

CHISAGO COUNTY PARK BOARD OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, March 18, 2021

At 3:00 pm, Thursday, March 18, 2021 Chair Wille called the meeting of the Chisago County Park Board of Directors in a synchronous e-meeting due to Declaration of Local Emergency. The following members present: Jolene Wille, Dan Kaiser, Frank Storm, Jill Sicheneder and Gregg Carlson. Also present: County Commissioner Mike Robinson, Joe Tart; Park Director, Diane Sander; Support Specialist and Kurt Schneider; Environmental Services Director.

Meeting Summary:

- Unanimously the Board approved the agenda
- Unanimously the Board approved February 18, 2021 meeting minutes
- Unanimously the Board approved the SIRT Crossing Permit at PID#18.00006.02

Meeting was called to order by Chair Wille.

Motion by Gregg Carlson to approve the agenda. Second by Frank Storm and carried unanimously.

Motion by Frank Storm to approve the February 18, 2021 minutes. Second by Gregg Carlson and carried unanimously.

Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail (SIRT) – Crossing Permit Application

Director Tart reported Bird Dog Farms, LLC is the new property owner for parcel PID#18.00006.02 (formally Eichten's) that is requesting a crossing permit for farming purposes, which will use the existing field entrance. The crossing permit is just an easement for field access. Board discussed trail conditions and noted the applicant will need to follow the conditions and any damage will be responsible for repairs. **Motion by**, Dan Kaiser to approve the crossing permit for Bird Dog Farms, LLC at PID#18.00006.02. Second by Jill Sicheneder and carried unanimously.

Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail (SIRT) - Interstate State Park Update

Director Tart reported on the website content for Segment C constructed by WSB consulting firm. Website content includes three main areas: project background, trail options and voting. Project background will provide an overview of the process to the trail options, recommended new alignment and feedback from DNR, City and County. Interested citizens can review trail options, provide their feedback and vote on which trail option they prefer. WSB will tally results and include the public input results in the feasibility report. The plan is for the website to go live in April for about three weeks. Gregg Carlson asked some clarifying questions on the website. Chair Wille commented the website was a good way to gather community feedback when in-person attendance has been restricted during COVID.

Parks Seasonal Staffing

Director Tart provided an overview of the hiring process for seasonal staff. County Board approved a new part-time Parks Maintenance Technician position on March 17, 2021. Director Tart reviewed 2021 proposed budget hours and total for Seasonal Park Rangers, Collection Attendants, Parks Maintenance and Maintenance Technician positions. Park Board reviewed training for seasonal staff and COVID protocols. The new Maintenance Technician will also be helping with volunteers. Park Board reviewed anticipated start dates and "to-do-list" for the 2021 season. Gregg Carlson asked if Kost Dam Park hiking trail was going to be opened this year. Director Tart indicated the trail may potentially reopen if no further issues persist.

Community Pollinator Grant Update

Director Tart provided an overview of the grant and identified pollinator garden areas. Some sections of the trail are not owned by the county. The Rotary Club will need to work with private citizens or other cities if they want pollinator gardens in selected areas along the trail corridor. Director Tart reviewed his meeting with the Bee and Butterfly Foundation. The meeting had good discussion about site and seed preparation. Timing will be critical with the hunting season, with only a few dates that will work for seeding operation. Gardens are going to get two different types of seed mixes: wildflower and bee. The bee mix will have more clover and wildflower mix will have more flowering plants. Chisago Lakes Middle School students will likely be growing seedling pots and planting the plugs. Volunteer groups will

do a broadcast seeding. Reminder about pollinator projects: Year 1 – plants sleep, Year 2 – plants creep and Year 3 – plants will leap. Need to have patience and will see project results after the third year.

Park Improvement Projects

Director Tart updated the Park Board with list of improvement projects and quotes for the 2021 budget. Director Tart indicated that additional portable restrooms and electrical services will take up a larger portion of the Rental and Services agreements in 2021.

Staff Report

Natural and Scenic Grant

Director Tart reported land appraisal will be taking place soon and reviewed application requirements.

Park and Trail Maintenance

Director Tart highlighted spring list for the next three - four weeks.

Shop Projects: Finish up remaining kiosk anchors, shelter reservations boxes, collection ticket box and soccer goal remover.

Field Projects: Inspections, removal of snowmobile signage and bridge mats, grading gravel parking lots, replace paneling on shelters prior to installing new materials for roofing, fascia and soffits, install remaining amenities at Taylors Falls Trailhead and constructing a work bench/installing hooks for hand tools at Ki-Chi-Saga storage garage.

Volunteer Projects: North Branch Honor Society members will be preparing and painting new parks trash cans. Pictures were provided of identified shelter roof replacement/maintenance upgrades.

Additional Questions

Dan Kaiser asked if the department was utilizing Sentence to Serve (STS) in 2021. Due to COVID protocols, STS was not available for much of the summer months in 2020. A project work list will be generated and the department looks forward for STS assistance.

Park Board discussed comfort level with meeting in-person and agreed to meet at various park locations when temperatures improve for late spring/early summer.

Adjourn – Motion by Dan Kaiser to adjourn the meeting. Second by Gregg Carlson and carried unanimously.