

Monroe County Land Conservation, Forestry & Parks Committee Minutes

Date and Place:

Tuesday June 16, 2015 at the Monroe County Ag Services Center, Sparta, WI

Call to Order:

Chairman Chapman called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. Present were: J Rasmussen; D Wegner; B. Micheel, LCD; B. Richardson, LCD; C Ziegler, Monroe Co. Forestry; C Walroth, DNR; K Antwi, DNR; M. Modjeski, DNR; and public. **Olson and VanWychen absent.**

Minutes Approval 5/19/15 meeting:

Motion by Rasmussen, second by Wegner to approve the May 19, 2015 minutes as presented. Motion carried 3-0-2.

Public Comment Period:

None

Conservation Congress- Annual Convention Update:

S. Brownell reported on Annual Convention. Issues included Natural Resources Board Authority, Stewardship, and elimination of science positions within DNR. Also updated the committee on local representation on Conservation Congress Committees.

Review Land Conservation Bills:

Micheel reviewed LCD bills for the month of May.

Budget Adjustment- State Cost Share Program:

Micheel discussed NOD grant award for a farm operation in Coles Valley and 2014 carryover funds for practices that didn't get installed last year in the amount of \$172,751.32. Need to adjust budget to reflect carryover and DNR grant; total state cost share budget will be \$271,251.32.

Motion by Rasmussen, second by Wegner to approve cost share budget adjustment. Motion carried 3-0-2.

County Conservationist Report:

Micheel reported on:

Tri-Creek land purchase update; Tri Creek fencing project between lands owned by S. Krueger and Monroe County will be replaced this summer; Tri Creek emergency action contacts updated; PL566 dam inspections completed and mowing will be completed around the first of July; Another NOD applications was submitted for a Kendall beef operation on the headwaters of Seymour Creek; Potential phosphorus trading plans coming in 2016 from Ft. McCoy and West Salem municipalities.

Proposed Conservation Administrative Assistant Position:

Micheel discussed adding an Administrative Assistant position to the LCD office. Micheel reviewed the history of the position and explained it has been 8 years since the last Assistant retired. Since that time the duties have been absorbed by staff, primarily the County Conservationist. Micheel is asking to fill this position to allow more time spent on items that benefit conservation. Micheel discussed programs that used to be active in this county, but no longer exist because of lack of staff time. Micheel showed a comparison of county dollar commitment comparing Monroe County to other counties in the area. Total projected position cost to Monroe County \$46, 115.00.

Motion by Rasmussen, second by Wegner to proceed with developing an Administrative Assistant Position. Motion carried 3-0-2.

Tri Creek Update:

Covered in County Conservationist Report

Staff and Supervisor Open Discussion:

Discussed department head meeting: 2016 department budgets must be completed by the end of August; Bob attending LEAN Training.

Soil and Water Conservationist Report:

Richardson updated committee on nonmetallic mining items, showed ongoing construction via Power-Point presentation, and answered questions from the committee.

NRCS Report:

None

DNR Private Lands Report:

Modjeski reported on 2015 Warden Recruitment Class Graduation. Explained role of Training Wardens.

Walroth reported on school programs for Sparta 2nd and 3rd grade students at the Sparta School Forest, MFL Audit and MFL application deadline and applicants.

Forestry & Parks Updates:

Ziegler reported that the boat launch approach at McMullen Park is going to be reconstructed. Bids were requested from several contractors; bids were received from two contractors: Hansen Construction \$2,335.00, Paradise Valley Concrete: one quote for \$5,257.90 (per specs) and one for \$5,901.39 (with addition of concrete piers buried into the ground). Hansen construction will be performing the work.

Ziegler reported the extent of damages and dead trees that resulted from the Arctic Road fire in the Town of Lincoln. The person who started the fire received a citation for Setting fire and failure to extinguish. An appraisal was performed on the timber damaged by the fire; the pre-fire stumpage value was \$3,646.49. The responsible party will be receiving a bill for the timber.

Ziegler reported on the County Deer Advisory Committee. He explained that the committee recommended to increase the deer population in the Central Forest Zone (NE part of County) and maintain the population in the Central Farmland Zone. The issue with maintaining the population in the Central Farmland Zone is that the average antlerless harvest in the county isn't high enough to maintain the population unless other tools (such as earn a buck) are brought back to help encourage people to shoot antlerless deer.

Request for Land Trade-Town of New Lyme:

Ziegler handed out maps of the proposed trade and explained that Troy Lambert was interested trading some land with the county. Troy Lambert explained that he had purchased a house and land in bank foreclosure. He'd like to sell the house and keep most of the land. He could keep an easement around the house to access the land, however there is a wetland to cross to access the land. He'd like to trade 2 acres of land for a strip of county forest land about 700' long by up to 66' wide.

Ziegler pointed out that these withdrawals are very time consuming, so the county would have to get a much larger compensation than 2 acres. Also, the slope of the proposed traded land is 40% grade on the north side of the ridge, which makes it difficult to build a sustainable road.

Supervisor Rasmussen pointed out that the trade would potentially eliminate the neighbor's access to the county forestland. More discussion occurred.

The committee directed Ziegler to work out more details and bring them back to the committee.

Resolution amending Forestry & Parks Ordinances:

Ziegler explained the major revisions to the ordinance and explained the park policy. There are new items that were added to the resolution, items that were deleted and items that were placed in the park policy. Discussion and questions occurred.

Motion by Rasmussen, second by Wegner to approve the resolution Replacing Monroe County Ordinance, Chapter 23, Parks and Recreation Article II – Outdoor Recreation and the Monroe County Park Policy. Motion carried 3-0-2.

Proposed Full Time Park Position-discussion/action:

Ziegler explained that the Park Department had a ¾ time Park Ranger position about 7 years ago. The position was left vacant for a year and it was eliminated by lapse of time. McMullen Park has increased in attendance and revenue on an annual basis by about 6% (attendance) and 10% (revenue). The day to day maintenance duties are handled by park LTEs, the oversight, scheduling, supply purchases, planning, etc. are completed by the Forestry & Parks Admin. The operations at the park have reached a point in which a park manager is needed to provide the necessary services for the public. The position would cost the county \$55,421 annually at pay grade 16 (\$16.18/hr.) or \$59,895 (\$18.00/hr.). The Park Department has enough revenue to fully fund the Park Manager position.

Ziegler spoke with the Maintenance Dept. and Highway Dept. regarding utilizing the Park Manager within their Departments January through February each year. Maintenance would be interested if the department wasn't trying to add a full time technician. The Highway Dept. would be interested in having an additional snow plow driver for the winter months. The position would require a Class B Commercial Driver's License. Using other departments to help fund the position would create more money to make park improvements.

The committee discussed hiring an LTE Park Manager and taking the chance of paying unemployment in the winter months. They would like to see something worked out with another department and more information brought back to the committee.

Review Forestry & Park Bills:

Ziegler reviewed the past months bills.

Set next Meeting Date:

The next meeting will be on July 21, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. in the Monroe County Ag Services Center.

Adjourn:

Motion by Wagner, second by Rasmussen to adjourn at 10:35 a.m. Motion carried 3-0-2.