

# Clinton County Conservation Board

## Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2020

via WebEx

### **Welcome & Introductions:**

The regular meeting of the Clinton County Conservation Board was called to order by Chair Dan Srp on April 14, 2020; at 6:32pm.

Board members present: Dan Srp, Gloria Friederichsen, Jeff Beckwith, Rita Hart, & Brian Grell  
Staff present included Jill Schmidt, Darin Voss, Chip Brown, Brad Taylor, Dave Schneden, and Tara Sbertoli  
Guests present: Jim Irwin

### **Meeting Minutes:**

Meeting minutes from the March 25, 2020 were presented. Rita Hart moved, Gloria Friederichsen seconded, to approve the minutes, motion carried.

**Financial Report:** Financial reports for April were presented. Jeff Beckwith moved, Gloria Friederichsen seconded, and approved the financials, motion carried.

**Darin Voss - Natural Resource Report:** Currently, I am still working out of the office full time. I have been trying to get out into the field as much as possible but right now I have had a lot of office work. Brophy Creek - Hinkle surveying was able to locate pins for the lane to the property on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Fortunately, he was able to locate existing pins and he put in a few more flags along the lane. It would have been way more expensive if he would have needed to set new pins. I ordered seed to seed the lane down. Al and I went to sign lane and had a discussion with Bill Wenzel. He does not want signs around bin site, so they are not in their way when putting up augers and such. He also expressed concern of putting in a parking lot with fence or guard rail. But does not have a problem if we leave it open. (I will send photos, maps and a proposed agreement of this area and discuss more at the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting) Hoffmann Addition Wetland Funds - I put together a letter and sent information requesting the reimbursement of the \$40,000 to Mike with Ducks Unlimited. I have since talked with Mike and he said they should have everything they need now to issue a payment. He was going to send it all in to national and he thought we should have a payment in approximately 3 weeks barring any setbacks. However, we do still need to show us over all match of the project which is the funds used for the acquisition. They will also need to see the appraisal for this. The IA DNR will do an appraisal review. Other things they needed was a Copy of Deed with a notice of grant restriction, a closing statement and a statement of just compensation. Mike with DU and the Heritage Foundation have been helpful guiding me through this whole process. I finally tracked down the appraisal and sent it to Mike but am waiting to hear back. Petersen addition - Property has been closed on. Pheasants Forever currently owns it and holds the deed. Once we come up with the remainder of the funds (hopefully sometime around October if we are awarded the Habitat Stamp Grant) they will do a bargain sale. I contacted Kathleen with Iowa DNR about the habitat stamp grant to see what we needed to do to reapply for that. We will need to send a cover letter along with a copy of the application stating that we are still interested in applying during the next round. We will need to update the application to reflect new ownership, include any additional funds we receive and that there will be a bargain sale. The appraisal is good for a year from when it was done (November 20, 2019). However, it will need to be updated to reflect the new ownership and make sure that the DNR is an intended user for the appraisal. I contacted the Appraiser on 4/6/2020 he

thought it would take around 30 days to complete but did not want to make any promises considering today's circumstances. The cost is going to be around \$1,000 to have the appraisal updated. We need to act soon as the habitat stamp grant is due the end of May. The REAP grant is also an option, but it sounded like we would hold off on applying for that until we know if we are awarded the Habitat Stamp Grant.

Plant inventory. Ben Martinsen - Trees have been cut off the gas pipeline right-of-way it is a 20 ft clearing approximately 50 feet east of original right of way. We were supposed to be notified prior to that happening so we could possibly find a buyer of the logs that were cut. However, we were not notified, and it will be difficult to get anyone back there to get them out with the current conditions. They did not take nearly as many trees down as they had once planned.

Update: (before placed on administrative leave) Walt had tried to get a hold of Alliant but to my knowledge got no response. There was supposed to be an agreement between Alliant, Kevin Oetken and CCB on the trees being logged once cut, but Alliant did not notify us before cutting them.

Tree and shrub spraying - Sprayed trees and shrub rows that we have planted over the past few years at McAndrews and Lost Nation to keep weeds from competing with them.

Prescribe Burning - I have completed burn plans for the areas in which we intend to burn this season. We got a good start on the burn season last week. We burned Monday-Wednesday and have completed 6 burns for a total of 180 acres. I have 8 more burns planned for a total of 170 acres.

Private lands - starting to get a lot of inquiries from private landowners about seed, drill rentals, plantings and habitat questions.

Equipment Maintenance - Have been getting equipment ready for the spring season but I still have a way to go.

Food Plots - Al has mowed food plots to prep them for planting this spring.

**Brad Taylor - East Report:** First and foremost, we are staying safe and staying healthy. With the governor's proclamation this week we were ordered to close the campgrounds for all recreational camping. We had already closed all playgrounds, bathrooms, buildings, and cabins to all public. We did get a confirmation on the proclamation we can allow camping to those in the medical field seeking isolation. We have a form for them to fill out if someone shows interest. This goes until April 30<sup>th</sup> as of right now. The cabins at rock creek did not have any bookings this month so it was a non-issue for us. Miss-Elk-Ton is rented for 12 days and since they were already in the cabin at the time of their stay it was permitted that they could continue to stay. When it comes time to do the check out and cleaning, we will let it sit empty for several days before we go in. The river will be creating this weekend at about 19.3 which is 1 foot or so over the main road. Water will enter the basement but only by a few inches. The rest of the park will be fine if it does not get much higher. We are still waiting on FEMA for approval of the new camp pedestals. Hopefully, we will have word before the water goes down. The camp store will hopefully open when the covid-19 clears up. We still need staff for the store but will not be able to do much in the form of hiring until we get closer to opening. I am hopeful to have it open by Memorial Day weekend.

**Chip Brown – West:** Worked on nature center trying to come close to deadline completion. Helped with prairie burns. Schaefer and I burned the prairie in the back valley. Schaefer mowed what was left. Dave has been finishing off his vacation time. I have had several meetings. Took first water sample of year. Lots of Covid-19 stuff.

### **Environmental Education Report:**

Animal care @ Office, Eden Valley & Rock Creek

Office: 4 snakes, 5 turtles, 2 raptors, 3 salamanders, a toad, a tree frog and crickets (used as food)

Eden Valley: 2 snakes, fish aquarium Rock Creek: Turtle Island, touch tank & fish aquarium

Animal Care schedule for staff (Jess) Raptor perches have been rewrapped/ new ones made for backup/rearranged perches, Maintenance on bird equipment i.e. leashes/jesses/travel boxes, Deep clean of enclosures, Water dishes switched out for summer, Completed the scheduled replacement of heat lamps/filters Field Work: Blue bird boxes cleaned and prepped Lake Malone & Wheatland Wildlife area (Chuck) Invasive Species brush control @ Sherman (Chuck & Mark), Burning (All), Tree cutting @ Sherman (Chuck), Trail clearing (Chuck) Office/Computer work: Email correspondence (All), Program numbers are up to date (All) and are in the process of being compiled (Mark), Online Training (All) Summer program planning/calendar of events (All), Covid-19 project list (All), Newsletter articles (All) REAP grant (Mark), FHNB paperwork, update for 2020 event (Jill), Electronic Meetings (Jill, Mark & Jess), DeWitt Central High School Interview/Project (Jill), Office cleaning/organizing (All), Organizing of pictures/files on computers (All), Facebook presence (All)

### **Discussion/Possible Action**

**Eden Valley Addition Update:** Currently tiling bathroom and drywall is ready for texture and paint. We are not going to meet April 30<sup>th</sup> deadline with all that is going on. We are under budget so far and still need to purchase tables, chairs, displays, etc. for the hall.

**Rock Creek Update:** River has crested, and boat docks will go in as soon as the water is down. Current balance after paying claims approved today is \$35,902.11

**FEMA Update:** Nothing to report

**Seasonal Positions:** County has stopped the hire of seasonals at this time due to Covid-19. Board advises to move forward with phone interviews and make conditional offers when county is cleared and begins opening. Staff is open to assist with other areas and can help with cleanup of store to be ready for opening.

**AmeriCorps Grant Application Update** – 2021 This year's start date has been postponed until May 26<sup>th</sup>. Grant application for 2021 is due in May. We will find out in August and will need matching funds, last year the cost was \$3600.

**Well Pump – Eden Valley residence** – 1999 well switch and gauge have been replaced three times. Brown presented quotes to the board for repair and replacement. Jeff Beckwith made a motion to move forward with Option 3 and replacing the pump (\$5,000) pending the approval of the budget amendment, Gloria Friederichsen seconded. Motion carried. Vote 5 – yes

**Habitat stamp grant – Petersen addition to EV** – Darin Voss requested the approval to have an appraisal done for the grant application, which will give 2 points towards the score. The cost of the appraisal is \$1,000. The grant is due May 29<sup>th</sup>. Rita Hart made a motion to approve having an appraisal completed for the grant application, Brian Grell seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote 5 – yes

Brophy Creek access – The narrow entrance to the property was discussed. Neighbor has concerns with parking near his grain bins and access. Board discussed parking to the north as well. Dan to speak to Mike Wolf about a possible agreement for access signed by both parties. Tabled.

**Interview Team – Interview Date/Time** - Board discussed the procedures for the interview team. It was decided that Interview team consisting of Brian Grell, Jeff Beckwith, Dawn Aldridge, Chip Brown and Tara Sbertoli would go through the applications and narrow down to 3-4 candidates to be interviewed by the board in a public meeting and can be a closed session if requested by candidates. Application deadline is May 1<sup>st</sup>. Dawn will be forwarding all applications after May 1<sup>st</sup>. Team to review applications and set up interviews for the third week in May and make offer of employment last week in May to start around June 1- 14.

**Approval of Park Officer Policy** – Park Officer Policy was reviewed by the board. Gloria Friederichsen made a motion to approve the policy with amending the last page to be signed by the chair only and officer acknowledgement page for signature to be added. Brian Grell seconded motion. Motion carried. Vote 5-yes

**Budget Amendment Request** – Jeff Beckwith made a motion to approve the budget amendment request for \$15,000 to cover the cost of director payout along with Eden Valley well and a stump grinder. Gloria Friederichsen seconded motion. Motion carried. Vote 4 – yes 1 – no (Hart)

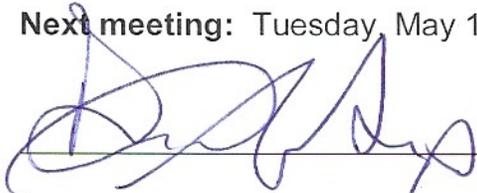
**Possible Approval of Stump Grinder** Rock Creek has lost several trees due to flooding and various reasons, the cost to hire someone to grind stumps outweighs the cost of purchasing a grinder. Jeff Beckwith made a motion to approve the purchase of a stump grinder contingent on the budget amendment request approved by the Board of Supervisors. Rita Hart seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vote – 5 yes.

Clinton County COVID-19 Policies & Closures Due to the Covid – 19 outbreak the county has implemented new policies specific to Covid-19, which are being changed as needed. Rita Hart made a motion to approve and adopt all county policies specific to Covid-19 from here on out. Motion was seconded by Jeff Beckwith. Motion carried. Vote – 5 yes.

Adjournment

Dan Srp adjourned the meeting at 9:04 pm.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, May 12, 2020 – 6pm - Location via WebEx



Dan Srp, President



Brian Grell, Secretary/Treasurer