

January 10, 2024
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, January 10, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

#24-0101 **Roll Call**
Members Present: **Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Crane, Feltner**
Members Absent:
Recognition of departing PCC Board Member, Jim Cataldo

#24-0102 **Public Comments**

#24-0103 **Financial Reports**

#24-0104 **Policy & Procedure Discussion Topic**

#24-0105 **MOVED BY Mollenhauer** to approve the December 13, 2023 meeting minutes.
SECONDED BY Crane
Vote Yea: **Feltner, Lewis, Altringer, Mollenhauer, Crane**
Members Absent:

CONSENT AGENDA

#24-0106 **Approving** bill list.

#24-0107 **Approving** revisions and additions to the Employee Administrative Manual of the Polk County Conservation Board that was approved at the December 13, 2023 Conservation Board Meeting. All changes in this manual will be effective January 1st, 2024. (pg 11-12)

#24-0108 **Approving** the Polk County Conservation Public Art Committee's recommendations for the 2024 Rotating Sculpture Program at Jester Park and Easter Lake Park. (pg 13-21)

#24-0109 **Ratifying** Polk County Conservation (PCC)Board's electronic vote on December 15, 2023, Approving the purchase and installation of two new playgrounds at Easter Lake Park, featuring ADA accessible features for a total cost not to exceed \$527,702 to Play-Pro Recreation. (pg 22-27)

#24-0110 ~~**Awarding** updates to the Polk County Conservation Board Bylaws and placing on the February Board Meeting Agenda for adoption. Adoption requires two affirmative votes (January & February meetings). (pg 28-33)~~ **MOVED TO ACTION ITEMS PER PAM MOLLENHAUER REQUEST**

#24-0111 **Awarding** lowest contractor bid for Timber Stand Improvement at Jester Park to Xtreme Tree

Inc. in a contracted amount of \$36,320.00 with a 10% contingency. (pg 34-35)

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

SECONDED BY Lewis

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

Members Absent:

ACTION ITEMS

#24-0110 **Awarding** updates to the Polk County Conservation Board Bylaws and placing on the February Board Meeting Agenda for adoption. Adoption requires two affirmative votes (January & February meetings). (pg 28-33)

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Mollenhauer to approve Action Item 24-0110 with proposed amendments of correcting Item #6 from lettering sequence of “b, c, d” to “e, f, g”.

SECONDED BY Feltner

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

Members Absent:

#24-0112 **Approving** Fee for Service agreement with the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI) in the amount of \$170,400 for the 2024 dedicated Polk County Conservation Crew. (pg 36-43)

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Crane to approve Action Item 24-0112.

SECONDED BY Mollenhauer

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

Members Absent:

#24-0113 **Authorizing** Polk County Conservation (PCC) staff to continue negotiation with Sandy Creek Partners (SCP) with regard to transferring permitting, restoration, and operation of stream mitigation sites (Trails End Phase 2 and Ziel) based on original PCC proposal and SCP counter proposal with the understanding that any proposed final agreement will require approval at a future Board meeting. (pg 44-47)

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Lewis to table Action Item 24-0113 until the February 14, 2024 PCC Board Meeting.

SECONDED BY Feltner

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

Members Absent:

BOARD DISCUSSION

Director Remarks –

Rich has had 3 evaluations in PCC career and Jim Cataldo did the last one in 2019.

Yellow Banks Exhibit: Rich promotes the philosophy of delegating authority to staff. Parks staff have been empowered, along with the PCC Parks Planner and PCC Naturalists, to leverage an existing amount of \$42,000 in

Bond funds to apply for a \$34,000 grant that would fulfill a need at Yellow Banks. This is a great example of delegated authority and leveraging bond funds at its best!

Fred & Carol Lockard Recognition Event: Printed invite handed out to Board Members 1-10-24 – send text reminder to PCC Board Members the day before event! This recognition event will be held in honor of the Fred & Carol Lockard land donation to PCC. Fred and Carol, multiple Lockard neighbors, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation staff, and Conservation Advisory Committee members will all be invited as well as the Board of Supervisors (all 5) to this event.

Greg Lewis – compliments to Jessica for her hosting skills at public events!

Jordan House property update – Rich has continued discussion with the City of West Des Moines regarding how PCC can support the City's efforts in rehabilitating the property around Jordan House. PCC is amenable to helping with demolition, removing concrete, removing septic infrastructure, re-graveling existing roads, and removing utilities.

Greg Lewis will reach out to his contact that has free gravel available so they can connect with Rich.

The PCC 2024-2025 Budget presentation to the Polk County Board of Supervisors went well with no surprises – thank you to those PCC Board Members that attended electronically! The Polk County Administrators made their recommendations at the end of PCC's presentation. It's too early to talk about exactly which budget items were granted and which ones were rejected. Rich and Kami will be communicating with the PCC Board and staff as the 2024-2025 budget becomes more finalized.

Brenton Slough: PCC, along with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, is getting closer to a final package. Different funding sources will feed at different times and then be used to leverage additional funding. PCC is exerting pressure to get Polk County to commit to \$2,000,000 in March 2024. ARPA funding is available from Polk County and a portion can be allocated to water quality. If granted the \$2,000,000, PCC will be able to buy the first piece of the Brenton Slough complex. PCC has \$1,000,000 in Bond funds available for Brenton Slough, and an application has been submitted for a NAWCA (North American Wetlands Conservation Act) grant, as well as a US Forest Service grant. Those grant programs often require paving the roads, so PCC is collaborating with the DNR and Federal organizations to facilitate that requirement. Also, the funding matches occur at different times and use restrictions are a consideration. PCC will have solid numbers in a month or two along with a timeline. Plans could solidify as early as April 2024 with PCC feasibly able to purchase a \$2,000,000 piece of Brenton Slough.

Next Thursday, 1-18-24, PCC is hosting a District 1 meeting at JPNC. There are currently 99 Conservation organizations in Iowa. ICCS (Iowa County Conservation System) ties them all together and the counties are divided into six districts. Each county conservation organization is given an opportunity to host a District meeting on a rotating basis and Jan 18th is Polk County's turn to host the January District 1 meeting. PCC leadership and Conservation staff from across Iowa will be in attendance. Board members are welcome to attend.

Every two years staff have the opportunity to apply for leadership training. The Director/Deputy Director select a certain number of employees to complete the program. Applications are being accepted right now. This program is a good way to grow from within. It's not a certified public manager program, but is competitive and takes six months to complete.

Lewis – do employees express interest? Interview process?

Rich – Yes - it's a competitive process, we look at succession planning, aptitude, and need within the departments and then make the candidate selections.

Strategic Planning: when Board member Feltner came on she was sent PCC Orientation materials via email, and all Board members were copied on the communications. Those materials are a good refresher.

Gentle Reminder: The best way for communication to happen is for Board Members to go through Rich then Rich to reach out to staff. Also, staff will go to Rich, then Rich to Board.

At the last strategic planning meeting with PCC Board Members, there was discussion meeting on 2-23-24 for day long Board Member retreat – will this work for Feltner? Feltner totally open on 2-16-24 so date will be changed to 2-16-24 as all members can attend.

Send Outlook invite for 2-16-24 from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

The 2024 PCC Leadership Staff Retreat will be held on 2-5-24 at Blank Park Zoo.

Board Chair & Members Remarks –

Lewis – where are we at on the Four Mile Mountain Bike Park? Greg would like to know what complications are happening so he can advocate.

Rich – let's discuss offline to go over the finer details of the issues.

Fendrick – we are working with staff engineers on technical details right now.

Jill would like to thank everyone who attended the BOS Two Rivers/Sleepy Hollow meeting last Tuesday as it is important to advocate at meetings on behalf of Rich and PCC staff.

Rich - incredibly thankful for the advocacy!

Nomination of 2024 PCC Board Officers

Board Chair: **Jill Altringer (Voted into position 1-10-24)**

Vice Chair: **Pam Mollenhauer**

Secretary: **Ryan Crane**

At the December 2023 PCC Board Meeting, Mollenhauer and Lewis both volunteered for Vice Chair position

Votes for Mollenhauer: Mollenhauer, Altringer

Votes for Lewis: Lewis, Crane

Voting stalled due to tie vote—moved voting to January Board Meeting for remaining positions (Vice Chair and Secretary) until all five members are present to vote. Lewis withdraws self-nomination of Vice Chair at 1-10-24 PCC Board Meeting.

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Lewis to approve the appointment of 2024 Polk County Conservation Board Vice Chair to Pam Mollenhauer by acclamation.

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

Members Absent:

Crane – nominates himself for Secretary

LET THE RECORD SHOW it was moved by Lewis to approve the appointment of 2024 Polk County Conservation Board Secretary to Ryan Crane by acclimation.

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

Members Absent:

CLOSED SESSION

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

The Polk County Conservation Board met in closed session Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 7:06 PM.

MOTION:

#24-0114 **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.

SECONDED BY Crane.

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

Members Absent:

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

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

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

Members Absent:

The Board returned to open session.

There was no action taken during closed session.

MOTION: Moved by Lewis to adjourn. Seconded by none.

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

Members Absent:

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.