

Dickinson County Conservation Board meeting minutes
5 p.m. April 8, 2020
Dickinson County Nature Center, 22785 Nature Center Road, Okoboji

Chair: Steve Anderson

Vice chair: Willia Mueske via Zoom video conference

Board members: Joan Gronstal and Kathy Kleen via Zoom, Eric Stoll via phone

Employees: Lee Sorenson, Kiley Roth via Zoom

Board liaison: Pam Jordan and Steve Clark via Zoom

Call to order at 5:06 p.m.

Agenda approval: Gronstal motion, Mueske second. Approved.

Public comment: No public in attendance

Consent agenda

a. Approval of past month's minutes

b. Recycle report

Mueske motion, Gronstal second. Approved.

Dickinson County Conservation Board areas

-Horseshoe Bend Mussel Project: The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will pay \$17,000 to reimburse the costs associated with the mussel restoration project on the Little Sioux River at Horseshoe Bend Wildlife Area.

Kleen motion, Gronstal second. Approved.

-USFWS landowner agreement: The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will oversee the technical aspects of the mussel restoration project.

Kleen motion, Mueske second. Approved.

-Abbie Gardner Interagency agreement FY21: This agreement is the same format as the past years have been to staff the Abbie Gardner Cabin & Museum in Arnolds Park in an agreement with the State Historical Society of Iowa.

Gronstal motion, Mueske second. Approved.

Operations and facility update

-Adopt-a-Roadside program: A press release has been sent out about the new Adopt-a-Roadside program through the IRVM program, and five entities have reached out with interest but have not signed up yet. Supplies have been purchased and will be reimbursed by the engineer's office.

Approval of expenses: Kleen motion, Gronstal second. Approved.

General discussion

-Sorenson said the Kenue Park lodge is getting close to completion; work on landscaping has begun.

-Kleen asked about a new trailhead going in in Spirit Lake and asked if the conservation board would be in charge of maintenance on the bathrooms at the trailhead. Sorenson said it has been a topic of discussion if a nearby business restroom could be utilized instead of building a bathroom there as the conservation board is planning on discontinuing the agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to maintain Ainsworth-Orleans Beach as to decrease trips to Spirit Lake, and this new trailhead would then need maintained. Jordan discussed the grant monies that are going into the project and said the maintenance portion is still under talks between county entities but said she thinks the bathroom at the trailhead is important.

Board members asked if the city of Spirit Lake could take on maintenance of this bathroom. Sorenson added that perhaps with two bathrooms in Spirit Lake and another the former Inn at Okoboji property that maybe the conservation board will need to relook at the Ainsworth-Orleans Beach agreement. Jordan asked if there could be a bathroom cleaning contractor, and Mueske said that would be better than the conservation board using manpower for it.

Sorenson added that there is dispute over parking lot land at Ainsworth-Orleans Beach. The dispute is between the landowner and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

-The deed for the former Inn at Okoboji property has not been completed, and Sorenson said with the COVID-19 restrictions that he is not sure how quickly that will move forward.

-Anderson said, as director of the Iowa Great Lakes Sanitary District, that the gravity sewer line at Brooks Golf and repairs have been completed. The sewer line that goes to the nature center and golf course still needs to be cleaned, televised and tested. About 1,200 feet of pipe were put in along Nature Center Road as of last week. The project appears to be ahead of schedule.

Nature Center Road will be maintained as a gravel road for a year to allow the road to settle before it is paved in the spring of 2021.

-Sorenson said for the lodge, a frontage road from the nature center entrance is being considered rather than having a separate entrance for the lodge. That would allow the current camera system to be able to see people coming into the driveway. There will also be separate security cameras set up inside and outside of the lodge.

Jordan asked if a frontage road would affect the new sewer line to the lodge, but Anderson said it should not affect it. The frontage road would be closer to the Nature Playscape than the road. Jordan asked if that would pose a safety issue for children, but Sorenson said there will be space between and that there are logs that compose a barrier for the Nature Playscape.

-Sorenson asked the people doing the sewer project if they could bring dirt to be utilized for the lodge project, and they have brought about four loads of dirt so far.

-Mueske asked about a replacement for Roth while she goes on maternity leave. Hiring for that has been placed on hold during the current conditions.

Adjournment: Kleen motion, Mueske second. Approved. Adjourn at 5:37 p.m.