

Dickinson County Conservation Board meeting minutes

5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2019

Dickinson County Nature Center, Okoboji

Chair: Eric Stoll

Vice chair: Steve Anderson

Board members: Kathy Kleen, Joan Gronstal, Willia Mueske via phone

Employee: Kiley Roth, Aric Ping

Board liaisons: Pam Jordan

Public: Alan Blake, Dale and Deb Sienknecht, Steve and Karen Sabasta

Call to order at 5 p.m.

Agenda approval: Anderson motion, Gronstal second. Approved.

Public comment:

-Postponed to 253rd Avenue section

Consent agenda approval: Gronstal motion, Kleen second. Approved.

-Approval of past month's minutes

-Recycling report

-Environmental education report

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas

-253rd Avenue: Dale asked that it be included in the letter that the land has been mowed for more than 10 years. He said there is about 10 feet of prairie grass left. Anderson said the prairie left is 13-26 feet wide. Dale asked if there is anywhere in the county that has approximately 50 million worth of property that close to prairie, and Anderson said that Manhattan Beach has both prairie and wetland areas next to property that was actually planted by property owners. He said there is prairie by Lakeside Lab homes as well. Deb pointed out there is no trail along those sections.

Alan said he is not against prairies but that in this area the issues are access to the trail.

Jordan said as issues come up, it necessitates research among different county entities. Dale said that the group thought the issue was resolved with the board of supervisors after attending that meeting, but the board of supervisors has now agreed that this county right-of-way decision does fall under the board of supervisors.

Blake said he likes the survey and thinks it is fair and asked if trails could be mowed through the prairie area to let homeowners access the trail.

Jordan said the board of supervisors need to approve the wording and task the conservation board with sending out the survey and tabulating the results. The surveys will be sent to the taxpayer addresses on file, not necessarily the 253rd Avenue address. Replies will be requested within three weeks.

Blake asked about the area along the bike trail if it would be reseeded this fall or next spring. The question will be brought up with the natural resource manager.

Blake also asked if the group could be given the survey results, and Deb asked for a copy of the survey that is sent out.

Anderson motion to approve the letter with a corrected introduction and a date inserted three weeks from the date sent to ask for replies and that it will then be given to the board of supervisors, Gronstal second. Approved.

-Little Foote Forest addition grand opening: The grand opening will be held 4 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 15, at the former Saddle Club.

-Okoboji wetland purchase: Sorenson asked the INHF to purchase the moose wetland since the purchase agreement with the Okoboji Foundation ends Dec. 1 and because the REAP grant application was not approved. The conservation board will then look for funding sources for the Okoboji wetland.

-Ainsworth-Orleans Beach boat ramp: Engineering is not needed on the project, but it will have to be put out for public bid.

-Land scoring/land purchase: The conservation board has put together scoring criteria for land acquisitions, and a property adjoining Little Sioux Savanna has come up for possible acquisition. Ping presented vegetation surveys done on the site, and Sorenson would like the conservation board to score the possible acquisition based on the criteria.

Anderson suggested the board members submit their scores electronically so Sorenson can pursue the purchase if it is desired by the board.

-Sanitary sewer update: As director of the sanitary sewer, Anderson said the Nature Center Road sewer project came in more than 30 percent over the cost estimate. The sanitary sewer trustees rejected all bids, and a new public bidding date has been set for late October/early November. The road past the nature center to Lakeshore Drive will be gravel for approximately a year.

A stub pipe will also be added to the plans to add a Huff-cut bathroom in Kenue Park.

Operations and facilities update:

-The new lodge in Kenue Park is hooked up to sewer and water. Anderson said Sorenson wants to do something about the power to put a transformer on that property. Alliant will provide prices for that and to bury the powerlines by the nature center as well.

-Anderson also updated the board about the septic tank at Horseshoe Bend, which is still flooding. It looks like water is coming through where the tank was supposed to be sealed.

Approval of expenses: Kleen motion, Gronstal second. Approved, with Mueske abstention because she didn't have the bills via phone.

General discussion

-Strategic planning: At the board's request, the staff have begun strategic, long-term planning

-Brooks Golf: Proposals from management companies are in and have been distributed to board members who will score them individually, and then the committee will meet to judge the proposals. Sorenson will send out the scoring rubric to the board.

Adjournment: Anderson motion, Gronstal second. Approved. Adjourned at 6:18 p.m.