

**Dickinson County Conservation Board**

**2279 170<sup>th</sup> St., Okoboji**

**7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2017**

**President: Kathy Kleen**

**Vice president: Joan Gronstal arrive at 8:18 p.m.**

**Board members: Steve Anderson, Eric Stoll, Willia Mueske**

**Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth**

**Board liaison: Pam Jordan, joined via phone**

**Call to order at 7:04 p.m.**

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

**Approval of past month's minutes:** Remove heading that says Meeting Agenda. Anderson motion, Mueske second. Approved.

**Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County update:** The Dickinson County attorney visited to talk about the Pollinator Paradise building project, and the state auditor said it would be fine for the funds to go through the foundation, as long as no county funds enter in to the project. Board member Ron Williams would still like the funds to go through the conservation board, but the board as a whole approved moving forward with the project funds going through the foundation.

**Environmental education update:** Programs have slowed so work could go into aligning programs with the Iowa Core. Naturalist Charles Vigdal will be transferring to the position of recycling center manager now that Sawyer Marco has put in his notice. Vigdal will continue helping with programs in the interim. Sorenson has received about 25 applications for the environmental education coordinator position, and the quality of the applicant pool has been positive. Few of the applicants are local, which means many interviews may be over Skype. Sorenson would like to have the environmental educator on board and then would like to have that person help hire the naturalist.

**Operations and facilities update**

**-Election of officers:** Stoll motion to elect Gronstal as chair and Anderson as vice chair for 2017, Mueske second. Approved.

**-Recycling center:** Hazardous material recycling happens every six months, with this pick-up costing \$7,792.79. No charge is allowed to the public for hazardous materials recycling. The recycling center balance of \$106,927.13 is the largest it has ever been.

The recycling center staff has been notified that Marco has stepped down and Vigdal will be taking over.

A complaint letter from local homeowners was submitted because the fire from burning the wood pile accidentally spread to the nearby leaf pile and smoldered, creating a short-term smoke problem in the neighborhood. Staff attempted to put out the fire in the leaf pile in multiple ways over

the 14 days of the fire, but many options did not work. The fire was finally put out with a contractor and excavator that was hired. The chipping company has requested to set up a regular chipping time, and then that the chips would stay on site until the company needs it, because the demand for chips has not been matching up to the time that chipping needs done. This would help decrease the need to burn in the future.

**-Pollinator Paradise:** Three-dimensional diagrams from Cannon Moss Brygger were distributed to board members. Fundraising with private donors is underway, and the CFDC is also looking into submitting a grant to the Okoboji Foundation for the project. The overall budget is set at \$1.7 million with \$1.2 for the building and exhibits as well as a \$500,000 endowment.

Stoll asked if an asphalt road and parking lot could be added to the budget, but other board members said that the budget was already high for the project.

Only one other county conservation board has a pollinator room in its nature center, and its budget was just over \$50,000, with homemade displays. The Pollinator Paradise plans here would be unique in the state. The next step is for CFDC president Becky Peters, Sorenson and donors to plan further fundraising efforts.

#### **Dickinson County Conservation Board Areas**

**-Horseshoe Bend tubing hill:** Sorenson has still been meeting with the county engineer to get the road project/tubing hill project estimate and get the agreement between the two entities signed. The county engineer would like a joint meeting with the conservation board and the board of supervisors.

Sorenson has been tracking how Horseshoe Bend was funded, and there were federal funds that went into the project that appear to not allow the land to be used for right-of-way. However, Sorenson has not been able to find paperwork for that funding agreement. Another option would be to use local monies for the road project, because it would then not have to meet federal regulations so the road project would not take the county's right-of-way.

**-INHF meeting land acquisition:** The meeting with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation was cancelled today due to bad travel weather for the staff member coming from Des Moines. Sorenson has been meeting with Heather Jobst with the INHF to lumping together some possible land acquisitions.

There is a meeting at 1 p.m. Jan. 19 at the Spirit Lake Library regarding the Spirit Lake United Methodist Church land off of Big Spirit Lake. Jobst said Sorenson needs to be the board's representative at this meeting, because the Spirit Lake Protective Association is looking to raise funds for the purchase of this property from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation that would then be turned over to the county conservation board for management.

**Budget discussion:** When Sorenson began as executive director, the maintenance shop was going to be housed with secondary roads but that fell through, so a funding request was put in this budget for a new maintenance shop at Horseshoe Bend. The conservation board has been awarded a variety of different pieces of new equipment through grants, but that equipment is stored in a different facility because Horseshoe Bend does not have enough storage right now. The new/proposed building would have room for the new equipment.

The proposed budget will be submitted to the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors, and then Sorenson will present the budget to the board of supervisors on Jan. 31. Anderson asked if the budget had to be cut, where would it be cut? Sorenson said the only main project to cut would be the maintenance building, which possibly could be put into stages. Stoll said perhaps to highlight what items in the budget are non-tax-asking items. Vehicle/equipment asking was diminished to offset the maintenance building funding request.

Anderson motion to approve the budget, Mueske second. Approved.

**Approval of expenses:** Stoll motion to approve, Gronstal second. Approved.

**General discussion:** Stoll asked when the piles of brush at Little Foote Forest from the Conservation Corps. cleanup would be burned, and Sorenson said it would probably be this spring.

**Adjournment. Anderson motion, Mueske second. Approved. Adjourn at 8:29 p.m.**