

**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES OF THE THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021 BOARD MEETING**

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Woodbury County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center beginning at 4:00 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant (via phone), Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth, and Suzan Boden (via phone)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Dan Heissel, Brian Stehr, Dawn Snyder, and Dawn Bostwick

**OTHERS PRESENT**

None

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Gehling called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda**

**MOTION** by Neil, second by Cindy.

To approve the consent agenda.

**VOTE:** Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth  
& Suzan Boden

Nay: None

Absent: None

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

- C1. Approve Minutes of the February 11, 2021 Regular Meeting and February 18, 2021 Special Meeting
- C2. Approve the January 2021 and February 2021 Claims and Expenditures
- C3. Receive and Place on File the February 2021 Financial/Budget Report
- C4. Acceptance of Gifts/Donations:
  - Gary Lemoines for \$60 cash for Tale Trail story trail
  - Chris Zellmer-Zant for children's books for Tale Trail story trail
  - Gene & Ginger Martin for \$50 cash for garden plants

- Gene & Ginger Martin for \$750 for Scarlett raptor adoption
- MacDonald Smith Memorial gifts:
  - Mary Amici \$100.00
  - Frank & Sandi Baron \$25.00
  - Mark & Ellen Dickey \$100.00
  - Andrew & Gabriella Galinsky \$50.00
  - Marsha Gunderson \$30.00
  - Marvin & Karen Heidman \$100.00
  - Lori Newbrough \$25.00
  - Stan & Barb Orzechowski \$200.00
  - John & Kari Richardson \$150.00
  - Fern Rocklin \$25.00
  - Rex & Maria Rundquist \$50.00
  - John & Patricia Scherrman \$25.00
  - Dawn Snyder \$50.00
  - Stacey Snyder & Kenny Leuenberger \$25.00

**ITEM R2. Presentation of Conservation Items for City Public Auction**

Brian distributed the list of items from various park areas to be placed for sale on the City’s public auction website.

**ITEM R3. Campground Fee Increase**

Dan distributed the camping survey results from the Iowa County Conservation System, as well as camping rates from Nebraska and South Dakota state parks. He noted that WCCB camping fees were last adjusted in 2014.

It was noted that improved amenities at each of the parks, in addition to increased electric rates, warrant an increase in rates at this time. Park electricity expense increased from \$55,608 in 2014 to \$66,964 in 2020.

**MOTION** by Neil, second by Chris.

To approve and authorize an increase of camping fees of \$5 for electric and electric/water sites and \$2 for tent sites effective April 30, 2021.<sup>7-21</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth & Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

Dan noted that the parks will be opening on Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, this year instead of May 1<sup>st</sup> to allow for a full weekend of camping.

Cabin pricing was briefly discussed. Cabin fees were last increased in 2017. Dan would like to discuss doing away with the weekday/weekend rate differential. More information will be provided for review at the next meeting.

**ITEM R4. Capital Improvement Projects Update**

**1. Brown’s Lake – Beach & Road Projects – Update on Progress**

Dan reported that he had met with the county engineer and his staff at Brown’s Lake. They advised him not to base costs on \$60/square yard, but to plan for \$100/square yard with the hopes of getting \$80/square yard. Dan suggested bidding the beach project first, and making sure funds are sufficient before bidding the next project. Discussion was held regarding current construction prices and whether delaying the concession building piece would help with costs. Dan would like to bid the building separately and have the flexibility to back off if the construction prices are too high and

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<sup>7-21</sup> To approve and authorize an increase of camping fees of \$5 for electric and electric/water sites and \$2 for tent sites effective April 30, 2021.

take too much of the budget. Concerns were expressed about having an overall plan for Bigelow Park before the roads are paved and cannot be changed.

Brief discussion was held regarding the beach fence not being on the property line and the potential dispute if it is moved to expand the beach area. Board members agreed that it was worth looking into and asked Dan to get a survey done and see what would be gained.

## **2. Brown’s Lake – Shoreline & Pier Update – Informational**

Dan reported that Lieber Construction will be coming back in to clean up roots and will take slope down to 4:1 for an additional cost of \$5,000. Staff asked if they could also take some of the first phase down to a 4:1 slope. Dan advised that this may cost an additional \$5,000, and the board agreed that he could make the decision on whether to proceed.

Dan provided drone pictures of the completed pier which will also be sent to Gilchrist and MRHD with the grant completion reports. Once submitted, the \$100,000 MRHD payment will be processed. The \$50,000 Gilchrist payment has already been received.

Aaron noted that some additional rock is needed along the shoreline and that a culvert also needs repaired.

Dan stated that he had Don Dixon make ten fish structures to be positioned around the pier as fish attractants at a cost of \$50 each for materials. He will send pictures to board members.

## **3. Salsness Dam Repair Issue**

Dan distributed a bid from Johnston Excavating for repairing the Salsness dam at a cost of \$59,840. Dan and Brian also met with them to discuss the project. The dam is currently 3-4’ wide on top but would be expanded to 10-12’ so a tractor can cross it. The slope will be taken to 3:1 and the dirt packed around the pipe, so the problem doesn’t reoccur. Dan reported that the middle of the dam currently sways down 3-4’, and if the beaver dam goes, it will sink the rest of the way. The water level is 18” higher than the tube because of the beaver dam. Johnston also provided a second bid of \$41,000 without the widened top. Dan advised that this could be funded through the CIP account right now.

**MOTION** by Neil, second by Cindy.

To approve and accept the proposal from Johnston Excavating to reinforce the Salsness dam at a cost of \$59,840.<sup>8-21</sup>

**VOTE:**   Aye:     Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth  
                                       & Suzan Boden  
              Nay:     None  
              Absent:  None

## **4. Nature Center Drainage Repair Cost**

Dan reported that Mike Barkley didn’t have the time or equipment to make the drainage repairs at the nature center. Forest Johnston met with Dan and Brian and stated that the pipe was installed

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<sup>8-21</sup> To approve and accept the proposal from Johnston Excavating to reinforce the Salsness dam at a cost of \$59,840.

wrong originally and should have extended to the bottom. Brian reviewed their proposed plan to repair the issue using on-site dirt while saving as many good trees as possible for a total cost of \$14,900 which would be paid for through the Nature Center fund.

Dan stated that there is also a possibility that in the process they could leave a flattened area near the parking lot to make a 30' x 30-40' flat pad for an open shelter house.

**MOTION** by Cindy, second by Suzan.

To approve and accept the proposal from Johnston Excavating for drainage repair at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center in the amount of \$14,900.<sup>9-21</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth  
& Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

**ITEM R5. Board member/staff reports**

**1. Administrative items**

Dan reported on the following items:

**a. April Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on April 15, 2021, at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center.

**b. Zook Grant Agreement**

Dan reported that he had received the Habitat Stamp grant paperwork from the DNR for the grant award of \$146,438 on the Zook property acquisition.

**MOTION** by Cindy, second by Suzan.

To approve and enter into the Cooperative Agreement for the Habitat Stamp grant program with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and receive grant funding of \$146,438 for purchase of the Zook property.<sup>10-21</sup>

**VOTE:** Aye: Aaron Gehling, Chris Zellmer-Zant, Cindy Bennett, Neil Stockfleth  
& Suzan Boden  
Nay: None  
Absent: None

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<sup>9-21</sup> To approve and accept the proposal from Johnston Excavating for drainage repair at the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center in the amount of \$14,900.

<sup>10-21</sup> To approve and enter into the Cooperative Agreement for the Habitat Stamp grant program with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and receive grant funding of \$146,438 for purchase of the Zook property.

**d. O’Connell Property**

Dan reported that the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation will close on the O’Connell property on March 26<sup>th</sup> and will hold it until grant money is acquired for repurchase. The INHF Board approved it with no concerns because of successful past partnerships with WCCB.

**e. Annual Report**

Dan presented a rough draft of the WCCB annual report for FY20. He asked board members to review the report for changes so that it can be signed at the next meeting.

**f. Sign Material**

Dan stated that he had received sign material orders from other counties and would probably order 100 sheets, reserving 20 for Woodbury County. They will be stored at Southwood.

**g. Old Business**

None

**h. Other Business**

Dan reported that he had been contacted by the DNR about doing a Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring (MSIM) survey on the Chapman easement. The property owner was very agreeable, but the DNR decided against it because there are bulls on the property and they employ college students unfamiliar with livestock. They have opted to survey the Salsness and Zook properties, as well as Oak Ridge. It will be a full inventory, which will demonstrate whether management has changed and improved things or if things have deteriorated.

Dan stated that although the board had expressed at the long-range planning meeting the need to hire someone to do management plans, the Board of Supervisors doesn’t have the budget to add staff. He reported that he has been working with Brian to try to find ways to accomplish it by using a team approach with a possible restructuring of current field staff and seasonal positions.

**2. Park Activities**

Brian reported on the following park activities:

- Park staff has been cleaning up dead trees and burning brush piles.
- Thomas Cobb was added as the new Resource Tech at Little Sioux Park on March 1<sup>st</sup>. He worked several summers at Little Sioux and is a Correctionville native, so will be a good fit.
- Staff completed most of the tree removal at Owego before it got too muddy. This will be followed up with a burn this spring. Brian stated that there hasn’t been a very good fire rotation there in the past, but he is confident that a three-year rotation will be established.
- There was a major winter kill of fish at Snyder Bend, drawing lots of public attention, as well as lots of eagles and pelicans. Dan stated that the DNR plans to shock it in April, and this will save them over \$100,000. The lake is at the lowest level it has ever been. It is a blessing that it happened as this will make the lake much safer for the public. Most were rough fish, and there were a lot of 25-pound carp.
- Staff has been gearing up for spring burns and getting lines prepped.

- Erik has been working on converting signs to the plastic material as time allows.
- Officers have law enforcement training to finish up. Bias training will be done online. They received some free training at Snyder Bend on trapping laws.
- Brian trained all officers on the body camera operation, software, and department policy. Recordings are stored on 2TB hard drives for as long as possible for any ongoing investigation and possible training use. The policy forbids staff to delete or share recordings. If the public or press requests a recording, the county attorney will be consulted to make that decision. The WCCB policy is heavily based on the Sheriff's office policy and has been approved by County Attorney.
- The new Ford F150 ordered in September has arrived. Brian and Dan will be installing lights and equipment, and the truck will then be taken in for radio and antenna installation.

### **3. Nature Center Activities**

Dawn reported on the following Nature Center activities:

- Dawn and three Nature Calls committee members met with beer distributors on Monday, and they liked the idea of doing something at the nature center. Tyler provided mapping and Beacon pictures. The committee will work to come up with a plan and dates. Initial thoughts are to have beer vendors, food trucks and art vendors in the parking lot. The change in venue was prompted by uncertainty of safety, but it was also noted that this is the 17<sup>th</sup> year and most attendees have never been to the nature center. It would allow people to see the center and what their donations are contributing to. It would also eliminate the expense of convention center rental and catering. Possible dates are September 18th or 25th in the afternoon. Dawn will send sponsor contact lists by email.
- A fantastic group of volunteers has been helping with redesigning three of the six garden beds at the nature center.
- Naturalists have been participating in virtual and in-person IAN workshop this week.
- Dawn spoke with Katie Roberts at the Siouland Community Foundation meeting and discussed the endowment fund and the possibility of working with the board to see how to get that money invested.
- Cindy mentioned that their school is having virtual family events on growing for spring, and that Theresa and Kari provided a fabulous video which will be accessed on Sunday by approximately 800 people. The Sioux City Journal will be reporting about it on Monday.

### **4. Board**

Discussion was held regarding a land development proposal being put forth by Keith Radig for the gravel pit area by Little Sioux Park. Chris has had conversations with Keith, Mark Nahra, and Dave Gleiser. There is a longstanding agreement for Little Sioux Park to take possession of the land from Secondary Roads after the gravel is mined. Mark Nahra was supposed to have put the agreement into writing but failed to get it done. It is recorded in the meeting minutes, however. Mark said he will get it done.

The 2020 camping receipts report was presented. An additional comparison of receipts for tents versus campers was requested.

### **ITEM R6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

The above minutes were recorded by Dawn Bostwick.

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Recording Secretary, Dawn Bostwick

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Board Secretary, Neil Stockfleth

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Board Chair, Aaron Gehling