



Minutes
Board Spring Quarterly Meeting
Thursday, April 13, 2017

4:00-5:30 PM
Multipurpose Room, Gilbert City Hall

Board Members Present: Anne Campbell, Sonia Dodd, Jean Eells, Rick Sanders, Mark Scott, John Farrell, Kevin Griggs, Harold Hove, Erv Klaas

Absent: Boone County Supervisor

Quorum is met

Also Present: Bob Kindred (substitute, City of Ames), Mike Cox (Story County Conservation), Kayla Hasper, Emma Wilson, Aimee Burch, Daniel Haug, Penny Brown Huber (Prairie Rivers of Iowa), Lisa Walters (Iowa Rural Water Association)

PROCEEDINGS

Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Ann Campbell
Vice Chair

Meeting called to order at 4pm by Vice-Chair Ann Campbell

Review and Approve October 13, 2016 Minutes

Rick moves to approve, Jean seconds, motion carries

Election of Board Chair

Erv Klaas nominates Jean Eells, Rick Sanders seconds. Motion carries.

Old Business:

- Update on amended and approved Bylaws Rick Sanders
 - Amended bylaws approved with no discussion

- Review standards for beaches versus drinking water versus streams Dan Haug, PRI

- Dan notes that monitoring web page has been updated to clarify relevant standards or benchmarks. Handout provides policy details.
 - Rick reiterates that the question brought up at last meeting was whether standards listed match the goals in the management plan.
- Update from Squaw Creek Watershed Coordinator Kayla Hasper, PRI
- Women Caring for the Land Workshop held today in Stanhope
 - Jean noted that one attendee in the upper watershed is interested in doing a large project
 - Wrote Conservation Collaboration Grant to reach “acreage” owners (10-100 acres) in urban fringe of Ames that are currently underserved by technical and financial assistance programs. Initial focus on Squaw Creek watershed because cost share is available.
 - Dates for field days
 - June 13 in Hamilton County
 - June 27 in Story County at Key Coop in Nevada
 - August, TBD
 - Emma Wilson has been working on videos to showcase conservation-minded farmers and our events
 - Kevin Griggs offered drone services. Best to schedule a half-day with several flights in mid-summer
 - Quarterly newsletter
 - Rick asked about Hickory Hills
 - Kayla met with those landowners and gave some recommendations but has since stepped away due to volatile situation
 - Penny noted that IDALS (Iowa Dept. Agriculture and Land Stewardship) met with us for annual review. They were pleased with work that has been done and pledged to renew grant for another 3 years, contingent upon funding
- Update from Watershed Educator Dan Haug, PRI
- Dan received training in Agricultural Conservation Practice Framework from Agricultural Research Service. In addition to running updates to include new tools for saturated buffers and bioreactors, Dan is working on making maps of conservation practices more accessible through web-mapping tools
 - Recent events include Ames Eco-Fair and talk at ISU policy class
 - Upcoming events include Earth Day tabling event at ISU and Iowa Children’s Water Festival
 - Dan and Annie received training from ICEC on new science standards and Dan will be working with Ames High earth science class on a watershed lesson. Annie wrote a North Face grant for funding to develop programs for outdoor learning environments
 - Dan and Kayla met with City of Ames staff to explore watershed boundary signs
- Update on Keigley Watershed Project Dan Haug, PRI
- Feb 28 meeting in Story City to discuss WMA was sidetracked by concerns by residents about a reservoir

- At April 4 meeting, Pat Conrad of EOR gave excellent presentation on water issues and initial findings of assessment.
 - Will continue to hold evening meetings, since requested by Story City and Randall

New Business:

Discussion and Prioritizing of Goals and Objectives

Board Discussion

- Penny reflected on how far we've come. Putting the plan together was a big effort by the board. Recently, focus has been on WQI grant that allowed us to hire watershed coordinator to implement nutrient reduction portion of the plan. Now, need to identify additional priorities for implementation.
 - Penny noted that we've made good progress on messaging (soil health) and on public awareness of the Squaw Creek Watershed
 - E. coli, turbidity, and altered hydrology have not been addressed
 - County Conservation and city parks departments already deal with habitat and recreation, but could reframe in the context of the watershed
 - Prairie Rivers has more GIS capabilities now that could address wetlands or recreational opportunities
- Bob said education is cornerstone and should continue. Rick emphasized that we won't be stopping any of our current activities, just adding new activities and changing our focus
- Kevin said that water quality and hydrology will follow the practices, so focus should be getting practices installed
- Erv said soil health is key to all objectives
- Kevin said this is great partnership compared to some other WMAs, but we can go beyond each member working on own projects and collaborate on projects. If you can show that 95% of eligible partners are on board...
- Board members discussed how to reach out to Hamilton and Boone Counties
- After discussion, board members agreed on four priorities
- 1. Wildlife Habitat
 - Erv Klaas was a principal investigator on Iowa GAP analysis in late '90s. Compiled vegetation maps, and for each habitat type, developed an animal model. Could use this available data to develop a diversity index for a county or for a watershed
 - Mike Cox noted that Story County is getting ready to engage a firm in a county-wide floristic study
 - Bird clubs and university staff could be involved
 - Birds are easy to monitor, but mammals are tricky because many are nocturnal. Reptiles and amphibians don't get much attention but Ada Hayden study found diverse community
 - Topeka Shiner likes to breed in old oxbows. Can identify oxbows with GIS techniques and look at restoration
- 2. Support smaller communities
 - Lisa Walters of Iowa Rural Water Association offered free services for 6-month source water protection planning
 - Stratford has already done a plan, but Gilbert and Stanhope might benefit
 - Opportunities through State Revolving Fund

- Source water protection is another entry point for talking about cover crops or conservation reserve set asides
- 3. Bring the Management Plan to Life
 - Kevin Griggs shared his 30,000 foot perspective on WMAs around the state. It's essential to differentiate yourself from other organizations seeking funding. Successful WMAs never let dust settle on the cover of their watershed management plan. Bring the document to life with strong web presence and video
 - Example: Instead of newsletter article talking about saturated buffers, have a 20-second video of Jim McHugh showing off his saturated buffer
 - Bob said there's no such thing as plagiarism in government. Can we link to existing educational materials and videos without reinventing the wheel?
- 4. Enhance recreational opportunities and make the connection to water
 - Rick said that recreation is a great way to reach people, pointing out practices that we're doing from trails
 - Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor as example

Board Members Share Updates on Watershed Initiatives and/or Issues in the area

- Story County has selected EOR to perform assessments for all HUC12 watersheds in the county
 - Rick hopes this will lead to county-wide watershed coordinator position
 - Bob asked about edges, Rick responded that at HUC12 level, most watersheds fit within county boundaries
 - Bob asked about future interaction with the 120 drainage districts in the county. Rick said we can't deal with water quality without addressing it at the drainage district level. Drainage district law is 100 years old and has focused on moving water from point A to Point B, but in a promising development, water quality was brought up at the last Grant #5 District meeting. We need to have these conversations in a non-threatening way.
- Ames finishing new water treatment plant and invites board members to tour
- Gilbert is starting wastewater project through State Revolving Fund grant
- Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor Mike Cox
 - Story County committed \$4 million to 37 acre park adjacent to research park south of Airport Road. Great example of how resource conservation, outdoor learning, and recreation can go hand in hand with commercial development. Showcases best management practices. Phase 1 is streambank restoration—currently looks like warzone because trees needed to be removed before April 1 to avoid impacts to roosting bats.

Next Meetings:

July 13th. Core Facility, 1805 Collaboration Place, Ames. Mike and Rick will reach out to arrange space and tour of new Tedesco Environmental Learning Corridor

October 12th, Host to be identified

All meetings start at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion by Jean Eells to adjourn at 5:30PM

Minutes submitted by Daniel Haug