

LINN COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2021, BOARD MEETING

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Linn County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on **December 20, 2021**, at the Jean Oxley Public Service Center Informal Board Room, 935 2nd Street SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Board Members Present

John Hanson, Steve Emerson, Cindy Burke, Brent Oleson, and Hillary Hughes

Cindy Burke joined the meeting by phone at 12:12 P.M.

Board Members Absent

Staff Present

Dennis Goemaat, Director; Daniel Gibbins, Deputy Director; Randy Burke, Planner; Ryan Schlader, Community Outreach Specialist;

Others Present

None

Call To Order

Board President Hanson called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM

Public Comment

None

ITEM R1. Approve Consent Agenda

Motion by Oleson, second by Hughes

To approve the consent agenda.

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

The consent agenda was approved and involved the following items:

ITEM C1. Approve minutes of the November 25, 2021 monthly meeting

ITEM C2. Approve claims list and expenditures – Claims List #2022-6.
Claims and Transfer list #2022-6 involving claim #6-605 through #6-722.

ITEM C3. Receive and place on file the November 2021 financial/budget report.

ITEM C4. Receive and place on file the November 2021 activity report.

ITEM C5. Acceptance of gifts.

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1. Gift #20-2022 – Monetary donation (\$100) from Echo Hill Elementary PTO for support of the education program and activities at Wickiup Hill Learning Center.
2. Gift #21-2022 – Monetary donation (\$376,750) from Friends of the Linn County Conservation Board for the Morgan Creek Park reconstruction project and support of the education program at Wickiup Hill.
3. Gift #22-2022 - Monetary donation (\$250) from David Hillman for support of the education program and activities at Wickiup Hill Learning Center

ITEM C6. Authorize the Director to sign a contract with Anderson Bogert Engineers for planning and design for repairs to the Cedar Valley Trail, Hoover section.

ITEM C7. Authorize staff to prepare and submit a written offer for a .16+- acre addition to Pinicon Ridge Park.

ITEM C8. Capital Improvement Program updates

REGULAR AGENDA:

ITEM R2. Discuss and decide regarding awarding a contract to Anderson Bogert for planning and design for the Grant Wood Trail from Secrist Road to Springville Road.

Randy Burke reviewed a contract with Anderson Bogert for planning and design for the Grant Wood Trail from Secrist Road to Springville Road.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Hughes

To approve a design contract with Anderson Bogert and authorize the Director to sign the contract.

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

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ITEM R3. Discuss and decide on submitting project requests for American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding.

- a) **Trail connection from Pinicon Ridge Park to Central City**
- b) **Connect Wanatee Park B-Loop campground to sanitary sewer main**
- c) **Trail connection from Wanatee Park to agri-community development**

Cindy Burke joined the meeting by phone at 12:12 P.M.

Gibbins reviewed three projects eligible for application to the Board of Supervisors requesting American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding at Pinicon Ridge Park, Wanatee Park and the Linn County Dows Property. Hughes asked if the joint application for the Maniti Trail would include Conservation management of the entire trail through the agri-community. Gibbins confirmed the trail portion of the project would be managed by Conservation and the greenhouses would be designed and managed by the Linn County Planning and Zoning Department. Oleson asked if the IT department was submitting a Wi-Fi application for ARPA funding that included campgrounds. Goemaat noted discussion was ongoing with IT to determine whether an application would be forthcoming this round of applications.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Hughes

To authorize staff to submit project requests as presented to the Board of Supervisors for ARPA funding.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent:

ITEM R4. Discuss and decide regarding awarding a contract for construction of a nature observation structure at Wickiup Hill Learning Center.

Randy Burke reviewed bids received for construction of a nature observation structure at Wickiup Hill Learning Center. The only bid received was from Tricon General Construction, Inc. for \$122,000.00. Staff recommendation was to reject the bid due to the bid being significantly above the engineer's construction estimate.

MOTION by Emerson, second by Hughes

To reject the bid from Tricon and rebid the project at a date determined by staff.

VOTE: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent:

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ITEM R5. Discuss and decide regarding approving a contract amendment with Anderson Bogert for extra design work on the Grant Wood Trail and authorizing the Director to sign the contract amendment.

Randy Burke reviewed a contract amendment with Anderson Bogert for additional trail design work along the Grant Wood Trail. Oleson asked how neighbor negotiations for construction access was progressing. Goemaat noted no agreement was reached, but one more attempt will be made prior to redesign of the trail in the road right-of-way ditch. Oleson asked if we are going to widen the shoulder. Goemaat discussed the design elements that would allow for a separated trail and accommodate an 8' trail with storm water drainage. Randy Burke noted the trail width of 8' to accommodate the available right-of-way would be acceptable to the Iowa Department of Transportation regarding federal grant funding.

MOTION by Oleson, second by Emerson

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

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

ITEM R6. Discuss proposal for additional Board policies.

Hanson discussed potential restrictions on e-bikes for natural areas due to speed and their mechanical nature. Hughes asked about prohibitions in equestrian areas. Goemaat confirmed mountain bikes are allowed and that the ADA requires reasonable accommodation for disability, which would allow a reasonable accommodation such as an e-bike based on the current policy. Emerson noted restrictions other than for accommodation could be included in a policy. Goemaat noted the state definition for bicycle includes e-bikes with certain specification limits. Oleson asked what the problem would be with e-bikes since they are quiet. Hanson noted the speed might provide conflict with horses. Oleson suggested regulating future bad behavior and not a whole class of users that might follow trail etiquette. Burke noted conflict would happen if a bike came up too fast on a horse. Oleson asked if any actual conflicts have occurred between e-bikes and horses. Goemaat noted no conflicts have been reported to date with e-bikes and horses. Hughes suggested watching this for the future to see if a problem develops. Emerson agreed that staff should watch this for the future. Hughes noted speed was the most important concern. Goemaat noted e-bikes do expand the ability for some to have opportunity to enjoy natural areas, and that staff will discuss the issue at the state level in the future. Oleson noted his suggestion would not be to regulate a whole class of users, but to target rules enforcement toward users that were not following rules or trail etiquette. Burke noted some activities are not allowed in some areas such as equestrian use. Burke asked why it would be different to prohibit bikes in some areas. Goemaat noted that could happen except for cases involving accessibility needs. Hughes noted a seasonal restriction for equine use only could be considered.

No motion was made.

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ITEM R7. Board member / staff reports – Board members and staff may report and/or discuss meetings or activities in which they have been involved.

- 1) Community Outreach/Marketing: Ryan Schlader reported on marketing and communications for the upcoming annual report, and seasonal hiring.
- 2) Updates:
 - a. Potential transfer of The Nature Conservancy properties in Linn County to the Conservation Board. – Goemaat reported on potential transfer of 2 parcels from The Nature Conservancy to Linn County pending determination of access easement and management needs.
 - b. Wanatee Park fishing pond near Highway 13. – Goemaat reported on the new fishing pond near Highway 13. Goemaat noted no plans are in place to add additional access along HWY 13. Hanson asked if interpretive signage would be added. Goemaat noted signage would be likely to include special regulations.
 - c. Fish Habitat grant review results. – Gibbins reported on a \$50,000 grant award for the Pinicon Ridge Dam project through the Iowa Fish Habitat grant program.
 - d. Recognition of John Hanson for his service on the Board. - Board and staff presented a service award and comments to Member Hanson as appreciation for his five years of service on the Conservation Board.
 - e. Goemaat reported on the Feed Iowa First operation through lease option of seventeen acres south of Lakeside Drive. Emerson supported up to a twenty year lease with protections to Linn County. Hughes noted low potential for future development. Oleson noted the trail development would need flexibility in the lease for completion. Goemaat confirmed language would be included for the trail development. Oleson suggested natural prairie cover if this lease was not completed or terminated in the future.
 - f. Cindy Burke asked about the CO2 pipeline proposal and whether it has been proposed to go through county properties. Goemaat indicated no contact by the developer had been made and it appears to miss Matsell Bridge Natural Area completely.
 - g. Brent Oleson requested continued discussion on Mt. Trashmore and a future dog park in future meetings. Oleson suggested a meeting with the new Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation director as time allows after their start.

ITEM R14. Public comment

None.

ITEM R15. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 PM
Daniel Gibbins typed the above minutes.

SEAL



Recording Secretary



Board Secretary