitions into its own 10-year plan document. Pease noted that year 2024 has a high dollar amount. Wiemold explained that these numbers continually change and some will be moved/pushed back in some years. Franz asked for this document to be updated for our November meeting. Harrelson confirmed that this was provided at this time for the board to review and make suggestions for changes. Franz asked for hard copies of the budget and CIP documents to be printed out and distributed to the board members before the November meeting. Tedesco asked if we could have the November meeting at the Conservation Center. After discussion, it was decided that the meeting would be held via Zoom.

#### 14. UPDATES

A. General Updates: Wiemold updated the board on opening the Conservation Center to the public. Following our COVID-19 protocols, the numbers for Story County are still high, so we will not be opening to the Public at this time. Friedrich is working on the final plat for the Dotson property. There are still items that need to be taken care of soon and we hope to see some progress by the end of October. The County Attorney is drafting an agreement with the City of Colo for the Hickory Grove sewer connection. We hope this can be finalized with the Colo by the end of the year. HOINT Slater connector was poured this week and should be open very soon. Staff will be working on wayfinding and informational signage from the High Trestle trail to the Slater trailhead moving towards Huxley. The 535<sup>th</sup> area between Huxley and Slater was asphalted and is open. HOINT Phase 2 should be ready to open after the 560<sup>th</sup> road straightening is completed. Once this is complete, there will be nine miles of paved trail from Slater to the Skunk River bridge east of Cambridge. TELC Phase 3 is almost complete. There is a tree planting scheduled along the trail on October 29<sup>th</sup>. Wayfinding signage will be installed towards the end of the month. Staff is still cleaning up from the Derecho storm as needed. We have turned our focus to other daily park maintenance and budgeted items. We will continue the Derecho cleanup during the winter. We are meeting with a FEMA representative at the end of the month to determine if we will file a claim for damages. Wiemold also discussed with the board that there was money budgeted in this fiscal year for some stabilization work on Grant Creek at Jennett. Brandon, SCC's current Natural Resource Specialist, researched this project and determined that stabilizing this spot would only cause damage to other areas of the property. The best thing to do is to let the creek to create a natural oxbow. Brandon has been working with Tom Rosburg and Bruce Ehresman on management. They have recommended to remove some of the trees and shrubs that are unwanted and invasive along the creek and restore it to a rolling grassland. We would like to take the money that was originally budgeted for the stabilization and put it towards hiring CCI to clear some of the trees and possibly a biotic assessment on Grant Creek. The board had no issues with this change.

B. Liaison Assignments, Committee Meetings Updates, and Announcements from the Board: Franz has been hiking and biking the trails. They are in great condition. She loved seeing the new trail signage at McFarland. She has been helping Director Cox with the WMA grant. Wild Women of the Woods had 40 women and 16 instructors. It was a wonderful event despite all of the changes that were made due to COVID. She recently camped and hiked all

of the trails at Dakins and had a delightful experience there. She has been working with staff on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Conservation. She volunteered to represent Story County Conservation at a Leopold Reads event. Meyers continues to meet with the Outdoor Alliance of Story County. They are donating \$2,000 towards the purchase of kayaks and equipment. Pease has had several meetings with Director Cox, including one on the Hannums Mill Dam removal or modifications. There are some things that still need to be worked out with the land owners.

15. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Tedesco, SECOND by Meyers, to adjourn. MCU. The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.



Recording Secretary

  
Story County Conservation Board