

Story County Conservation Board
February 13, 2017
Story County Conservation Center, Ames, Iowa

1. Chair Nancy Franz called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS

Nancy Franz – present

Jim Pease – present

Craig Meyers – present

Ted Tedesco – absent

Rick Sanders - present

STAFF

Mike Cox

Jolene Van Waus

GUESTS

Mike Meetz

Linda Murken

Liz McAllister

Christine Laumer

3. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND HANDOUTS

Chair Franz announced that agenda item #15, consideration of an electric line easement at Wakefield Woods, will be postponed.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Franz welcomed guests and invited them to introduce themselves.

Mike Meetz announced that the 2016 Olav Smedal Award recipient is Hank Kohler of Ames. Meetz thanked the board for their continued interest in the award and added that names for 2017 award candidates can be submitted to him.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Pease noted two typographical errors: the word thee (instead of the) in item #10 and an extra word (“a”) in item #17.

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, to the minutes of the January 9, 2017 board meeting as corrected. MCU.

6. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS AND RECEIPTS

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

7. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

There were no additional comments or questions on the financial reports. Chair Franz recognized Financial Data Manager Van Waus for reaching a milestone of 30 years of service to Story County Conservation.

8. SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

Franz noted that the snowshoe hike programs were cancelled due to lack of snow.

9. CONSIDER FIRST READING OF REVISIONS TO BY-LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT POLICY

The board reviewed revisions sent with the board packet and discussed additional minor suggestions and changes.

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Motion by Meyers, SECOND by Pease, to approve the first reading of revisions to Story County Conservation By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, and Safety and Health Management Policy. MCU.

10. CONSIDER DISTRACTED DRIVING POLICY

Director Cox explained that this new policy mirrors the county's recently adopted policy.

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, to approve Story County Conservation Distracted Driving Policy. MCU.

11. CONSIDER DRIVER'S LICENSE AND INSURANCE VERIFICATION POLICY

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, to approve Story County Conservation Driver's License and Insurance Verification Policy. MCU.

12. CONSIDER WILDLIFE HABITAT STAMP FUND GRANT AGREEMENT FOR ACQUISITION OF RONALD "DICK" JORDAN FAMILY WILDLIFE AREA

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, to approve a Cooperative Agreement/Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund grant for \$308,701 between Story County Conservation and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources towards the Ronald "Dick" Jordan Family Wildlife Area acquisition. MCU.

13. CONSIDER WILDLIFE DIVERSITY GRANT AGREEMENT FOR ROBISON WILDLIFE ACRES RESTORATION

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, to approve a Wildlife Diversity Small Grants Program Agreement for \$2,300 between Story County Conservation and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for Robison Restoration Project. MCU.

14. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MASTER PLAN FOR TEDESCO ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CORRIDOR

Director Cox explained that SCC went through an extensive process to hire an engineering firm, the review committee met with the engineers to review the plan, and two open houses were held to give the public an opportunity to comment on the plan. Over 170 people attended the open houses and gave input on trail surfacing and use, facilities, water quality, watershed analysis, and stream components. As a whole, Cox said the plan accomplishes the aspects the board sought--water quality, stream treatment, connectivity, recreation, and habitat. The plan addresses over a dozen different practices and the goal of an outdoor learning facility with educational components that will be changing and ongoing.

Sanders commended and thanked the board for their involvement in the project and appreciates the relationship the county is building with Ames and ISU. He believes that SCC will reach and educate Story County's citizens through this park.

Cox received a revised cost estimate of \$4,755,000 for the first three phases of the project. He said the board will continue to look for additional funding and ways to reduce expenses.

MOTION BY Meyers, SECOND BY Pease, to approve the Master Plan for Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor and recommend approval of the plan and updated cost opinion by the Story County Board of Supervisors. MCU.

15. CONSIDER CRITERIA FOR AND PLANNED EXPENDITURES OF ENERGY TRANSFER FUNDS

Sanders gave background on the agreement reached between Story County and Energy Transfer Partners for the Bakken Pipeline to cross the Heart of Iowa Nature Trail. The board of supervisors felt these funds should come to Conservation.

Franz read and explained the criteria for spending the \$1.6 million as specified in the resolution the board approved in June 2016. She added that the proposed expenditures align with the county's C2C Plan and include water quality, protection of resources and sensitive areas, and leverage of money for other funding/public support.

Director Cox gave details on the proposed expenditures, including Bear Creek Bridge repair, Carroll Prairie acquisition and restoration, Jennett Pond renovation, mitigation bank additions for restoring wetlands, water trail access improvements, watershed coordination, cabins, and Heart of Iowa Nature Trail paving.

Sanders said he struggles with spending money on watershed assessments without a plan to follow up with work. He agrees that Conservation needs to be a more active partner in water quality and watershed assessments as part of the Upper South Skunk River Authority.

Pease stated he would like one cabin built as a demonstration of sustainability and education. Sanders said he would like to see at least one cabin considered and believes the board should take advantage of this opportunity.

Sanders added that wherever possible, it is vital to use the money for leveraging other funds. He asked that an updated list of the proposed expenditures be forwarded to the supervisors for the FY18 budget and that the supervisors be updated on the status of projects.

MOTION BY Pease, SECOND BY Meyers, to approve the list of planned expenditures utilizing energy transfer funds as amended. MCU.

16. GENERAL UPDATES

The director gave updates on the following:

- The summer edition of the Prairie Horizons newsletter will be printed in color using paper with a 30% recycle content. Cox showed a sample of the new format.
- The contractor is finalizing a list of areas to be included in the Sensitive Areas Inventory. A request for proposals is being prepared for the ground work.
- County-wide watershed assessments are due February 15. The board will review staff recommendations at the March meeting for approval by the board of supervisors.
- Work on Phase I of the Hickory Grove Lake restoration project is moving forward. Tree clearing is finished, and staff are following up on lake dredging and additional shoreline work. The best method to draw down the lake is still being researched.
- Trees at the Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor will be removed prior to April 1.
- Cox is working with Zearing fertilizer to route the Praeri Rail Trail extension to Dakins Lake through Zearing behind their facility. Cox anticipates work to start next fall.

17. BOARD REPORTS

Franz reported that she attended the fishing derby at Dakins Lake on February 11. There were 241 anglers, and many catfish and some bluegill were caught. The Zearing Fire Department raised \$5,000 for a new scoreboard at the school. Franz added that plywood clamped to the sides of the shelter kept people warm.

Franz and Jeff White were elected co-chairs of the trails committee at the January meeting; Jim Wilcox is secretary. Committee members were pleased with items in the FY18 budget proposal.

Franz announced that SCC has received certification as a Service Enterprise organization. She added that SCC's volunteer recognition event will be in April.

Meyers reported that he and Director Cox met with the Colo City Council regarding the Hickory Grove sewer project.

Sanders will be going to Washington, DC next week. He hopes to visit with Iowa senators to get some results on the Army Corps situation.

18. OTHER

Mike Meetz, chair of the county REAP committee, reminded the board that REAP funds may be available for some Conservation projects.

Cox announced that SCC will host the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards conference in 2020. Franz is identifying possibilities for keynote speakers. Pease added that he is proud to have Story County host the conference since SCC is fortunate to have an amazing relationship with the board of supervisors and an involved conservation board.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Pease, SECOND by Meyers, that the meeting be adjourned. MCU.

Chair Franz adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.


Recording Secretary


Story County Conservation Board

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