LINN COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2022, BOARD MEETING

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Linn County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on **November 28, 2022,** at Wickiup Hill Learning Center, 10260 Morris Hills Road, Toddville, IA 52341.

Board Members Present
Steve Emerson, Hillary Hughes, Cindy Burke, Brent Oleson, George Kanz

Board Members Absent
None.

Staff Present
Dennis Goemaat, Executive Director; Daniel Gibbins, Deputy Director; Randy Burke, Planner; Ted Doscher, Planner; Ryan Schlader, Community Outreach Specialist; Jason Baumann, Resource Manager

Others Present
Todd Happel, Anderson Bogert Engineers; Tom Peffer; Nadine Brock; David Wilson; Diane Handler; David Dechant; Greg Januske; Steve Hershner; Dick Mundy; Mary Clapp; Jacque Kepler; Judy Lucas; Kurt Rogahn; Dave Lamka; Dennis Brandt; Cerena Liole

Call To Order
Hughes called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM

Public Comment

Tom Peffer commented on support for the development of the Grant Wood Trail (GWT) as a representative of the Linn County Trails Association. Tom read a resolution of support by LTCA to continue development of the GWT including support for hard surfacing the trail to support users with mobility challenges.

Mary Clapp presented a petition to dedicate the GWT to first responders. Mary commented on her preference to keep a portion of the trail natural. Mary also commented that paving wasn't necessary and can be dangerous with faster users. Mary noted concern that horses wouldn't be able to use the trail.

Kurt Rogahn commented on his preference for a hard surface trail development to Springville and beyond. Kurt commented that a hard surface trail will serve all users including those with disabilities equitably, and for economic development.

Jacque Kepler commented on her preference to keep the trail natural because it would look like a road. Jacque noted a petition she forwarded to the Conservation Board to keep it as natural as possible and asked them to look for an alternate route. Jacque asked if there was an erosion control plan and noted her concern for removal of trees and wildflowers.

Greg Januske commented on support as a trail rider and member of LTCA in support of developing the Grant Wood Trail with hard surface for reasons of safety, inclusion, and accessibility.

David Dechant commented as a trail rider and walker in support of a paved and grass surface while preserving as much of the surrounding environment for all users.

Diane Handler commented that the history of the trail acquisition by LTCA was to give options for alternative transportation or safe places to bike away from cars.

Dennis Brandt handed out comments to the Board and staff and pictures of the mowed width of the trail. Dennis commented that adding hard surface is not right in his opinion and will damage the natural quality of the trail. Dennis commented on LTCA Facebook posts supporting leaving some natural trail surface on the GWT.

Judy Lucas commented on her opinion that users with all abilities use the trail and visit the trail to enjoy the natural setting. Judy noted reading that the original intent of LTCA was to not pave the trail. Judy read a proposed resolution for preserving the trail in the current condition.

ITEM R1. **Approve Consent Agenda**

Motion by Emerson, second by Oleson

To approve the consent agenda.

Vote: aye: all present
nay: none
absent: none

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. **Approve minutes of the October 24, 2022 monthly meeting**

ITEM C2. **Approve claims list and expenditures – Claims List # 2023-5.**
Claims and Transfer list #2023-5 involving claim #5-572 through #5-708

ITEM C3. **Receive and place on file the October 2022 financial/budget report.**

ITEM C4. **Receive and place on file the October 2022 activity report.**

ITEM C5. **Acceptance of gifts.**

1. Gift #9-2023 – Monetary donation ($30) from PEO Chapter KG for support of the Wickiup Hill education program.

ITEM C6. **Capital Improvement Program updates**

REGULAR AGENDA:

ITEM R2. **<u>Presentation from Jeremy Wilhelm regarding the Grant Wood Trail.</u>**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting.

ITEM R3. **<u>Presentation from Todd Happel with Anderson-Bogert regarding the preliminary design and route for the Creekside Road to Springville segment of the Grant Wood Trail.</u>**

Todd Happel with Anderson-Bogert presented on the preliminary design and route for the Creekside Road to Springville segment of the Grant Wood Trail. Goemaat presented some historical and background information for the GWT. Happel presented on findings of the preliminary design and route study from Creekside Road to Springville. Hughes asked if erosion issues had been assessed. Happel noted a few drainage areas would need to be stabilized. Hughes asked about restoration plans. Happel noted those would be completed with future design. Kanz asked if any structures had historical value. Happel noted some structures were deteriorated but some would be able to be reused. Goemaat reviewed comments of concern and support received during the public input process.

No motion was made.

ITEM R4. **<u>Discuss and decide regarding a proposed development plan for the Grant Wood Trail from Creekside Road to Springville.</u>**

Goemaat presented a staff proposal for a development plan for the Grant Wood Trail development from Creekside Road to Springville. Oleson asked if the plan would include wildflower establishment and restoration. Goemaat noted that the trail development would include a seeding plan and that this section would see minimized disturbance, but seeding of native wildflowers would be included if needed. Oleson noted his preference to have wildflowers established with projects on the Grant Wood Trail such as with the Cedar Valley Nature Trail projects.

<u>MOTION</u> by Oleson, second by Kanz

To approve the proposed development plan for the Grant Wood Trail from Creekside Road to Springville.

<u>VOTE</u>: aye: all present
nay: none
absent: none

ITEM R5. **<u>Discuss and decide regarding a Federal Aid grant agreement with the Iowa Department of Transportation for a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant for a gravel surface on the Grant Wood Trail from Creekside Road to Paralta Road and authorizing the Director to sign the agreement.</u>**

Goemaat reviewed a Federal Aid grant agreement with the Iowa Department of Transportation for a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant for a gravel surface on the Grant Wood Trail from Creekside Road to Paralta Road. Kanz noted 3/8" limestone would be a more accurate description than the term of "gravel" used by the IDOT.

<u>MOTION</u> by Kanz, second by Emerson

To approve the grant agreement and authorize the Director to sign the agreement.

<u>VOTE</u>: aye: all present
nay: none
absent: none

ITEM R6. **<u>Discuss and decide regarding a fee for service agreement with Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa to provide natural resources work crew to Linn County Conservation for the 2023 calendar year and authorizing staff to sign the agreement.</u>**

Gibbins reviewed a service agreement with the Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa to provide natural resources work crew to Linn County Conservation for the 2023 calendar year.

<u>MOTION</u> by Emerson, second by Burke

To approve the agreement and authorize staff to sign the contract.

<u>VOTE</u>: aye: all present
nay: none
absent: none

ITEM R7. **Discuss and decide regarding a request from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to release parasitoid wasps at Wakpicada Natural Area to help control Emerald Ash borer infestations.**

Gibbins reviewed a request from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to release parasitoid stingless wasps at Wakpicada Natural Area to help control Emerald Ash borer infestations. Oleson noted questions about impact on native species. Goemaat noted discussion with the Department of Agriculture concerning the safety of the parasitoids to native species. Kanz suggested using the release as a possible educational effort with a partner.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Kanz

To approve the request by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to release parasitoid wasps at Wakpicada Natural Area.

VOTE: aye: all present
nay: none
absent: none

ITEM R8. **Discuss and decide on Resolution #2022-34 authorizing staff to submit a DNR Fish Habitat Fund grant application regarding fish habitat components of the Pinicon Ridge dam modification, project #19-19.**

Gibbins reviewed Resolution #2022-34 authorizing staff to submit a DNR Fish Habitat Fund grant application regarding fish habitat components of the Pinicon Ridge dam modification.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Burke

To approve Resolution #2022-34 and authorize staff to submit the grant application.

VOTE: aye: all present
nay: none
absent: none

ITEM R9 **<u>Discuss and decide regarding awarding a contract for trail work on Woodpecker Trail at Pinicon Ridge Park and authorizing the Director to sign the contract, Project #6-21.</u>**

Doscher reviewed a contract for trail work on Woodpecker Trail at Pinicon Ridge Park. Doscher noted the contract amount would be $56,000.

<u>MOTION</u> by Burke, second by Oleson

To approve the contract and authorize the Director to sign the contract.

<u>VOTE</u>: aye: all present
nay: none
absent: none

ITEM R10 **<u>Discuss and decide regarding the Conservation Board's FY 2024 budget including operations, passenger vehicles, budget offer and capital projects and authorize staff to submit the budget to the Board of Supervisors.</u>**

Goemaat reviewed the proposed FY 2024 budget including operations, passenger vehicles, budget offer and capital projects. Goemaat noted a delay in receiving the P91 form related to salaries and benefits would be incorporated when finalized. Goemaat noted difficulty in determining a fuel budget number with ongoing fuel price fluctuations. Goemaat reviewed an increase in seasonal staff pay rates. Goemaat reviewed requests for equipment, vehicles and capital projects. Oleson noted inflation impacts to operations and asked if any other departments were asking for increases for particular areas of operations. Goemaat noted fuels discussions had happened with other county departments and that future operational budget growth in other areas will be needed due to inflation.

<u>MOTION</u> by Kanz, second by Burke.

To approve the proposed Conservation Board FY 2024 budget, and authorize staff to submit the proposed budget to the BOS for review.

<u>VOTE</u>: aye: all present
nay: none
absent: none

ITEM R11. Board member / staff reports – Board members and staff may report and/or discuss meetings or activities in which they have been involved. (Conservation Board & staff)

1. Ryan Schlader – Schlader reported on recent community outreach, media and marketing efforts.

2. Updates:

   a. Discussion with Robins regarding a connection to the Cedar Valley Trail – Goemaat reported on a Robins development and proposed connection to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. Hughes asked if the intersection would have traffic signals. Goemaat noted the intersection would likely not be a signalized intersection.

ITEM R12. **<u>Public comment</u>**

Jackie Kepler asked about the engineering and studies completed for the portion of trail from Paralta to Springville.

Mary Clapp commented that she would appreciate dedicating the trail to first responders and had learned a lot through the attending the meetings.

ITEM R13. Closed Session

MOTION by Emerson, second by Kanz

To go into closed session at 1:40 PM for the purpose of discussing acquisition of particular real estate in accordance with section 21.5(l)(j) Code of Iowa.

VOTE:
aye: Emerson
aye: Hughes
aye: Burke
aye: Oleson
aye: Kanz
nay: none
absent: Burke

MOTION by Kanz, second by Oleson

To go out of closed session at 1:55 PM.

VOTE:
aye: Emerson
aye: Hughes
aye: Burke
aye: Oleson
aye: Kanz
nay: none
absent: Burke

ITEM R14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:56 PM.

Daniel Gibbins typed the above minutes.

Recording Secretary

SEAL

Board Secretary