LINN COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020, BOARD MEETING

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Linn County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on **August 17, 2020**, at Morgan Creek Shelter, Morgan Creek County Park, Palo, IA 52324.

**Board Members Present**
John Hanson, Cindy Burke, Hillary Hughes and George Kanz
Cindy Burke joined the meeting by phone.

**Board Members Absent**
Steve Emerson

**Staff Present**
Dennis Goemaat, Director; Daniel Gibbins, Deputy Director; Randy Burke, Planner; Shaun Reilley, Resource Manager; Josh Fossum, Assistant Resource Manager; Andrew Huck, Conservation Ecologist

**Others Present**
R.J. Carson

**Call To Order**
Board Vice President Hanson called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM.
Member Kanz was appointed acting Secretary.

**Public Comment**
None

**ITEM R1.**  **Approve Consent Agenda**
Hanson asked if staff time applied toward incidents was tracked. Goemaat noted the department typically tracks out of pocket costs only. Hughes asked if there was a comparison of days open in relation to visitor attendance. Goemaat noted staff will make a note on future visitor reports noting reduced days open in 2020 due to COVID and the derecho.

**Motion** by Kanz, second by Hughes

To approve the consent agenda.

**Vote:**

* aye; all present
* nay; none
* absent: Emerson

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

**ITEM C1.**  **Approve the July 22, 2020 Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**ITEM C2.**  **Approve claims list and expenditures – Claims List #2021-2.**
Claims and Transfer list #2021-2 involving claim #2-68 through claim #2-141.

**ITEM C3.**  **Receive and place on file the July 2020 financial/budget report.**
ITEM C4. Receive and place on file the July 2020 activity report.

ITEM C5. Acceptance of gifts.
   1. Gift #3-2021 – Monetary contribution ($750) from Linn County Trails association as a donation toward paving the Cedar Valley Trail.

ITEM C6. Capital Improvement Program updates report.

REGULAR AGENDA:

ITEM R2. Public hearing regarding the proposed plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated cost for pond construction at Squaw Creek Park, Project #26-19E.

The Conservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with Iowa law regarding the proposed plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated costs for pond construction at Squaw Creek Park, Project #26-19E. The published notice of the public hearing was presented. No written or oral comments or objections were received.

MOTION by Burke, second by Hughes

To close the public hearing.

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

ITEM R3. Discuss and decide on Resolution #2020-11, approval of the plans and specifications, form of contract and estimated construction costs concerning the pond construction at Squaw Creek Park, Project #26-19E.

Kellogg reviewed the plans and specifications, form of contract and estimated construction costs concerning the pond construction at Squaw Creek Park, Project #26-19E. Hanson asked if this pond would support healthy fish habitat. Kellogg confirmed the design depth will support healthy fish habitat year round.

MOTION by Kanz, second by Burke

To adopt Resolution #2020-11 indicating that a public hearing was held and approving the plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated costs for the Squaw Creek Park pond construction, Project #26-19E, and to authorize staff to receive and open bids.

VOTE: aye; all present
   nay; none
   absent: Emerson
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ITEM R4.  Discuss and decide on resolution #2020-12 setting date and time for the public hearing regarding the proposed plans, specifications, form of contract and estimated cost for a contract to erect the shelter and other components of the Morgan Creek Park redevelopment project, Project #3-19.

Randy Burke reviewed Resolution #2020-12 setting the date and time for the public hearing regarding redevelopment at Morgan Creek Park for Monday, September 28, 2020 at 10:30 AM. Hanson asked about wetland design within the rendering. Burke confirmed the wetlands will function to detain storm water runoff. Hughes asked about orientation of the layout in relation to the east hill and future lodge. Burke confirmed orientation of the amenities in relation to the future lodge.

MOTION by Kanz, second by Hughes

To approve Resolution #2020-12 setting the public hearing.

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

ITEM R5.  Discuss and decide on authorizing staff to order the playground for the Morgan Creek Park redevelopment project.

Randy Burke reviewed the 3 concepts received through the RFQ for the Morgan Creek Park redevelopment project playground. Hughes asked if any of the three designs offer more inclusive features than the others. Burke described the various inclusive elements of each proposal. Kanz commented that the Hedra proposal is very cutting edge design supportive of strategic plan goals. Goemaat noted that most of the proposals are similar in regard to their use of recycled materials. Hughes noted preference for a zip line like the Hedra that is off to the side to reduce cross-traffic and supported the Hedra design concept.

MOTION by Kanz, second by Hughes

To authorize staff to order the approved playground for the Morgan Creek Park redevelopment project.

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

Kellogg reported on the recent Chain Lakes Natural Area addition. Kanz asked if the county had ownership of the road. Kellogg confirmed it is a county owned and maintained road. Burke noted her preference to not allow trapping, and suggested future discussion due to concern for humane taking of game animals.

No action taken.

ITEM R7.  Discuss and decide regarding Resolution #2020-13 Designating the recent addition to Chain Lakes Natural Area as open to hunting and trapping.

Goemaat reviewed Resolution #2020-13 designating the recent addition to Chain Lakes Natural Area as open to hunting and trapping. Hanson asked if it was open to foraging. Goemaat confirmed it would be as long as it doesn’t harm the parent plant.

MOTION by Kanz, second Hughes

To approve Resolution #2020-13 designating the recent addition to Chain Lakes Natural Area as open to hunting and trapping.

VOTE: aye; all present
nay; none
absent: Emerson
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ITEM R8. Discuss and decide regarding Pinicon Ridge dam modification preferred option and direct the project engineer to proceed with additional planning for the selected option.

Gibbins reviewed dam modification options and public input received through the virtual open house conducted to gather public input on the dam modification design process. Gibbins reviewed letters received by mail in addition to the online survey from Richard Vanourney, Steve Hinnen and Merle Akers. Burke asked what the reasons were for the preferences in the letters. Gibbins communicated the various points given in the letters. Hughes noted staff have done well to communicate with the public, which has resulted in positive feedback.

MOTION by Hughes, second Burke

To approve the extended dual design option and authorize staff to direct the project engineer to proceed with additional planning of the Pinicon Ridge dam modification project.

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

ITEM R9. Discuss and decide regarding awarding a contract for engineering and design work for stream improvements to a tributary to Squaw Creek in Squaw Creek Park.

Kellogg reviewed the contract for engineering and design work for stream improvements to a tributary to Squaw Creek in Squaw Creek Park. Hanson asked about orientation within the park. Kellogg and Goemaat confirmed the area is to the south of the Meadowlark Shelter in Squaw Creek Park.

MOTION by Hughes, second Kanz

To approve the contract for engineering and design work for stream improvements to a tributary to Squaw Creek and authorize the Executive Director to sign and execute the contract on behalf of the Board.

VOTE: aye; all present  
nay; none  
absent: Emerson
ITEM R10. **Discuss proposed quinquennial celebration for the Linn Water and Land Legacy Bond.**

The Board discussed a future quinquennial celebration for the Linn Water and Land Legacy Bond. Goemaat proposed holding this celebration 5 years after the first bonds were sold. Hughes noted being mindful of current events later down the road in 2021. Consensus by the Board was to wait until 2021 to plan the event.

No action taken.

ITEM R11. **Discuss and decide regarding Resolution #2020-14 designating the reconstructed prairie at the southern edge of Squaw Creek Park as the Monarch Research Prairie.**

Gibbins reviewed Resolution #2020-14 designating the reconstructed prairie at the southern edge of Squaw Creek Park as the Monarch Research Prairie. Burke noted this would be a wonderful location for a large named Monarch Research Prairie.

**MOTION** by Burke, second Hughes

To approve Resolution #2020-14 designating the reconstructed prairie at the southern edge of Squaw Creek Park as the Monarch Research Prairie.

**VOTE:**
- aye; all present
- nay; none
- absent: Emerson
ITEM R12. **Discuss and decide regarding next steps for a potential name change to Squaw Creek and Squaw Creek Park.**

Goemaat provided an update on the potential name change to Squaw Creek. Goemaat noted support by Cedar Rapids and Marion jurisdictions and the Board of Supervisors. Hughes noted appreciation for the letters of support nominating the name Wanatee and asked what staff recommended. Burke noted support for the name change of Wanatee Park as a replacement for Squaw Creek Park.

**MOTION** by Burke, second Kanz

To retire the name Squaw Creek Park and replace it with Wanatee Park and to authorize staff to work with other jurisdictions to coordinate an application by Linn County Conservation to the US Board of Geological Names to request the name Squaw Creek be changed to Wanatee Creek.

**VOTE:** aye; Burke, Hughes, Kanz  
nay; Hanson  
absent: Emerson


Kellogg and Huck reviewed the Economic Benefits of Natural Resource Properties Managed by Linn County Conservation Board report. Kellogg explained the data sources and calculations for each major ecosystem type. Hughes noted next year it would be good to produce a 5-year summary of bond project’s value, and increase to the system. Hughes noted the permanency of the additions by the bond in addition to the monetary value for the community. Burke noted appreciation for the report and that it could be an educational tool for the value of the ecosystem.

No action taken.
ITEM R14. **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: Gibbins updated the Board on ongoing marketing and communications that have focused on dechero related operations. Marketing staff continues to gather and use project construction and natural resource related drone footage to show recent progress of bond related projects.

2) Updates:
   a. Legislative Update – Great American Outdoors Act – Goemaaat reviewed the passage of the Act as a permanent source of potential funding.
   b. Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grant update – Gibbins reviewed the current status of the Community Attraction and Tourism grant application for Morgan Creek redevelopment and the expected timeline for notification of awards by the State CAT Board.
   c. Biotope project status – Randy Burke reviewed the process for the 2 planned biotopes and timing of the final design.
   d. Possible land donation – Goemaaat reviewed a potential donation of land along the Cedar River to be used as a natural area.
   e. Goemaaat showed pictures of the cleanup work from the Derecho and commended staff efforts and talents to make progress toward cleanup.

ITEM R15. **Public comment**

None.

ITEM R16. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:59 PM

Catherine Kastens typed the above minutes.

[Signature]

Recording Secretary

[Signature]

Board Secretary