LINN COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2020, BOARD MEETING

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Linn County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on June 22, 2020, at Riverside Shelter, Pinicon Ridge County Park, Central City, IA 52214.

Board Members Present
Steve Emerson, John Hanson, Hillary Hughes and George Kanz

Board Members Absent
Cindy Burke

Staff Present
Dennis Goemaat, Director; Daniel Gibbins, Deputy Director; Randy Burke, Planner; Ryan Schlader, Community Outreach; Dana Kellogg, Natural Resources Manager; Aaron Batchelder, Resource Manager; Nick Haight, Resource Technician; Nathan Allen, Resource Technician

Others Present

Call To Order
Board President Emerson called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM. Kanz was appointed acting Secretary.

Public Comment
None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

Motion by Hanson, second by Kanz

To approve the consent agenda.

Vote: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Burke, Hughes

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve the May 18, 2020 Monthly Meeting Minutes

ITEM C2. Approve claims list and expenditures – Claims List #2020-12.
Claims and Transfer list #2020-12 involving claim #12-870 through claim #12-1090.


ITEM C4. Receive and place on file the May 2020 activity report.
ITEM C5.  **Acceptance of gifts.**
1. Gift #44-2020 – Monetary contribution ($300) from Beverly Blasingame for a Legacy Tree to be planted at Morgan Creek Park in memory of Susan Pecka.
2. Gift #45-2020 – Monetary contribution ($1,300) from Megan Ballantyne to purchase a bench for Palisades-Dows Preserve.
3. Gift #46-2020 – Monetary contribution ($300) from Gina Johnson for a Legacy Tree to be planted at Morgan Creek Park in memory of Jim Bornstein.

ITEM C6.  **Approve equipment purchases – ATV, motor grader and 1-ton dump truck.**

ITEM C7.  **Authorize disposal of excess picnic tables by donating them to local nonprofits.**

ITEM C8.  **Authorize the director to sign a contract for asphalt repairs to the Cedar Valley Trail surface near Tower Terrace Road.**

ITEM C9.  **Authorize the director to sign a contract for concrete installation at the Squaw Creek Park shop for material storage.**

ITEM C10.  **Capital Improvement Program updates report.**

REGULAR AGENDA:

ITEM R2.  **Public hearing regarding the plans and specifications, form of contract and estimated construction costs for construction of the Morgan Creek Park shelter, playground and restrooms, Project #3-19.**

The Conservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with Iowa law regarding the proposed plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated costs for the Morgan Creek Park shelter, playground, and restrooms, Project #3-19. The published notice of the public hearing was presented. No written or oral comments or objections were received.

Hughes joined the meeting at 12:01 PM

**MOTION** by Hughes, second by Hanson

To close the public hearing.

**VOTE:**
- aye; all present
- nay; none
- absent: Burke
ITEM R3. Discuss and decide on Resolution #2020-5, approval of the plans and specifications, form of contract and estimated construction costs concerning the Morgan Creek Park shelter, playground and restrooms, Project #3-19.

Randy Burke reviewed the plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated construction costs concerning the Morgan Creek Park shelter, playground and restrooms, Project #3-19.

MOTION by Kanz, second by Hughes

To adopt Resolution #2020-5 indicating that a public hearing was held and approving the plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated costs for the Morgan Creek Park wetland, Project #3-19, and to authorize staff to receive and open bids.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Burke

ITEM R4. Discuss and decide regarding bids received and awarding a contract for Squaw Creek Park wetland and stream improvement project and authorizing the Director to sign the construction contract, Project #26-19D.

Dana Kellogg reviewed the bids received for Squaw Creek Park wetland and stream improvement project, Project #26-19D. Apparent low bid was Jim Schroeder Construction Inc. with a bid of $225,000. The following bids were received:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bidder</th>
<th>Total Bid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boomerang</td>
<td>$277,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder Contracting</td>
<td>$235,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Iowa Excavating &amp; Concrete</td>
<td>$230,613.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Schroeder Construction Inc.</td>
<td>$225,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Bridge &amp; Culvert, L.C.</td>
<td>$259,650.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson Contractors, Inc.</td>
<td>$255,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MOTION by Hanson, second by Hughes

To approve the contract for construction of the Squaw Creek Park wetland and stream improvement project, Project #26-19D, and authorize the Executive Director to sign and execute the contract on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Burke
ITEM R5.  **Discuss and decide on Resolution #2020-6 authorizing staff to submit a State Recreation Trails grant for the Grant Wood Trail gap from Oxley to Creekside Road.**

Randy Burke reviewed the State Recreation Trails grant application for the Grant Wood Trail gap from Oxley to Creekside Road.

**MOTION** by Kanz, second by Hughes

To approve Resolution #2020-6 and authorize the Board President or Executive Director to sign and submit the grant application on behalf of the Board.

**VOTE:**

- aye; all present
- nay; none
- absent: Burke

ITEM R6.  **Discuss and decide on Resolution #2020-7 authorizing staff to submit a State Recreation Trails grant for paving a section of the Grant Wood Trail from Waldo’s Rock Park in Marion to Oxley Road.**

Randy Burke reviewed the State Recreation Trails grant for paving a section of the Grant Wood Trail from Waldo’s Rock Park in Marion to Oxley Road. Hanson asked if the remnant telegraph poles would be retained. Burke confirmed that the poles would not be included with this paving project.

**MOTION** by Hanson, second by Hughes

To approve Resolution #2020-7 and authorize the Board President or Executive Director to sign and submit the grant application on behalf of the Board.

**VOTE:**

- aye; all present
- nay; none
- absent: Burke
ITEM R7. Discuss and decide on the proposed conservation easements from Camp Wapsie YMCA camp regarding two conservation easements of approximately 10 and 31 acres of land adjoining the YMCA Camp near Central City.

Kellogg reviewed the proposed conservation easements from Camp Wapsie YMCA Camp.

MOTION by Kanz, second Hanson

To approve the two conservation easements and authorize the Board President to sign the easements on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Burke

ITEM R8. Discuss and decide regarding authorizing the Board President to sign a subordination agreement between Camp Wapsie YMCA, Farmers State Bank and the Conservation Board related to the conservation easement.

Kellogg reviewed the subordination agreement between Camp Wapsie YMCA, Farmers State Bank and the Conservation Board related to the conservation easement.

MOTION by Kanz, second Hughes

To approve the subordination agreement between Camp Wapsie YMCA, Farmers State Bank and the Conservation Board and authorize the Board President to sign the easement agreement on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Burke
ITEM R9. Discuss and decide regarding authorizing the Director to sign a grant agreement with The Nature Conservancy retroactive to June 9, 2020 for funding the Morgan Creek Park wetlands.

Goemaat reviewed the grant agreement with The Nature Conservancy for funding the Morgan Creek Park wetlands.

MOTION by Hughes, second Hanson

To approve the grant agreement and authorize the Executive Director to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Burke

ITEM R10. Discuss and decide regarding the annual Director performance review.

The Board discussed the Director performance and evaluation.

MOTION by Kanz, second by Hughes

To approve the annual Director performance appraisal documents.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Burke

ITEM R11. Discuss and decide regarding authorizing the Board President to sign an agreement with the city of Hiawatha for a connection to the Cedar Valley Trail.

Gibbins reviewed the agreement with the city of Hiawatha for a connection to the Cedar Valley Trail.

MOTION by Hanson, second Hughes

To approve the agreement and authorize the Executive Director to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Burke
ITEM R12. **Board member / staff reports – Board members and staff may report and/or discuss meetings or activities in which they have been involved.**

1) Community Outreach/Marketing: Schlader reported on upcoming virtual public input online for the Pinicon Ridge Dam project through subject matter videos and a questionnaire. Hughes asked about design status by the engineer and how the fish and mussel ecology goals were used in design consideration. Gibbins confirmed fishery and mussel ecology goals were primary concerns incorporated into the design and that the department was assisted by staff from Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

2) Updates:
   a. COVID-10 Response Update – Goemaat discussed current operations and continued response to the pandemic. Batchelder discussed specific protocols within Pinicon Ridge Park concerning facilities and boat/canoe rental. Batchelder noted park observations of high levels of use of park open areas including campgrounds. Staff have observed varying response to social distance requests and staff have spread tables out at facilities to assist. Batchelder noted increased diversity in user groups. Goemaat noted appreciation for staff developing park operation protocols that were shared on a state level to other organizations.

   b. Preliminary Biotope plans for Wickiup Hill – Randy Burke discussed preliminary designs for the nature appreciation structures under design for Wickiup Hill. Hughes asked about materials and anticipated lifespan of the structure. Randy discussed options being looked at to try to get long-term low maintenance durability. Goemaat noted discussions with the architect on this question had occurred. Hughes asked about materials and their effect on wildlife and using this structure to test the product success. Burke indicated these considerations would be a part of the design process. Kanz suggested birding partner input. Goemaat confirmed birding volunteers at Wickiup would be valuable in the design process.

   c. New County ATV/UTV Ordinance – Goemaat discussed the newly passed ordinance allowing limited use of the ATV/UTV’s on some county roads. Parks are excluded by the ordinance and department rules. Staff preference would be to continue to prohibit them due to noise issues. Emerson indicated his preference for any future rule change would be to restrict use to established vehicle roads and parking lots within a park.
d. Update on Highway 100 trail bids – Randy Burke discussed Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) bids received. Randy Burke noted the IDOT submitted the contract early on June 23rd. Goemaat reviewed the overall Morgan Creek Park development project status including expected budget and timeline of construction. The Board concurred that staff should sign the trail project contract and add the item to the next Board meeting for retroactive action.

e. Legislative update – Goemaat discussed positive State fiscal budget outcomes concerning conservation related funding including REAP, State Recreation Trails grant funding and Community Attraction and Tourism grant funding. Goemaat discussed the Great American Outdoor Act legislation which would make the Land and Water Conservation Fund permanent. Kanz noted REAP was extended 2 years.

ITEM R13. Public comment

None.

ITEM R14. The Board will travel to the Pinicon Ridge Park dam in Central City to discuss the potential dam modification project.

Due to inclement weather, the Board did not travel to the dam but discussed concept designs at Riverside Shelter. The Board and staff reviewed preliminary concept designs and benefits of the various options in regard to safety, recreation, fisheries, river ecology and flooding impacts on the park.

ITEM R15. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:59 PM.

Catherine Kastens typed the above minutes.

[Signatures]

Recording Secretary

[Signature]

Board Secretary