

Minutes of the Allamakee County Conservation Board

The Allamakee County Conservation Board meet in regular session at 1:00 P.M. Tuesday July 10, 2012 at the Columbus Bridge Property located at 1978 Great River Road. The July 2012 meeting had been moved from the first Tuesday of the month due to Board Member and staff scheduling conflicts with the first Tuesday falling on July 3rd. The meeting was held at the Columbus Bridge Property to discuss development planning with the Allamakee County Board of Supervisors and the public. Thirty five people were in attendance. Conservation Board Members present were Dennis Blocker, Dave Carroll, Marilyn Clark, Bill Moody, and Gary Soper. Present from the Allamakee County Board of Supervisors included Lennie Burke, Sherry Strub, and Larry Schellhammer. Other Allamakee County representatives in attendance included Allamakee County Engineer Brian Ridenour, Allamakee Attorney Jill Kistler, Planning and Development Coordinator Tom Blake, and Economic Development Director Laura Olson. Also present were Conservation Board Staff Members Jim Janett and Jarrod Olson. Executive Director of the area RC&D Executive Director Lora Freist was attending. Allamakee County Community Foundation members present included Bruce Re Vior and Brian Houlihan. Present were Allamakee County Conservation Foundation members Dave Duncklee, Clem Schulte, and Jane Regan. Regan also is Allamakee County's Representative on the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. Attending was Eastern Allamakee County Community Schools Superintendent Dale Crozier, Lansing Commercial Fishing Museum proprietor Karen Galema, Mark Moine from Gardner Architecture, Roger Mohn from Mohn Engineering, Lansing Main Street Matters Executive Director Sara Thompson. Attending was James Kerndt who is President of Kerndt Brothers Bank and also an adjoining landowner. Others attending included retired County Engineer Willaim Kerndt, Bruce Palmborg, Mary Palmborg, Joe Pap, Bill O'Connor, Ric Zarwell, Betty Zarwell, Judy Schild, and Sue Stirn.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M. and the minutes from the previous meeting were read and approved.

Claims and revenues were reviewed and approved by the Board. Ending balance summaries from the 2011-2012 Fiscal Year Budget were provided to the Board. The Board ended the fiscal year with a \$1,757.13 balance. The balance did not included Historical Society balances.

The Director provided the public attending the meeting a brief history of the Columbus Property ranging from the location first serving Allamakee County as a County Seat and the first District Court hearings held in Allamakee County being at this location. A summary of the recent use of the property was provided. This included the Board of Supervisors past decision to remove the structures from the property and the actions taken by the County Engineer and the Conservation Board to remove the structures, septic's, and well capping. The history of the current proposed development of the property was discussed. The development of the property as Driftless Area Education and Visitor was first identified to the Conservation Board in the REAP plan in the early 1990's. Since the Allamakee County Board of Supervisors transferred management of the property to the Allamakee County Conservation Board three years ago, the Conservation Board has had continued public input to develop the property as a visitor and education center. The Conservation Board has been moving forward with the development of an education and visitor center by obtaining planning grants and retaining engineering and architectural services. The Conservation Board had received two planning grants from the Allamakee County Community Foundation totaling \$12,000.00. These funds have been used for site planning including building design, topographic maps, and water and septic, and construction cost estimates for grants.

Planning and construction costs were discussed. Lora Friest representing RC&D had prepared and submitted a National Scenic Byway Grant for the construction of the Education and Visitor Center totaling 1.3 million, the projected total cost of the project was estimated at 2.2 million. The Board discussed submitting a \$700,000.00 REAP grant for the upcoming grant cycle for the project. How the REAP grant is written and the amount of the grant will differ based on if the National Scenic Byways Grant is funded. The Director indicated the body of the REAP grant will be similar and adjustments can be made in the budget section of the grant to accommodate grant funding announcements. Information was provided regarding the composition and efforts of the Allamakee County Conservation Foundation and their role in fundraising for the project.

The Conservation Board discussed the variance requested with the Board of Supervisors and Tom Blake. Blake discussed the basis for recommending to the Board of Adjustment not to approve the variance submitted to the Board of Adjustment for parking on County Road Right of Way. Blake indicated that the plans for the project would make a stronger application showing some onsite parking. Gardner Architecture Architect Mark Monie and project engineer Roger Mohn discussed different design options. Board of Supervisor Larry Shellhammer suggested conducting a project planning meeting with the necessary individuals to address submitting a variance that will address some onsite parking options. The Conservation Director will coordinate the meeting in the near future. Suggestions regarding reducing the size of the building were discussed, Lora Friest voiced concerns about changing the building to much could affect the National Scenic Byways Grant that has been submitted for the project.

The Board addressed questions from the public regarding the proposed project. Comments were positive and many offers were made to aid and assist the development of the project. People in attendance encouraged the Conservation Board to be diligent in pursuing the project and to notify them to attend any meetings that may require support for the project.

Updates were provided on Fish Habitat Grant's and project specifications. Permits were complete for phase one of the stream bank stabilization on the Columbus Property. Phase two funds may have to be turned back into the Fish Habitat Account due to issues with Rail Road compliance. Permits for stream bank stabilization projects for Volney Park and Phase I of Columbus have been filed and are waiting approval. The Director informed the Board that he hoped to complete the projects during the month of September depending on having optimum water levels. Bid specifications for rock and machine time will be completed.

Field operation items were presented to the Board. Items included painting of the exterior of the shop, minor high water debris removal, replacement of office AC unit, kiosk construction being completed at New Albin Park, and plans for placing steel on Harpers Ferry Bluffview shelter house and restroom.

The Board left the Columbus Bridge Property and viewed road #224 south of the Alliant Energy Power Plant. The Conservation Board has completed some clearing of the tree canopy along the road and will be competing more clearing in the future. The goal of the Conservation Board is to maintain a hiking trail on the roadway which extends approximately 1.75 miles. The Conservation Board asked the Board of Supervisors not to support any request in the future to vacate the road.

The next Conservation Board meeting will be held at 1:00 P.M. Tuesday August 7, 2012.

There being no additional business a motion was made by Carroll, second Clark, all in favor, motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 P.M.

