

Land Conservation Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2020

The July 13th, 2020 Land Conservation meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chair Steve Williamson in the conference room of the Ag Service Center. Present were Steve Williamson, Lee Van Landuyt, Greg Kinney, Cathy Cooper and Kent Marshall. Melissa Luck, Shaun Murphy-Lopez, Clinton Langreck and Barb Scott were present via Webex.

Lee Van Landuyt moved to approve the amended agenda and proof of notification. Seconded by Greg Kinney. Motion carried.

Shaun Murphy-Lopez moved to approve the minutes of the June 8th meeting. Seconded by Melissa Luck. Motion carried.

#4 Ash Creek Community Forest. Cathy reported that Ken mowed the trails on the property with tractor and mower rented from Pine River Leasing. Cathy and Melissa were asked if there was any news about the grant. Neither has heard anything.

#5 Mill Creek. Ken has talked with Rob Wanless about completing the finishing work out at the Huth Dam site. Rob has indicated he will as soon as he gets time. The final list of projects using the borrowed money has not been completed yet. Ken and Cathy need to meet with the Area Engineer, Mike Dreischmeier but haven't been able to because of COVID. Ken would like to rent the mini excavator for \$200 per day to complete some work on a few of the dams such as removing beaver dams and logs on top of the risers. Melissa Luck moved to approve renting the mini excavator for work on the dams. Seconded by Greg Kinney. Motion carried.

#6 Conservation Technician Report. Ken is out in the field but left a list of projects that have been completed. Everett Newberry had a stream crossing and riprap installed. Robert King, Donna King, Marsha Martinek all completed well abandonments.

#7 Working Lands Initiative/Farmland Preservation. Kent reported that he is working with 2 producers to complete nutrient management plans through one-on-one farmer training.

#8 County Conservationist report. Cathy reported that there will be Conservation Partnership Training via GoToMeeting starting tomorrow. WI Land + Water sent out an agenda and a link to all supervisors via email. Cathy stated that she attended the virtual County Conservationist meeting the afternoon of July 9th and morning of July 10th. She stated there were several good sessions. Keynote speaker was Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes who spoke about what is happening at the state level with the budget and legislatively. She stated many of the sessions had to do with climate issues, COVID's effect on producers and its effect on the budget. She said that the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture will probably be looking at cuts but will try to make the cuts in cost sharing and try not to affect staff allocations. The preliminary grant allocation will go to the State Land and Water Conservation Board August 4, 2020 with the Final allocation plan to be finalized in October. Cathy then stated that she had a virtual meeting with Matt Wallrath (Upper Sugar River Watershed) and Josh Benes (Executive Director Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development) today to discuss the Lake Monitoring and Protection grant. This grant is replacing many of the Invasive Species grants. The county would be eligible for a base amount of money to use to work on invasive species. Richland County is eligible for \$9578. The county can either do work themselves or hire an agent with more experience. Cathy is going to meet with them again to discuss what invasive species and projects to work on. The county needs to let DNR know by September 2nd about the intent to apply. The grant application is due November 1st. Golden Sands may be interested in being the agent. This will be on the August agenda for the committee to decide which way to go, either staff do the work or use the agent.

#9 Office space. Cathy presented a spreadsheet on the costs that will occur if the department moves. She forwarded the information to Clinton so he would have a copy. Many of these items would need to be purchased if the department moves because the department currently uses some federal equipment. The biggest expense would be file cabinets for the landowner files. It was asked if other departments have gently used cabinets that the department could have. Cathy will check into this. The cabinets need to be in working condition. Cathy stated that the department needs at least 600 square feet. There was space in Health and Human Service. Cathy, Shaun and Clinton all stated that the concern with that space is the heating /cooling system and also the security for information of Health and Human Services and the MIS department. This will be looked into. Shaun mentioned that there may be room at the University. Cathy will check into that.

#10 Well water testing. Melissa stated that the next testing is supposed to happen in October, but the COVID may prevent that from happening. Cathy will talk with the county conservationists from Crawford and Vernon counties and report back next month. Next year might be a better option.

14 Wildlife Damage. Nothing to report

#12 DNR report. There was no one present, but the Forestry office has moved into the next building over, so the staff has easy access to their garage.

#13 Farm Service Agency. Greg reported that the staff is working on crop reporting, but because of COVID, they can only have one masked customer in the office at a time. This is making it harder to complete the reporting. He also said that the office furniture is being replaced and reconfigured the end of this week.

#14 Natural Resource Conservation Service. Nothing to report

15 Committee Member Reports. Nothing to report

#16 Bills. The following bills were presented: CK Norman Development, \$926.00; Greg Cerven, \$1,47.66; Pine River Leasing Inc, \$300.00; Premier Co-Op, \$70.46; Everett Newberry & Wanless Construction Inc, \$3,815.00; Bob King, \$371.00; Donna King, \$154.00; and Marsha Martinek & Advanced Dairy Solutions, \$523.79. Shaun Murphy-Lopez moved to approve the bills. Seconded by Melissa Luck. Motion carried

Next meeting was set for August 10, 2020 at 4:00 pm at the Ag Service Center.

Lee Van Landuyt moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Greg Kinney. Motion carried. The committee adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Cooper

Cathy Cooper
Secretary pro temp
County Conservationist