

Clinton County Conservation Board

Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2020

Welcome:

The regular meeting of the Clinton County Conservation Board was called to order by VP Dan Srp on January 14, 2020; at 6:04pm at the Grand Mound Office.

Board members present included Dan Srp, Gloria Friederichsen, Rita Hart, and Brian Grell. Staff present included Walt Wickham, Chip Brown, Allen Ketelsen, Tara Sbertoli, Duane & Denise Levein.

Election of Officers:

In the past practice has been that the Vice Chair takes the Chair position and a new Vice Chair is nominated. Friederichsen stated that she felt Srp was doing a great job as Vice Chair and she felt he would make a great Chair. Rita Hart questioned if Srp being the Chair was a conflict and would it be a concern. The position is the main point of contact for the board, recommends agenda items and attends the Board of Supervisors meetings. The Chair position does not entail more decision making than any board member. Srp questioned Hart to whether her issue was him being on the board at all due to being a Board of Supervisor. Hart stated that a lot of people have shown an interest on being on this board, but if no one has a concern then she is fine with this. Other counties in Iowa have had Board of Supervisors on CCB and as Chair for a one year standard operating procedure. Friederichsen made a motion to nominated Dan Srp as Chair, and the motion was seconded by Brian Grell. Motion carried. Grell asked the duties of Vice Chair. Vice Chair is to fill the duties of the Chair when the Chair is not present, such as lead the meetings. Rita Hart made a motion to nominate Friederichsen as Vice Chair, the motion was seconded by Brian Grell. Motion carried. Gloria Friederichsen then made a motion to nominate Brian Grell as the Secretary/Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Rita Hart. Motion carried.

Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes from the December 10, 2019 were presented. Brian Grell moved, Gloria Friederichsen seconded, to approve the minutes, motion carried.

Financial Report: Financial reports for January were presented. Rita Hart moved, Gloria Friederichsen seconded, and approved the financials, motion carried.

Administrative Reports: Walt Wickham: Executive Director's Report: The groups doing the fundraising for the acquisition of the Petersen Farm by Eden Valley have raised an additional \$86,000! This reduces the ask for the Habitat Stamp grant to \$250,000. I have submitted an amended application with the new lower request. We are still waiting to hear when the review committee site visits and grant review will be held, but it should be soon.

Work on the interior of the addition to Eden Valley has resumed. Chip and Dave have been running the wiring for lights, outlets, etc. under the direction of an electrician. When completed and inspected by the state, the electrician will make the final connections. When the electrical is completed, insulation will go in and the furnace can be turned on allowing the drywall to be hung and other finish work to begin.

We have received a portion of the FEMA funds for Rock Creek. Funds for silt removal and gravel replacement have been deposited in the Rock Creek account. Much of the work will wait until spring to be completed so as to avoid having the new gravel bladed off of the roads when snow plowing.

Last Monday I spoke with Dale Dalton, a CPA in Clinton about the situation with Chuck Jacobsen and the Sherman House. After our conversation, he told me that he didn't feel that this would be a taxable situation, however, he was asked to do a deeper investigation by County Attorney, Mike Wolf. I phoned Mr. Dalton to see if he would require any additional information from the conservation department. Mr. Dalton said he did not at this time and that he would thoroughly research the tax law and any applicable court cases. He said he would get back to me by January 14 with the results of his review. Walt will be meeting this month with the I.T. Department regarding joining the county network and also computer recommendations. Habitat Stamp Committee will be touring the property by Eden Valley on Thursday and scoring each applicant/and award in Waterloo on Friday. Walt will be attending. January 27, 28 & 29th is Winterfest School in Coralville. Most all staff will be attending, Tara will be staying back to feed animals and work at Rock Creek.

Darin Voss - Natural Resource Report: I was gone on vacation the whole first week of December and a few days between Christmas and the New Year so it was a short month for me. I participated in two Christmas bird counts this year including the Lost Nation and Camanche counts. The Lost Nation count for my area was down from years past in both the number of species and overall individual birds. I covered a different area this year for the Camanche count then what I normally covered. We didn't have a very high number of total species (27) but I was really impressed with the number of Trumpeter swans we counted (188). This really shows how important and successful Conservation efforts are.

Manikowski Prairie - Mowed the 10 - acre fallow field south of the creek in the northwest portion on the property. This was done to prep it for working on the creek line and cleaning up the debris that high water washed int and to prep it for seeding next spring. Mowed firebreaks. Put in water crossing in creek and cleaning snags out of creek as well as cutting hanging and problem trees along creek bank.

Equipment maintenance - Fork Truck had to change water pump, took out radiator and had Bill's radiator clean and flush as well as fix a few leaks and had to replace the neck as it was bent and leaking. Also completed general maintenance on it including changing oil, filters and belt

Training - Finished up with the online training that we've been assigned. This includes Carosh and IWMCA training.

Brad Taylor - East Report: With the 2019 camping season in the books I put some numbers together comparing 2018 and 2019 seasons. I included the main money makers for us. Because we take payments from 2 different sources, mycountyparks.com and the register at the camp store, I kept those separate then combined them for a grand total. If you remember 2018 it was not a great year and in 2019 we made 33% less in the store than we did in 2018. This was a difference of \$47,000. That is hard to make that much money up. A good chunk of that was camping income. Without campers we are not selling ice, wood, and food in the store. It is very hard to make money in the camp store without campers. Look over the numbers and if they are confusing call me and I'll walk you through them.

Ryan and I used several vacation days during December and early January. In between we cut and split wood, repaired a leaky touch tank in the nature center, and helped Darin with some tree clearing at Manikowski. We are hoping for the ground to freeze so we can cut trees in the campground with minimal amount of damage to the ground. I have also started making plans on turning a primitive camping area into electrical sites. This would add 13 new sites that would be minimal amount of flooding. We could keep them open with minor flooding when the lower end would be closed. This will not be cheap and we will need a grant to help with the cost. I also think if we added these sites, they would pay for themselves especially when the lower end is closed for a length of time.

Boat slip contracts have been mailed out and we should start receiving them over the next few months. We are starting to see a few reservations come through for the summer months at Rock Creek. These will pick up more in April and May. We have had a few reservations and Camp Miss Elk Ton in December, and everyone is happy with the place. We will be working with the boy scouts at the end of February and early March on some trail clearing. The Pintail cabin had no reservations in December, and a few booked for January. Rock Creek made \$1761 in the month of December. \$400 of that came from the Turtle Tank Sponsorship. \$521 of that was Christmas gifts for cabins or campsites. Here are some upcoming banquets from some great organizations. They have all helped the conservation board in many ways to help our mission. Please come and support them. Delta Waterfowl at Rock Creek January 25th, Whitetails banquet Vista Grande February 15th, and Pheasants Forever Wheatland March 21st. One thing I would like the board to consider is having a meeting that staff is invited to so we can all meet new board members and they can meet staff. I'm not sure if this would be a regular board meeting or a special one. I think it's important that the board knows who we are and what we do. I think a meeting like this should be done once a year. This is just a thought.

Chip Brown – West: West District Report was questioned. It was not emailed with other reports. Chip and crew have been working on nature center, Schaefer has been cutting a lot of wood. Trail work will need attention soon. All electrical ran and waiting for state inspection. Outlets and lighting to follow the approval of panel hook up. Insulation has been started and will be finished after inspection and then start furnace so that the flooring can be installed and then drywall.

Environmental Education Report: We made 12 schools visits for programming this month. We provided 43 programs total in the schools. These numbers are lower due to two weeks of Christmas break. Public Events Included - 3-Open Archery/Air Rifle Range programs (Mark), Hibernation Program @ Rock Creek (Jill), Bald Eagle Watch (Jess & Chuck). Outreach Programs • 1- senior program (Bickford Assistant Living - Jill)

The naturalists have been staffing the Eco Center 5 days/week. They have been trained on the store and some minimal food specials. Public programs have been added throughout the winter while having the Eco center open. Several staff participated in winter bird counts. The newsletter has been distributed with all winter programming. Mark finished the Teacher Newsletter Jill volunteered/attended REAP congress in Des Moines

Upcoming Events Mark is hosting an Eden Valley Open House and also a movie & popcorn event at Rock Creek. Jess, Brad & Ryan are putting on an ice rod building workshop. Many more public events in store the next couple of months, be sure to read the newsletter!

After Jill's article came out regarding the animal donations/sponsorships we received a \$400 donation to sponsor Turtle Island for one year. Recognition for this sponsor is in the works.

Old Business Possible Board Vote/Action.

Contract Mowing - Wickham passed out a worksheet consisting of the costs of mowing Malone and Killdeer on our own and also distributed a worksheet containing all the bids received. Staff raised a few questions about who would rake sand at beach, clean bathroom and pick up garbage. Also how questions people have at the park will be sent to the proper resource. The bids ranged from \$150 to \$746. Chip Brown spoke up stating that he didn't want to see our board leap in first with contract mowing. He stated that other parks do not contract out and that we also should not do it. Chips concerns included college students not getting the experience to become a park ranger. If contract mowing is started we are not protecting entry level positions/jobs. After much discussion the board assured staff that we do participate in entry level positions including AmeriCorps and having interns. And seasonal can do other jobs besides mowing, and will keep this in mind and provide opportunity. More discussion was made regarding saving money because conservation would not have to purchase a new mower this year, which is due to be replaced. Also the fact that this would free up seasonal position and Allen to work on other projects where we lack laborers. Gloria Friederichsen made a motion to have a one year trial on contract mowing for Malone and Killdeer Parks, keep the seasonal position and not purchase a new mower and Wickham to do a reference check on the three lowest bids and chose the best candidate. This to be reviewed in one year. The motion was seconded by Brian Grell. Motion carried.

Residence at Sherman Park – The county attorney has requested to research assessed taxes and suggested consulting with WPF CPA. Howes and Jefferies suggested that the house be rented for between \$900-\$1,000 and Central Realty recommended \$700-\$750. The auditor's office will need to add this to Jacobsen's taxable income information to his salary. Wickham still checking with state auditor and county attorney to determine that employee meets criteria or should be taxed. Other items discussed included employee on the clock when working on the house or not on the clock. Does he receive credit for mowing grass or trail maintenance, etc? Wickham to move forward with lease and email to board. Tabled at this time.

Five Year Plan – Rita Hart made a motion to schedule a planning session for a 5 year plan at a later date outside of our regular meeting. Gloria Friederichsen seconded motion and motion carried. Planning session to be scheduled at February meeting.

Corp of Engineers Lease Agreement Srp asked for a follow up on the insurance and spill prevention information/compliance with the Corps. Wickham informed board that the insurance was sent to the Corps in September, but the Corps requested it list them on the insurance certificate. Walt contacted Julie Bray and it was sent to them by AC Root. Wickham argued that RC didn't need spill prevention and the Corps told Wickham to do it anyway. Wickham later wrote a self-plan and self-inspection which was accepted by the Corps.

FEMA Update - A spreadsheet was passed around detailing the labor and materials spent to date at Rock Creek for flood damage. As of today we have \$5848.96 in labor and \$3738.00 in materials for grounds maintenance. Electrical still pending approval.

Annual Report - Wickham made changes as requested to the report and passed a new one out for the board. This item was tabled for the Board to review on February 11th meeting.

Eden Valley Addition Update –Floor came in at \$9,771 and was budgeted at \$11,000. All electrical ran and waiting for state inspection. Outlets and lighting to follow the approval of panel hook up. Insulation has been started and will be finished after inspection and then start furnace so that the flooring can be installed and then drywall.

Rock Creek Finance Update – Srp mentioned discussing the store hours at Rock Creek during the December meeting. Historically the eco center has been closed Monday thru Wednesday during the winter months. Balance to date for Rock Creek is \$46,052.75 and looks much better than a year ago. Still not out of the woods. Payroll began coming out of fund for Taylor this month. Balance of FEMA funds for grounds repair is \$34,911.04.

Open Discussion: There will be a Climate Change Presentation by Ray Wolf from the National Weather Service on February 4th at 6:30pm at Rock Creek. The public is invited. Friday morning will be Conservation Budget presentation to the BOS at 8:30am.

Roger McNeil contacted conservation recently regarding a tree on the fence at Hoffman. He would like to cut it down and take. Please thank him for doing so.

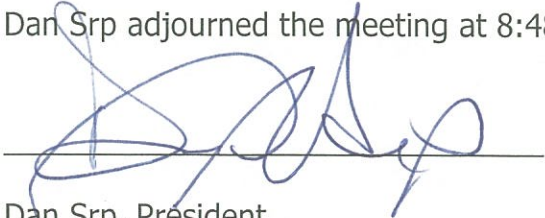
March 11 & 12th Walt and Dan will both go to the Clinton County Day at the Capitol – discuss items to take to legislators. Group attending will meeting ahead of time and decide on four issues.

Hosts of Sherman Park, Denise and Duane Levien attended the meeting. Levien's asked is it would be possible for secondary roads to run the road grader down through Sherman Park once a month. The also requested a chainsaw and gator for trail maintenance. If they had the equipment they would work on the trails. The educational posts identifying trees need to be redone. They have a new flag pole this year and the Boy Scouts will be maintaining. The board appreciated their efforts and discussed the liability issue of a chainsaw.

Srp discussed our trails being ADA compliant and searching for grant to fund this project. Dawn and Corey to attend an ADA Convention soon.

An Adult Pinewood Derby event is being planned by Walt and Dan in partnership with the Boy Scouts. More information coming soon.

Dan Srp adjourned the meeting at 8:48pm.



Dan Srp, President



Brian Grell, Secretary/Treasurer

