

Polk County Conservation Board
5:30 p.m. - Polk County Administration Bldg., Room 120
111 Court Ave., Des Moines, IA

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

The Polk County Conservation Board met in person for regular session on Wednesday, December 8, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

- #21-1201 Roll Call
Members Present: **Crane, Lewis, Mollenhauer (Zoom), Cataldo**
Members Absent: **Altringer**
- #21-1202 Public Comments
- #21-1203 New Employee Introductions
a. Shelly Nesheim – HR Specialist
b. Allison Wisgerhof – Youth Corps Coordinator
- #21-1204 Equestrian Center Challenge Trail Presentation
- #21-1205 Financial Reports
- #21-1206 **MOVED BY** Crane to approve the November 10, 2021 meeting minutes.
Vote Yea: **Crane, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Lewis**
Members Absent: **Altringer**

CONSENT AGENDA

- #21-1207 **Approving** bill list.
- #21-1208 **Ratifying** the recommendation to the Polk County Board of Supervisors to approve a permanent ingress/egress access easement to Daniel and Laura Miller near Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt.
- #21-1209 **Approving** rental and fee adjustments for the Jester Park and Thomas Mitchell cabins, electric, non-electric and full hookup campsites, and Jester Park Equestrian Center, effective January 3, 2022.
- #21-1210 **Approving** revised job classification/description for the Conservation Facility Attendant position(s) and establishing the miscellaneous pay rate at \$15.00 per hour following the Polk County Board of Supervisors resolution at their December 14, 2021 meeting.
- #21-1211 **Approving** the six week equipment lease agreement with Midwest Underground (MWU)-Bondurant for the Rayco T200 forestry mower in the

amount of \$22,500.00.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Cataldo to approve the consent agenda.

Vote Yea: **Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Lewis, Cataldo,**

Members Absent: **Altringer**

ACTION ITEMS

#21-1212 **Approving** both agreements with Shive Hattery and Hansen Company and Polk County Conservation Board for Professional Design Services and Construction Management Services for the Easter Lake North Shore Development Project for a total of \$732,000.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Lewis to approve Action Item 21-1212.

Vote Yea: **Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**

Members Absent: **Altringer**

#21-1213 **Approving** the proposal from Wright Outdoor Solutions to provide installation and maintenance services for three years in an amount of \$38,700.00 for the Great Western Trail planting for the proposed tunnel at County Line Rd.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Mollenhauer to approve Action Item 21-1213.

Vote Yea: **Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**

Members Absent: **Altringer**

#21-1214 **Approving** the proposal from IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) Trail Solutions in the contract amount of \$44,930.00 for Planning/Design Services for the Copper Creek Mountain Bike Park.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Lewis to approve Action Item 21-1214.

Vote Yea: **Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**

Members Absent: **Altringer**

#21-1215 **Public Hearing approving** plans, specifications, form of contract, engineer's estimate, and designating lowest responsible bidder for the construction of the Trestle-to-Trestle Bridge project to United Contractors Inc. in a contract amount of \$1,921,858.00 plus a 5% contingency and authorizing the Polk County Engineer to digitally sign contract, performance bond, closeout documents, and act as Owner Agent on behalf of Polk County Conservation during construction administration.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Mollenhauer to approve Action Item 21-1215.

Vote Yea: **Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**

Members Absent: **Altringer**

BOARD DISCUSSION

Director's Remarks

2022 Bond – Kami Rankin and Rich Leopold met with Deb Anderson and John Norris to discuss budget/timeline for bond expenditures. First bid letting will involve capital improvement projects, land acquisitions, and water trails. There are administrative advantages to planning expenditures every two years. Projects that are being discussed for budgeting: ICON, Sleepy Hollow, Easter Lake North Shore, CBG research station/Speck property

The question was asked: "How will past Bond projects be handled as it overlaps with new Bond expenditures?"

Answer: \$3-\$4 Million remains from 2012 Bond funds – funds need to be spent by June 2022. The Bond allocation pie chart which illustrates how 2012 funds were spent will be updated as the funds are closed out.

Another question was asked: "Has the increase in the cost of goods created a concern?"

Answer: Yes, but PCC wasn't surprised. For instance, with projects like the Easter Lake North Shore Improvement Project, the pre-design cost estimates in 2019 were very preliminary and due to the delay from COVID, cost increases were to be expected. Also, the Trestle to Trestle Bridge project has been prolonged for various reasons, but the overall cost increase was around 10%, which was better than expected considering the time that has elapsed.

Point of Sale Analysis – Katie Stoklasa is currently researching point of sale needs for the entirety of the Polk County Conservation system. Currently there are three types of systems being used: www.mycountyparks.com for online reservations, www.fareharbor.com for equestrian center trail rides, sleigh rides, and other activities, and Square for at-the-gate ticket sales for Glow Wild. A consolidated point of sale system that could integrate with Polk County financial systems would capture efficiencies and streamline profit/loss reporting, as well as equip staff to manage retail inventory, perform over-the-counter sales, and ensure compliance with cash handling procedures. PCC has received feedback from the general public that educational items and/or merchandise would be well received if offered at places like the Jester Park Nature Center and the Outdoor Rec & Wellness Center. In the near future, PCC will be expanding its operations to include Sleepy Hollow (winter sports and equipment rental plus other warm weather activities), and will continue to grow operations in places like Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt (Speck Property conversion to research station or visitor's center), Easter Lake (new concessions building and accessible amenities), and Yellow Banks Park (full service camp sites). A point of sale system that is customizable and expandable would be ideal so Katie is looking into hiring a consultant to do an analysis of PCC's point of sale needs and potential growth opportunities.

Greg Lewis: A point of sale system would pay for itself over time, if it helps facilitate more efficient business operations.

Other PCC things to note: Doug Romig has started his new position in Thornton, CO and as a

gesture of thanks for his impactful service at PCC a piece of art will be dedicated to Doug at Easter Lake's North Shore. Doug played a significant part in driving the direction and momentum of the Easter Lake North Shore project, which will set a precedent nationally for incorporating universal design and accessibility into outdoor recreation spaces.

The Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee, Land Acquisition Committee, and Sustainability Committee were formed to further explore and develop action plans pertaining to various parts of the PCC Strategic Plan. These committees have been meeting regularly and are developing reports which will capture specifics regarding these action plans. Information from these committees should be forthcoming in the next few months.

2022 Election of PCC Board Member Officers:

Board Chair: Ryan Crane (Nominated by Greg Lewis, Seconded by Jim Cataldo)

Vice Chair: Greg Lewis (Nominated by Jim Cataldo)

Secretary: Pam Mollenhauer (Nominated by Greg Lewis)

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Cataldo to approve the appointment of 2022 Polk County Conservation Board Officers.

Vote Yea: **Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**

Members Absent: **Altringer**

Board & Chair Remarks

Lewis: Friends and acquaintances within the biking community are very excited about the 42 acres of "disaster area" that is being converted to the Copper Creek Bike Trail. Some concerns have been raised about keeping ATV's out of the area between Hubbell & University Ave – police are slow to arrive if an issue is called in and the ATV users are usually gone when they do arrive.

Leopold: PCC will have to strategically design a contingency plan similar to the one implemented at Strasser Woods – increased usage/traffic will help curb any misuse.

Lewis: There have also been concerns raised about poaching white tail deer on Easter Lake property and Ewing Park property. The DNR & PCC Rangers have been made aware, but wondering if there's anything more that can be done?

Leopold: The park rangers will engage with any poachers – we can make all seven rangers aware of the concern.

Mollenhauer: Is the date of our planning meeting Jan 6th? Answer: Yes

CLOSED SESSION

#21-1216 Moved by Mollenhauer to go into closed session pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.5(j) to discuss the purchase or sale of particular real estate only where premature disclosure could be reasonably expected to increase the price the governmental body would have to pay for that property or reduce

the price the governmental body would receive for that property.
Vote Yea: **Crane, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Lewis**
Members Absent: **Altringer**

Closed Session Attendees: Katie Stoklasa, Rich Leopold, Kami Rankin, Ryan Crane, Cassie Cook, Doug Sheeley, Kate Clark, Greg Lewis, Natalie McFarlane (Zoom), Adam Fendrick, Pam Mollenhauer, Jim Cataldo

Action on closed session:

Moved by Mollenhauer to return to open session.

Vote Yea: **Crane, Lewis, Mollenhauer, Cataldo**

Members Absent: **Altringer**

Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.