

BREMER COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD
Regular Meeting February 7, 2024
Conservation Board Office
1104 South Main Street Tripoli, IA 50676

Members Present: Larry Pavelec, Chair; Mandie Sanderman, Vice Chair; Richard Harms, Stacey Snyder and Kevin Korman

Members Absent: none

Also Present: Andrew Hockenson, Director; Heather Gamm, Naturalist; Darius Robinson, Co. Attorney; Kip Ladage, Howard Schmitz, Debra Schmitz, Linda Lamb, Darrin Siefken, Rob Walters, Dwight Diercks

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Pavelec.

Korman moved to accept the minutes from the January 3, 2024 regular meeting with the correction of Sanderman present in person not virtually. Seconded by Sanderman and approved unanimously.

Misc. Correspondence and Announcements: Hockenson provided an update from the budget presentation with the Board of Supervisors. During the meeting they recommended setting up a wage scale for each position. Hockenson also provided a brief legislative session update.

Area Reports and Updates:

- **Parks:** Linda Lamb and Howard and Debra Schmitz were in attendance to discuss the trail locations and south parking lot usage at Ingawanis Woodland. Howard read a statement he had prepared of instances of trespassing and trail users interfering with his hunting because of the proximity of certain sections of trail adjoining his and other neighbors' properties. Linda also commented on the trails and proximity of the south parking lot to her residence. She was concerned with the number of people using the lot and at times, the late hours they are there. The parking lot and trails were in existence prior to Bremer County owning the property, however usage has grown significantly. Howard, Debra, Linda, and two other neighbors who were not in attendance feel the trails need to be moved to allow a 100-yard buffer between their properties. They also feel the south parking lot is not needed because of the larger area closer to Eagle Lodge, and could be closed off. They are requesting the Conservation Board consider these options. No decision was made at this time and discussion was tabled until the March meeting.

Pavelec has continued to visit with groups about the cabin project. Articles in the newspapers have also been published. At this point the funding request made to the Board of Supervisors was not approved, however they were supportive of the project.

- **Wildlife Areas:** The Habitat Stamp grant for constructing a wetland at Ringneck Wildlife Area has been approved.

The Board discussed land along the Wapsie River on the south side of Hwy 3 that will be going to auction at the end of February. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) was also approached about a property along the Cedar River south of Plainfield. The property is owned by two parties, with one possibly interested in donating their ½ interest, which would reduce the cost of purchasing the other half of the property. The INHF reached out, seeking the Board's interest in the property. No action taken at this time. Will further discuss at the March meeting.

- **Other Areas:** An update on the potential tile line running through Dillion Wildlife Area was provided. Once a wetland determination by the NRCS office has been completed on the neighboring property, tiling can take place through the wildlife area. The 12" tile will run alongside what is currently there. Any ground disturbance will need to be re-seeded.

Storage Agreement: The Bany Building storage agreement with the Iowa DNR has been finalized.

Clothing Allowance Guidelines: The county Auditor's Office questioned whether items purchased under an employee's uniform allowance should run through payroll, therefore being taxed as a fringe benefit. IRS Fringe Benefit Guide states work clothes and uniform allowances are excluded from wages of an employee and tax exempt if they are specifically required as a condition of employment, and are not worn or adaptable to general use as ordinary clothing. It was determined a majority of employee clothing shall not be exempt from payroll taxes, as the items are adaptable to general use. Steel toed boots are exempt as they are safety related. A set of clothing allowance guidelines were created to help with future purchases. After discussion, Harms moved to approved the clothing guidelines. The motion was seconded by Snyder and approved unanimously.

EE Coordinator/Naturalist Report: The EE coordinator/naturalist report was reviewed. The report contained recent programs and participant numbers. Heather did many BCNA related tasks and made posts on our Facebook page. She filled out the DNR 2023 fishing pole report. She attended a Zoom IAN-NAI conference planning meeting, as well as an online ICEC meeting. She made caterer arrangements for that winter workshop on Feb. 3. She also worked with INRCOG to write a bike grant that would help get rid of old bikes, repair bikes, and help with bike maintenance. There was a motion by Korman to approve the report. The motion was seconded by Sanderman and approved unanimously.

Recycling Educator/Naturalist Report: The Recycling Educator/naturalist report was reviewed. The report contained recent programs and participant numbers. Angie attended Winterfest and has begun working on the newsletter. She also worked at finishing up a new Lights and Shadows program. There was a motion by Harms to approve the report. The motion was seconded by Sanderman and approved unanimously.

Open Discussion: BCNA banquet is March 23. Kip Ladage provided an update on the watershed management authorities day at the capital. Sanderman requested additional discussion at a future

meeting in regards to dogs of leash. Harms suggested looking into having a firewood cutting day similar to what Butler County offers.

Bills/Purchases: Motion by Sanderman to approve the bills. The motion was seconded by Snyder and approved unanimously.

Next meeting 7:00 PM March 6, 2024 at the Conservation Board Office in Tripoli.

With no other business, the meeting was declared adjourned by Chairman Pavelec at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: Larry Pavelec, Chairman

Andrew Hockenson
Director
