

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE MACON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
June 19, 2019**

PURSUANT to written notice given all members of the Board, the above meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Jensen with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board members present: President Jensen, Treasurer White, Secretary Johnson and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Parish

Board members absent: 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Schneller

Trustee Parish MOVED to approve the Minutes of the May 15, 2019, Public Meeting as presented. Trustee White SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee White MOVED to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Parish MOVED to approve the monthly Disbursements in the amount of \$217,861.97 and additions to disbursements in the amount of \$25, 872.96. Trustee White SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:** No Audience.

**PRIOR BUSINESS:**

**1. ECO Center Upgrades**

Paul Marien reviewed the schematic design that was included in the Board Packet. It came about after a three-day workshop, conference call and emails finalizing the design. The central theme of the project is to connect people with the Natural Resources of the Conservation District. Four subthemes will be:

- a) Here: the experience at Rock Springs Conservation Area
- b) History: Historical timeline how humans have interacted with and valued the land from the Native Americans to the present day.
- c) Prairies, forests and wetlands: this will use the existing diorama with modifications.
- d) Conservation Legacy: a hall of fame will showcase success stories and will be displayed in the current "Bluestem Theater". The District's hope is to encourage the public to be part of success and to leave with that.

Some questions were raised as to how old the current Eco Center was and Paul replied that it's approximately 20 years old and is in need of a change. Trustee Parish commented that his grandchildren recently enjoyed going through the exhibit but it was their first time to see the display. Paul commented that the new design will be more interactive for younger children. The cost of the new exhibit will be costly but hopefully it is a fundraising project the Foundation can tackle after Prairie Pedal is finished. The last exhibit was partially funded by the Foundation and a grant. Paul is checking to see when the application process will be open for a museum grant. Trustee Parish asked if this was the final design and Paul responded that no it wasn't that more detailed changes will more than likely be made during the fabrication stage. Paul assumes that the project will begin to fully develop in the next fiscal year. This was informational only and no action was required by the Board.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **1. Liability Insurance Renewal:**

Paul Marien explained that it is the time of the year for the District's annual liability insurance renewal. The District is in the second of three years in which the premium had been frozen at the same price of \$65,884.00. The staff feel that IPARKS has done a good job and recommends renewing the policy.

Trustee White **MOVED** to approve payment to IPARKS for the District's liability insurance in the amount of \$65,884.00. Trustee Parish **SECONDED** the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

### **2. Special Use Permits:**

Paul Marien presented two special use permits that needed Board approval in two separate motions.

The first permit is with a group new to the District called Prairie Land Path and Leah's Hope Canine Rescue. The group would like to hold a fundraiser in which they would charge a fee for participation and have food vending available. The event would be held on October 12, 2019, (which is Columbus Holiday weekend) at Friends Creek Conservation Area. It is some type of foot race where the dog is tied to the runner. Paul let the Board know that if they will be having food that they are required to have a health permit. There should be enough parking available for the 200 participants they are expecting and will be held on the west side of the trails and should not affect the campers. The group has stated that there will be a veterinarian on site. It was a general consensus of the Board to let them hold the event this year and if it doesn't work out well, then deny them the next time they apply.

Trustee Johnson **MOVED** to approve the special permit use for Prairie Land Path Pounders and Leah's Hope Canine Rescue for a Canicross foot race on October 12, 2019, at Friends Creek Conservation Area pending all requirements are met. Trustee White **SECONDED** the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

The second use permit was for the Decatur Running Club. This club has held their fundraising run for the past several years at Sand Creek Conservation Area and there has never been a problem. Staff are familiar with the group and have no complaints.

Trustee White MOVED to approve the special permit use for The Decatur Running Club on October 12, 2019, for their annual trail run event at Sand Creek Conservation Area. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee Johnson, "AYE"; Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

### **3. Staff Reports:**

Paul Marien gave an update on the conservatory project at Oglesby Mansion. They have decided to scale back the project with the District Staff completing a majority of the work in-house. Shane Ravellette, Operations Manager, feels confident he and his staff can fabricate the walls in the shop. The main goal is to get the greenhouse removed and the area enclosed. At this time, there will not be a closet built. Paul met with the Decatur City Manager and agreed to serve in a technical advisory capacity for the management plan for the Sangamon River Watershed project. He also updated the Board on the success of the joint shoreline project making enhancements to the shoreline. If the city continues to want assistance with other projects, an agreement would have to be created to reimburse the District for staff time and materials. Paul reported that he has completed the final report to the Clean Energy Community Foundation for the grant awarded to purchase acreage at the Friends Creek Conservation Area. The District will continue to send them photos of the development although it is not required by the grant.

Richie Wolf reported that summer camps are well underway with good attendance in all camp areas. Earth adventures has been averaging 28-30 campers and an average of 20 in the Adventure Club. Mini Camps are full and the next two Xtreme camps are also full. The District has completed the second summer concert with the next one scheduled for June 30<sup>th</sup>. Staff were busy conducting library programs at the various outlying libraries. It is a popular program. Richie reminded the Board that the annual Independence Day Event held at the Homestead Prairie Farm was scheduled for June 29<sup>th</sup>. He also reminded the Board that the Homestead is open every Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Shane Ravellette reported that the biggest success for the month was removal of approximately 40-50 trees along the Bike Trail, Discovery Trail and Woodland Trail. A big project in the works is the center island at Sand Creek. There has been a problem with the public driving through the center and when it's wet leaving ruts. The project will hopefully eliminate this problem. The project is to transition the center piece into a pollinator planting which will be a two-year project. First they will let the grasses grow and then burn them off, spray round-up and plant in the fall while fencing the area off to allow growth. Shane reported that the new intern, Mackenzie has been doing a great job. Trustee Jensen asked Shane about the status of the observation deck at Friends Creek and when it would be completed. Shane

reported that the footings were poured last week and all the materials have been purchased. So pending on the weather and vacations that have been planned, it should be done by mid-July.

Pam Smith reported that a majority of the month was spent on new hire paperwork including the camp counselors, Natural Resource Intern and the Historic Intern. About two weeks of her time, was spent troubleshooting phone, internet and online registration software after a power outage occurred. Pam reported that the District's IMRF employer rate will rise almost 55% from the current year to next year going from 5.03% to 7.81%. This increase was due to the loss occurred by IMRF in 2018 and the reduction of their assumed rate of return from 7.5% to 7.25%. The checks depositing funds into the Fidelity Investment account for the Foundation were finally sent to Fidelity for deposit into the Money Market account.

**4. Other:** No other business.

#### **COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES:**

No Comments from the Trustees.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Trustee Johnson MOVED to go into Executive Session at 6:18 p.m. for the purpose of

1. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1)
2. The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body (5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (5))

Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee Parish MOVED to return to the Regular Public Meeting at 7:10 p.m. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. Roll call vote was as follows: Trustee White, "AYE"; Trustee Jensen, "AYE"; and Trustee Parish, "AYE". Motion carried.

Trustee White MOVED to approve the Executive Session Minutes of June 19, 2019. Trustee Johnson SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Trustee White MOVED to adjourn the Regular Public Meeting at 7:20 p.m. Trustee Parish SECONDED the Motion. All members of the Board present voted, "AYE". Motion carried.

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President

ATTEST:

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Secretary