

Harrison County Conservation Board
Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2020

The Harrison County Conservation Board (HCCB) held its regular June meeting at the Willow Lake Recreation Area Headquarters. President Ben McIntosh called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Those members present were Kris Pauley, Kimberly Nunez, Peter Ryerson, and Danelle Myer. Also present were Supervisor Walter Utman, Operations Supervisor Mike Weis, and Director Scott Nelson.

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Pauley, second by Nunez. Motion carried.

There were no Public Comments.

Nelson gave the following Updates:

1. All staff are busy with normal Spring/early summer activities. Plus, they've been busy with the Cabin Initiative project.
2. Campgrounds are open with no major issues with the Covid restrictions. Showers, latrines, shelters, playgrounds, cabins, and beach are all open.
3. Conservation Education is exploring ways to adhere to the social distancing guidelines. All large programs have been cancelled. Looking at smaller, more numerous programs for the summer, along with suggestions to the public on what they can do/explore at the HCCB areas.
4. The Welcome Center still remains closed to the public, following state guidelines for Iowa Welcome Centers. Staff is creating protocol on how to safely open. The Farmer's Market has had to events – and both have been successful.
5. The Goodman property is moving along towards being donated to the HCCB. A Title Opinion has been received from the County Attorney's Office and it's in Mr. Goodman's hands now.

Nelson presented the Fiscal Year 20/21 Salary Recommendations to the Board for approval. The Board of Supervisors allowed all county employees a 3% Cost of Living allowance. After discussion and review, a motion to approve the recommendations as presented was made by Nunez, second by Ryerson. Motion carried.

The meeting was turned into a "rolling meeting" as everyone toured the new cabins. Nelson and Weis lead the group to explain the processes that have happened and what needs to continue. Staff will be meeting to discuss the opening of Prairie View and Monarch Ridge in mid-June.

Nelson reviewed the current budget, which is set to end on June 30th. The department spending has been fortunate this year, coupled with the Corvid restrictions, have left the HCCB in good shape. Staff is working on fulfilling the needs of purchases and will make every effort to spend the line items responsibly. Revenues are down due to the Corvid issues, but the Auditors Office insured the HCCB that this is an unforeseen problem and not to worry over it. This is the reason for having a healthy reserve within the system.

Nelson informed the Board that the Annual Conference in September is tentatively still going to be held. Any members who wished to attend will be paid out of this year's budget. If, by chance, the event is cancelled, the registrations will be rolled into next year.

The Board discussed the Willow Lake Nature Center and progress to date. Unfortunately, many of the grants that were submitted were declined. Coupled with major funders needing the project to have 70% of the funds secured before they will entertain being a partner, along with the Covid emergency hitting investments AND the HCCB's Trust account (cabin refunds and lack of cabin reservations for 2 months), the common questions is "how do we proceed with the project". The silver lining is that thousands of people were able to enjoy the properties the HCCB manages and public opinion is high and favorable to the program. It was determined that JEO Architects be invited to meet with the Board at the July 6th meeting to discuss the pulse of major projects, plans for moving forward, and for guiding us into the future.

The HCCB did receive \$44,000 Loess Hills Missouri River Region grant as match towards creating the construction documents for the building. This will be a part of the discussion with JEO on how we move forward.

Department Reports were reviewed.

In Future/Other: the next meeting will be on Monday, July 6th at Willow Lake.

With no further business, a motion to Adjourn at 9:50 pm was made by Pauley.

Ben McIntosh, President

Kris Pauley, Vice-President

Peter Ryerson, Secretary