

Boone County Conservation Board regular meeting
Monday, April 11, 2022
Boone County courthouse 4th floor conference room and via Zoom

Members present: Jennifer Schieltz, Greg Stotts, Marilyn Jordan, Pat Hagan, Brandon Moe
Employees present: Ex. Dir. Katie Healy

Chair Jordan officially called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Hagan made a motion to approve the agenda, 2nd by Stotts. Motion passed.

Motion to approve the minutes of the previous regular meeting (March 14, 2022) made by Hagan, seconded by Stotts. Motion passed.

Ex. Dir. Healy presented the monthly bills totaling \$12,803.80. Motion made by Moe to approve the bills, seconded by Hagan. Passed.

Old Business

Ex. Dir. Healy gave a Boone County Trails Advisory Committee update. We are moving ahead with phase 1A, adding a section of trail from the High Trestle Trail to Swede Point park. The concrete company doing the work is hoping to start mid-June. We are working on renewing the lease for Swede Pointe park with the Army Corps of Engineers, so that we can reapply for a specific grant.

New Business

Don Williams public forum follow-up discussion: The board agreed that a good discussion was had and a lot of information and suggestions were shared. Member Schieltz noted that the suggestion of charging for parking at Grant's Woods was an interesting idea to raise some more revenue. We would not want to make this mandatory since we don't have the manpower to enforce it, but suggested we put up some signs and donation boxes with a "suggested" parking fee or donation of \$2 or \$3.

In regards to the Don Williams clubhouse and golf course, the board reviewed/ summarized some of the main comments and thoughts shared at the forum. The board noted it was clear in the meeting that people care deeply about the golf course and want to help. There is a strong desire to move ahead in working with the Supervisors to try to fund a new clubhouse in some form, with the size and cost to be determined. Most of the feedback we heard was in favor of a functional, but not super fancy or large clubhouse.

Next steps are for the board to decide on a scope/ size of the clubhouse and then solicit bids from several construction companies. There was a suggestion from the audience to go to some of the other golf courses around the area and look at their clubhouses for comparison.

We are excited about the possibility of volunteers perhaps forming a "Friends group". Chair Jordan said she will talk to some people who are involved in the "Friends of the Ledges" group to ask about their structure, process, and activities to help guide the formation of a similar group for Don Williams. Member Moe advocated for working aggressively in the next 30 days to get volunteers signed up to do some other needed maintenance and improvements on the golf course

itself. He would like to see groups of people take charge of specific holes on the course or rebuild specific shelters. At a minimum, volunteers will need to sign a waiver before helping. Ex. Dir. Healy will check with the County Attorney to make sure all insurance/ legal needs are met. Audience members also brought to the board's attention some hazard trees that need to be cut down on the course asap. Ex. Dir. Healy will work on this, either utilizing help from other county departments or hiring an outside tree contractor.

New Employee Updates: We have both a new Operations Manager and a new Park Ranger that will start on Monday. We also now have a seasonal hire who has started to mow the holes on the golf course. The new Park Ranger who will oversee the golf course is not yet certified in pesticide application, so there may be short-term contracting with an outside group to consult or work with us on that. An audience member volunteered to help with repairs to the irrigation system on the course.

The clubhouse will open this Friday, April 15. This year's contractors have put a lot of work into cleaning and prepping the clubhouse and it is looking very nice.

Open Discussion from community members in attendance:

Discussion of our golf cart rental contract and money spent on repairs that were needed last year. Ex. Dir. Healy noted that options for other companies are limited or no carts are available. Hopefully the clubhouse concessionaire this year can help monitor and keep people from abusing carts.

A volunteer discussed a willingness to help with trash cleanup along the Des Moines river.

An audience member asked how old the clubhouse is, and it was noted it was built in 1962.

A suggestion was made for the board to set some specific dates for goals to be met.

A suggestion for the board to go ahead and get another bid or two for a basic 35' x 50' building, and not start over with a brand new design or spend a lot of time looking at other courses.

A suggestion to approach companies and NGOs like Fareway, Hy-vee, Leonard Good Trust to contribute additional or matching funds for a new clubhouse.

A suggestion to look strongly into ways to incentivize the clubhouse concessionaire so they want to stay year after year.

A desire from the group to see clear stats and record keeping at the end of this season of how many memberships there were, how much revenue was raised, etc.

A renewed ask for an additional port-a-pottie near the boat docks; Ex. Dir. Healy confirmed that we are planning to add one there.

The board agreed to have an additional meeting sometime in the next week or two to continue these discussions before our next regular monthly meeting in May.

Motion to adjourn by Stotts, 2nd by Hagan. Passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm.

Marilyn Jordan, Chair

Jennifer Schieltz, Secretary