



AGENDA OUTLINE/MINUTES TEMPLATE

August 14, 2024
Lauridsen Skatepark
901 2nd Ave, Des Moines, IA 50309
5:30 PM

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD (ESTABLISHED 1956)

The Polk County Conservation Board met in person for regular session Wednesday, August 14, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m.

- #24-0801 **Roll Call**
Members Present: **Altringer, Mollenhauer, Crane, Lewis, Feltner**
Members Absent:
- #24-0802 **Public Comments** None
- #24-0803 **New Employee Introduction**
 a. Molly Huhn - Americorps Program Coordinator
 b. William Paulsen - Construction Technician
- #24-0804 **Financial Reports**
- #24-0805 **Policy & Procedure Discussion Topic** – Commemorative Gift Program
- #24-0806 **Action on the Minutes of the Previous Meeting(s)**

MOVED BY Crane to approve the July 10, 2024 meeting minutes.

SECONDED BY Feltner

Vote Yea: **Altringer, Mollenhauer, Crane, Lewis, Feltner**

Members Absent:

CONSENT AGENDA

- #24-0807 **Approving** bill list.
- #24-0808 **Approving** recommendation to the Polk County Board of Supervisors to approve a permanent electrical utility easement to MidAmerican Energy located near the Lauridsen Skatepark parking lot.
- #24-0809 **Approving** staff to submit an Iowa Department of Natural Resources Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant in the amount of \$500,000 for the Brenton Slough Phase 3 acquisition and sign the resolution requirement in support of this project.
- #24-0810 **Awarding** lowest contractor bid for wetland excavation at the Dan Miller parcel

at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt to Molitor Construction in a maximum contracted amount of \$26,307.00 with a 5% contingency.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Mollenhauer to approve the consent agenda.
SECONDED BY Crane

Vote Yea: **Altringer, Mollenhauer, Crane, Lewis, Feltner**

Members Absent:

ACTION ITEMS

None

BOARD DISCUSSION

Director Remarks –

Brenton Slough Fundraising through INHF going very well! Ducks Unlimited has been partnering with PCC & INHF and landed a \$470,000 grant from Prairie Meadows. The money will be divided between four projects proposed in the grant application. The PCC projects that will benefit from portions of the grant are as follows:

1. **PCC - Brenton Slough: \$300,000**
2. **PCC - CBG Pumped Wetland: \$10,000**
3. Fisher Lake (private lake in Johnston)
4. Helland Wetland Project (water quality initiative wetland)

Other fundraising initiatives include GOF partnering with key large corporations to secure between \$500,000 - \$700,000 for Brenton Slough. Brenton Slough improvements will be done in three Phases. Phase 1 is slated to be completed in 2024, Phase 2 in 2025, and Phase 3 in 2026. Phase 1 includes \$2,000,000 in ARPA funding, and \$1,000,000 from PCWLL Bond funds. However, with such successful fundraising, some of the Phase 1 PCWLL Bond funds can be pushed to Phase 2. Use patterns at Brenton Slough are still to be determined and primary focus has been on completing the purchase of Brenton Slough land.

Upcoming conferences:

- Below are three upcoming events that Polk County Conservation helps to sponsor. It is always great to have Board members attend, therefore Board Members have a first chance at these complimentary registrations. Please consider each, and if interested, **please let Rich know by Friday, August 23**. After that date, PCC will start opening up to staff that may want to attend on our behalf.

Iowa Environmental Council Annual Conference

- September 24, 8am – 4:30pm, Drake University
- PCC is a member of the Iowa Environmental Council and as a \$500 sponsor of this conference PCC is entitled to 2 complimentary registrations. More information at: <https://www.iaenvironment.org/get-involved/council-events/2024conference>
 - The full agenda is not posted, but there are four “tracks” of sessions to choose from and the keynote speaker is from Kettering University and has

been involved in the research and response to the water crisis in Flint Michigan.

Wild Prairie Showdown

- October 10, 6-10 pm, Capital Square Atrium
 - This is a joint event of the Great Outdoors Foundation and ICON Water Trails. We are deeply involved with both organizations. For our \$5,000 contribution, we have 8 complimentary registrations. Early bird registration ends Aug. 30.

<https://greatoutdoorsfoundation.org/a-record-breaking-wild-prairie-showdown/> (this link is about last year's event; this year's has yet to be posted)

Iowa Nature Summit

- October 9-10, Drake University
- This conference is in its second year. Polk County Conservation sponsors this event at \$2,500, and we have 5 complimentary registrations.

<https://www.iowanature.org/>

- This is organized by Neil Hamilton and a crew of volunteers. [Agenda linked here.](#)

Sponsorship Opportunities:

- PCC will contribute \$5,000 to help sponsor the "Statewide and Local Economic and Health Impacts of Cycling and Trails" study. Luke Hoffmann, Executive Director for the Iowa Bicycle Coalition, is leading this study and PCC hopes to gain valuable insights from the results.

Sleepy Hollow – Feasibility Study results have come back. Initially the fundraising goal was fluctuating between \$10-15 million. Feedback from the study recommends that government funding be solicited to pay for infrastructure expenses such as utilities and parking, and a capital campaign fundraising goal be set at \$10,000,000. The next follow up meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2024. PCC is hopeful that Bob Riley and J. Elder II will continue to support the capital campaign, as Feasibility Study participants expressed high levels of confidence in their leadership. Regarding current operations, PCC is hopeful that repairs will be completed and Sleepy Hollow will be open for business by September 21, 2024. State Fair camping has gone smoothly and feedback has been positive. Staff have done a great job representing PCC and ensuring campers have a great experience!

Alleman Park – streambank mitigation will be done in this park in 2026 as part of the Sandy Creek LLC mitigation bank operation. A picnic shelter and new parking area are also being planned. There are some features currently under improvement and consideration. A mowed trail system is currently being maintained in the park, an old railroad bridge exists that could be rehabilitated (with significant expense), and local residents have been providing feedback on improvements they would like to see included in the park. PCC has been in conversations with Alleman Mayor, Bob Kramme, and North Polk Schools regarding a funding partnership for future improvements to the park. PCC has provided options within an improvements proposal that includes itemized expenses, so Alleman's leadership and residents can decide how they want to move forward.

Two Rivers Park – grading, excavating, and the construction of the overlook are currently in progress. Discussions with project managers have occurred to review security and lighting plans, as well as planting layouts and PCC taking over operations in the spring of 2025. Rich will be sending progress pictures as things develop.

ICON Fleur Drive site – designs have passed the 30% completion mark, and are slated to pass the 60% mark soon. This project is estimated to cost \$28,000,000. Construction is planned for 2025, with PCC taking over operations and management in 2026.

PCC will have a very heavy downtown footprint by the end of 2026. Staffing levels have been planned for anticipated use patterns of the new facilities and grounds being added into PCC's network. There is currently \$500,000 in annual operations and staff funding promised from Polk County (and partners) to PCC for the Lauridsen Skatepark facility and Two Rivers Park.

ICON Raccoon River Boat Ramp – located right off first street and 63rd, north of Brown's Woods. PCC is working with West Des Moines to facilitate this project. Earthwork is in progress and concrete is being poured. Multiple change orders have been submitted by the contractors due to soil conditions so project contingency funds have been exhausted. Future change orders are not expected at this time, but if they occur, PCC will be sharing 50% of the cost with West Des Moines.

Four Mile Mountain Bike Park – trail construction has started and next month's PCC Board Meeting will be at this park. The parking lot improvements have been planned for 2025.

Board Remarks –

Altringer: asked Rich to provide insight as to how PCC plans on addressing the homeless population as new downtown areas managed by PCC come online.

Leopold: there has been a lot of press coverage recently due to the City of Des Moines changing their homeless camp policies. Traditionally, PCC has had a more robust policy concerning homeless camp engagement than the City of Des Moines. The new policies that the City of Des Moines have adopted are now aligning closer to PCC's policies. PCC's mission is to Provide Outdoor Recreation, Provide Environmental Education, and Protect Our Natural Heritage. Homeless camps interfere with the fulfillment of PCC's mission in the form of harassment and assault of visitors recreating on PCC trails and in PCC parks. Homeless camps also present a public safety hazard in the form of used drug paraphernalia, garbage, and human bio-waste. PCC designates significant time and resources for homeless camp cleanup and consistent patrolling of areas experiencing homeless issues. Experts within homeless service provider networks that partner with PCC insist that there are enough beds to accommodate the current homeless population in the Des Moines Metro, and the PCC Rangers communicate with homeless individuals and groups regularly. PCC Rangers are equipped with contact and resource information that is relevant and can assist with connecting homeless individuals with help if they desire it.

Altringer: are there any remaining questions, changes, or are we comfortable with PCC's protocols?

Lewis: I'm comfortable with what's in place. On Oct 8, 2024 there is a Midwest Water Summit sponsored by the Izaak Walton League. There will be a dinner and presentation involving the Save Our Streams program. Time of event and cost to attend is yet to be announced. More information will be shared with Board Members as it is released.

NO CLOSED SESSION

~~CLOSED SESSION~~ ~~PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD~~

~~The Polk County Conservation Board met in closed session Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at _____ p.m.~~

MOTION: _____

~~#24-0811 **MOVED BY** _____ **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. (pg 36)~~
~~**SECONDED BY** _____.~~

~~VOTE YEA: **Altringer, Mollenhauer, Crane, Lewis, Feltner**
Members Absent:~~

~~MEMBERS PRESENT: **Lewis, Mollenhauer, Altringer, Crane, Leopold, Rankin, Cook, Stoklasa, McFarlane, no attendees via Webex**~~

~~**MOTION:** Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ to go back into open session.~~

~~VOTE YEA: **(Unanimous) Altringer, Mollenhauer, Crane, Lewis, Feltner**
_____ Members Absent:~~

~~The Board returned to open session.~~

~~_____ There was no action taken during closed session.~~

MOTION: Moved by Crane to adjourn. Seconded by Mollenhauer.

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.