November 8, 2023
Polk County Administration Building
111 Court Ave, Des Moines, IA 50309
5:30 PM – PCC Board Meeting

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

The Polk County Conservation Board met in person for regular session Wednesday, November 8, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m.

#23-1101 **Roll Call**
Members Present: **Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**
Members Absent:

#23-1102 **Public Comments**

#23-1103 **MidAmerican Energy – Two Rivers Park Presentation**

#23-1104 **Pale Blue Dot LLC Sustainability Plan Presentation**

#23-1105 **Mountain Bike Park Presentation**

#23-1106 **Financial Reports**

#23-1107 **MOVED BY** Cataldo to approve the October 11, 2023 meeting minutes.
SECONDED BY Crane
Vote Yea: **Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**
Members Absent:

CONSENT AGENDA

#23-1108 **Approving** bill list.

#23-1109 **Approving** a Statewide TAP Grant application and committing 20% matching funds for a project to repair several trail bridges on the Chichaqua Valley Trail.

#23-1110 **Approving** a Statewide Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP) grant application and committing 20% matching funds for the Great Western Trail repairs and/or jointly submitting a co-application with Warren County Conservation Board.

#23-1111 **Approving** application to the United States Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Competitive Grant for work at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt.

#23-1112 **Providing** staff the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Habitat Stamp grant resolution requirement for the Miller Property restoration at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt (CBG).

#23-1113 **Recommending** to the Polk County Board of Supervisors the approval of a temporary construction easement to the City of Des Moines, Iowa, for the construction of a recreational trail along SW 63rd St. on land known as Brown's Woods Park and directing staff to request approval from the Polk County Board of Supervisors.

#23-1114 **Approving** $75,575 (plus 10% contingency) with Red Dot Advertising and Design to provide website design and development services for Sleepy Hollow.

#23-1115 **Receive** and file proposed user fee rates for Board action at the December 13, 2023 meeting. All fees will become effective on January 1, 2024.

#23-1116 **Approving** the 2024-2025 minor bond projects.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by **Mollenhauer** to approve the consent agenda.
SECONDED BY Crane
Vote Yea: **Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer**, **Cataldo, Crane**
Members Absent:

ACTION ITEMS

#23-1117 **Reject** all Bids for the plans, specifications, form of contract documents and engineer's estimate designating the lowest responsible bidder for the construction of the Jester Park Nature Center Addition project.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by **Crane** to approve Action Item 23-1117.
SECONDED BY Mollenhauer
Vote Yea: **Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer**, **Cataldo, Crane**
Members Absent:

#23-1118 **Requesting** authorization to purchase 2,550 native ecotype container-grown trees as a sole source purchase from Iowa Native Trees and Shrubs in the amount of $84,150 for the Trails End Mitigation Bank to be planted in November 2023.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by **Crane** to approve Action Item 23-1118.
SECONDED BY Lewis
Vote Yea: **Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer**, **Cataldo, Crane**
Members Absent:

BOARD DISCUSSION

Director Remarks –

Decision Package for FY'24-'25 Budget – the preliminary decision package has been put together. A meeting has been scheduled with Kami/Rich/John Norris/Sarah Boese/Deb Anderson for Nov 27th. Rich will use the guidance/direction provided at the Nov 27th meeting to further refine the decision package and will present it at the December 13th PCC Board Meeting.
Lewis: When is the PCC Board approved decision package due to Polk County?

Leopold: The first or second week of January 2024 is the deadline to submit the PCC Board-approved Decision Package to Polk County.

Two Rivers Park – the Polk County Board of Supervisors is asking PCC to take on/manage Two Rivers Park. Rich can initiate conversations with specific members of the Board of Supervisors for Greg Lewis to get his operations questions answered, if desired. Operations questions should be addressed to the Board of Supervisors vs. the third-party contractors hired to design the park.

Altringer: Who is bringing this park to PCC?

Leopold: The Polk County Board of Supervisors

Lewis: How is this park going to be staffed with FTE's?

Leopold: An operations plan has been in negotiations with the Polk County Board of Supervisors and the City of Des Moines for the last year and a half. PCC will get $150,000 from Polk County and $150,000 from the City of Des Moines. $200,000 of the $300,000 will be allocated to PCC staff salaries. The remaining $100,000 will go towards Two Rivers Park materials and operations expenses. 2 FTE's and 2 PPT employees will be funded as a result of this negotiation. Assigned staff will rotate between Lauridsen Skatepark, Two Rivers Park, and the ICON Fleur Drive site utilizing a centralized staffing support model.

Lewis: How big is the ICON site?

Leopold: 42 acres

There is also a major trail system in the works connecting the Gay Lea Wilson trail over to the Bridgestone/Firestone plant. This trail will need maintenance so centralized staff will be tasked with overseeing those trail needs also.

Crane: Will there be a building that PCC staff can operate out of as a centralized base of operations?

Rich: We are working with MidAmerican to see if that can be incorporated into the Two Rivers Park design.

Cataldo: Considering Deb Anderson's less than optimistic budgeting forecast for the next few years (from the budget presentation she gave at the 10-11-23 PCC Board Meeting), is there any concern about obtaining additional staff if there is a need? Will PCC staff become overwhelmed if the FTE's don't materialize?

Rich: Prioritization of efforts is a constant topic of conversation with Deb Anderson and other Polk County budget authorities. PCC is less than 3% of Polk County's budget, so our asks have relative impact.

Altringer: "What IF" questions need to be addressed in these project agreements – with funding and staffing insecurities there needs to be a level of protection in the form of safety clauses in the agreements.

PCC needs to have the Polk County assistant attorney help build in some protection within these types of agreements. Consideration needs to be given to sustainable PCC continuous operations.

Rich: There are lots of other areas that we manage that we don't own – for example there are many areas owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers that PCC manages. Polk County has been very good in supporting the staff funding needs at Lauridsen Skatepark, and the Two Rivers Park is being structured similarly.

Survey QR Codes in Parks - The first season of using Survey QR codes in parks has concluded. Jessica Lown has compiled a report on usage by park visitors. The intent of the park survey was for visitors to provide constructive and actionable feedback about the parks. PCC had 50 surveys submitted across the overall parks system in a period of about six months. The vast majority of submitted reports were related to Yellow Banks Park and didn't contain information that was actionable. The few reports that were actionable were forwarded to parks staff to address as they were able.

GroupMe Text Chain - A new GroupMe text chain is coming to announce events to Board Members via cell phone. All PCC Board Members will be included on this text chain, so look for a text to come soon.

ICON West Des Moines Site Plan update – this location is north of Brown's Woods off of 1st St and 63rd St. The overall site plan cost is $1,300,000. West Des Moines has been very successful in getting grants – $400,000 REAP grant and a $75,000 DNR Water Access Grant have been obtained, and efforts are underway to apply for a $125,000 MidAmerican water trails grant. The surrounding land and boat ramp will come under PCC's management via this ICON initiative.

ICON Fleur Drive site update – plans are moving forward slowly. Rich met with Stephanie Oppel (new ICON Executive Director) for a two-hour meeting today. The planning process has been challenging. The initial landscape architect/consultant has been replaced with a new consultant, which Rich will be collaborating with moving forward.

2022 BOND - Kami/Rich have been working on BOND expenditure reporting and planning for the next BOND letting. The request will probably be around $7,000,000 and will be scheduled for May 2024 to align with other lettings Polk Co is doing. This will keep administrative costs down since administrative fees accompany each letting request. Rich will provide a breakdown of what the $7,000,000 will be applied to.

Sleepy Hollow Feasibility Study – Ellen Nelson with Funding Solutions has been hired. Preliminary discussion has resulted in an estimated $10-$15 million goal for the fundraising campaign. Case materials, committee members, and co-chair candidates are being considered at this time.
Crane: During a recent tour of the Sleepy Hollow grounds, it was obvious that the property has been neglected and is in a poor state. With a grand opening being planned for 2024, what plans are in place to change this?
Rich: Internal plans are in place to do some remodeling in the Sleepy Hollow Lodge so operations can launch in March 2024. The goal is to be functional, but to also let the public see that future improvements are sorely needed to bring the property up to PCC standards that the public has come to expect.

Deaton House update – Rich/Jill have toured the property. The initial report created by PCC's Construction/Maintenance/Operations staff outlined that the house would be too cost-prohibitive to rehab. When obtaining new land containing buildings/structures, PCC's goal is to share the detailed internal evaluation data of those buildings/structures with the Board to better decide next steps/direction (tear down or future rehab and utilization). Internal evaluation reports can be included in future Board packets for review and Board Member feedback.

Lockard Land Donation – PCC would still like to honor the Lockard family's 11 acre land donation publicly – possibly at a public Conservation Advisory meeting. The PCC Board will be notified when this event is scheduled.

Board & Chair Remarks –

Altringer: It's important to recognize the Lockard's donation publicly even though it's been almost a year.
Lewis: Director Leopold did a great job answering questions at this week's Izaak Walton League meeting. The economic value that PCC's new projects will generate will be significant and also impactful in showing the public that PCC has great staff that knows what they are doing – time should be taken to thank PCC staff and relish in these large accomplishments after each project is completed.
Cataldo: What is the significance of Lauridsen Skatepark's new certification by the USA Skateboarding Association?
Rankin: Recognition amongst the skateboarding community and elevation to the top of the list of preferred venues for USA Skateboarding events and competitions.

CLOSED SESSION
PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

The Polk County Conservation Board met in closed session Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at __7:18 PM__.

MOTION:

#23-1119 **MOVED BY _Crane_** 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.
SECONDED BY Mollenhauer

VOTE YEA: **(Unanimous) Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**
Members Absent:

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane, Leopold, Rankin, Cook, Sheeley, Stoklasa, McFarlane**

MOTION: Moved by **_Crane__**, Seconded by **Mollenhauer** to go back into open session.

VOTE YEA: **(Unanimous) Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**
Members Absent:

The Board returned to open session.
There was no action taken during closed session.

MOTION: Moved by **Lewis** to adjourn. Seconded by **Crane**.

VOTE YEA: **(Unanimous) Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Cataldo, Crane**
Members Absent:

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD AND WITH NO OBJECTIONS, THIS MEETING IS ADJOURNED.

Meeting adjourned at **_8:00 PM**.