

**Dickinson County Conservation Board special meeting**

**Dickinson County Nature Center, Okoboji**

**10 a.m. July 24, 2019**

**Chair: Eric Stoll**

**Board members: Kathy Kleen, Joan Gronstal, Willia Mueske**

**Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth**

**Board liaison: Pam Jordan**

**Via phone: Maria Brownell, Jenna Bishop of Ahlers Cooney in Des Moines (leave at 10:46 a.m.)**

Call to order 10:01 a.m.

**Agenda approval:** Kleen motion, Mueske second. Approved.

**Brooks Golf RFP discussion**

-Strike first paragraph regarding current management agreement, which was an unusual nine-month agreement for the first operating season.

-Only one year of financials is available from Brooks Golf. A request for previous years was requested but denied from former owners. Anything regarding previous financials will be taken out of the RFP.

-The timeline from Jester Park should be adjusted by a week, to allow a little more time to clean up the RFP and its language. The RFP will be released July 31.

-The board had previously discussed giving options for 18 holes or 27 holes, but Sorenson said it would make it hard to compare proposals. The lawyer agreed that all proposals should be on the same playing field. "Part of the RFP process is making sure everyone is the same." Gronstal motion to stay at 27 holes, Mueske second. Approved.

-A few places in the current RFP still say "Jester Park" and need to be changed to Brooks Golf.

-The restaurant lease ends in October, but the current management agreement ends in December. Sorenson asked if the leasee would be able to renew with the current management company. The lawyer said the lease language would need to be examined. Mueske asked if the restaurant would be included with the golf course or if it would be independently leased. The board would like to leave the restaurant tied to the course, and the RFP will be tweaked to allow the restaurant to be run by the management company or sub-leased to a restaurant owner. It would still allow the conservation board to oversee any work done on the premises.

-Sorenson asked what happens if the management company went bankrupt. The management agreement, not the RFP, will address sureties as well as add a provision for cancellation after evaluation if relationships begin to break down. Mueske motion to keep a 10-year term, with an option for an additional five years, with a provision for cancellation in the agreement. Gronstal second. Approved 2-1 with Kleen opposed.

-The conservation board would not like to own any equipment from the course. Sorenson asked if it should be included in the RFP or sold outright at auction. The lawyer suggested giving management companies the option to purchase the equipment, and if there is no interest there should be an auction.

-Page 5 of the RFP states that the POS system is owned by the land owner instead of the management company. Sorenson will talk with Jester Park. Another option is to require financials instead of owning the POS system. Mueske would like monthly financials. Sorenson said the conservation board doesn't really oversee the management, and the lawyer stated that anything submitted to the board becomes public record. Perhaps they could provide a general overview periodically.

-Under the "criteria" section, points are awarded to proposals based on compensation to DCCB, business plan, history of the company, etc. This can be followed up by an interview process with the top proposals. Kleen would like a rubric for the proposals to help rank them.

-Sorenson asked if the companies that have submitted proposals are public record. The lawyer will look into that. To conceal identities, it's possible to do sealed proposals.

-Jester Park funds capital improvements from the \$1 per round that goes to the conservation board, but Brooks Golf has about 15,000 rounds per year, so that would make capital improvements few and far between. The management company would have to propose improvements to the conservation board.

-A tour of the course will be given to management companies that submit a proposal. Board members are welcome to attend, and it will be posted as a public meeting for the conservation board.

-Kleen motion that after the proposals are received a committee of staff, up to two board members and possibly a Dickinson County supervisor would evaluate and submit a recommendation to the conservation board, Gronstal second. Approved.

**-Sorenson evaluation:** Sorenson has requested a performance review from the board members, who will send the evaluations to Sorenson. Stoll will then conduct a meeting with Sorenson.

-Gronstal asked about the drive by the Okoboji Commons hotel that was discussed at the July meeting. Sorenson said litigation has started in the area, and Jordan said there are layers of easements in the area. She thinks that the conservation board's current stance to not maintain the road is fine to stand at the moment.

-Roth is working on a REAP grant application for the Okoboji Foundation wetland to the east of Kenue Park.

**Kleen motion to adjourn. Gronstal second. Approved. Adjourn at 11:40 a.m.**