

MINUTES OF THE MCHENRY COUNTY  
CONSERVATION FOUNDATION  
Strategic Planning Meeting  
Lost Valley Visitor Center  
January 23, 2019

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

President Semel made a motion to open the Special Board Meeting, Director Dreher seconded the motion, all were in favor. The Strategic Planning Meeting of the McHenry County Conservation Foundation was called to order on January 23, 2019 at 5:10 p.m.

2.0 ROLL CALL

Brad Semel, President  
Kevin Ivers, Vice-President  
Ray Eisbrener, Secretary  
Martie Gorman, Director  
Dennis Dreher, Director  
Kim Becker, Treasurer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Yvonne Semel, Administrator  
Shawna Flavell, Executive Director  
Elizabeth Kessler, Advisor  
Dave Brandt, District Liaison

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

None were made.

4.0 BOARD DISCUSSION

4.1 Strategic Planning

4.1a Executive Director Shawna Flavell opened with an Ice Breaker asking everyone what their reason was for joining the Foundation Board. Each Board member shared their personal reason for joining the Board.

4.2b. Executive Director Flavell shared with the Board a Ted Talk entitled "How Great Leaders Inspire Action." The questions asked were - Why? How? What? Great leadership comes from those who inspire those around them. The connection and implication was that we share our passion why we joined the Board with others. Executive Director Flavell said that over the life of the Foundation only about 3% of the residents of McHenry County have contributed financially to the Foundation.

4.2c Review of the Foundation's Mission Statement. How does the mission statement of an organization appeal to you? They are emotional; they are simple; you know they are fulfilling their mission statement; inspire curiosity of how the mission statement is fulfilled. The Foundation's current mission statement is, "To support the vision of the McHenry County Conservation District and its partners . . ." It was apparent it needs to become more inspiring. The 3 Ws were discussed - Water, Wildlife and Way of Life - things that make people value conservation. Advisor Kessler passed out a sheet entitled "McHenry County Citizens' Conservation Bill of Rights." There was further discussion about the mission statement of the Foundation. It was concluded that it seemed to be more of a vision statement than a mission statement. A vision statement is more how you see the future - what are you trying to achieve? The MCCF Vision Statement is "The McHenry County Conservation Foundation is the leader for promoting, enhancement, and enjoyment of McHenry County natural resources for the benefit of all residents." Discussion ensued why the Foundation and District mission and vision statements needed to be different.

4.2d Executive Director Flavell asked the Board if there are things that should be in the mission and vision statements that aren't in there now. The current statements seem to reflect more on the legality for IRS status than for a passionate pursuit (i.e., we play an integral role in supporting MCCD). What does the Foundation provide for the citizens of McHenry County? Healthy water? Vibrant way of life? Wildlife? Advisor Kessler commented that it should be pointed out in some way how the Foundation can amplify the work of the District. President Semel commented that we should emphasize that the Foundation is the engine that can propel the District to go above and beyond in its promotion of the 3 Ws.

Executive Director Flavell would like the Board to think over the mission and vision statements and come prepared at the next meeting with more inspirational concepts.

4.2e Values and Culture - what is it that we want to foster within the Foundation? How are we working toward achieving our mission? Who are we working for? We are working for the current and future citizens of McHenry County. What are the success drivers of reaching secure funding to achieve the mission of the Foundation? How do we communicate with each other and our donors? Secretary Eisbrener spoke at the District steward's meeting and reported that even of those who volunteer with the District, few people were aware of what the Foundation was about. It was agreed that there need be much more effort to reach the citizens of the County and help them understand what the Foundation is about and what we do. Secretary Eisbrener felt we need to integrate people with other interests. Executive Director Flavell asked the Board members to participate in an exercise where they

wrote down the Core Values of the Foundation - "the Principles that guide our strategy and our individual actions." Core Values of the Board included:

1. Make a difference in conservation;
2. Secure funds (ie. grants, donations) that are not available to the District;
3. Passion for a high quality environment;
4. Trustworthy;
5. Visionary;
6. Accountable;
7. Innovative;
8. Integrity;
9. Fiscally responsible;
10. Inclusive;
11. Relational;
12. Respectful of legacy donations - honor those who donate in memory of others
13. Be looked at as a true partner of the District/working together as a team
14. Transparency - be an organization with no hidden agenda
15. Donor-centric - honor their requests, acknowledge their donations

Executive Director Flavell asked that the Board members choose their Top 8 core values for our next meeting.

#### 4.2f District/Foundation MOU Overview

President Semel asked if there were any issues that had not been identified in the MOU now that our Executive Director had been in the position for several months. Advisor Kessler said that the document was serving as a good roadmap, but we still need to establish some additional policies and procedures. Director Dreher commented on some language in the MOU which Advisor Kessler clarified.

Executive Director Flavell commented on the budget that she was working on for the District. Having a budget will allow the Foundation to better anticipate future expenses. Secretary Eisbrener suggested meeting monthly for at least the first half of the year to allow the Executive Director to move forward with timely Board support. Treasurer Becker suggested conference calls, but President Semel reminded the Board that OMA guidelines that we now follow would not allow public transparency.

Advisor Kessler suggested reviewing the MOU and determining what has been completed and what still needs to be done. Liaison Brandt commented on By-Law changes which will be discussed at the next Board meeting. There was some discussion about the need to update QuickBooks and making the information on QuickBooks accessible to Executive Director Flavell and Treasurer Becker. A spending policy is being drafted to help establish parameters for spending limits, attendance support for conferences and items

that have been budgeted. Such a policy will facilitate Board approved expenditures.

#### 4.2g Board Roles and Responsibilities

The Board discussed the hand out, "Expectations for McHenry County Conservation Foundation Board of Directors." The Board requirements for the Secretary and Treasurer are currently being handled by Administrator Semel. Treasurer Becker asked about the statement, a "bond for the faithful discharge of the duties with such sum and such surety of sureties as the Board of Directors shall determine." It was determined that this won't be needed at our current level of financial responsibility. This is at the Board's discretion, so can be implemented when needed. There was some conversation about Administrator Semel remaining an Independent Contractor versus an Employee of the District. Advisor Kessler will speak with the District's legal counsel about the recommended change and when it should be implemented. There was discussion as to how this would look with the budget through the District and how the transition could take place.

Executive Director Flavell asked elected officers of the Board to comment on the positions listed on the Board expectations sheet and discussion followed.

4.2h Board Self-Assessment Review - Executive Director Flavell had sent out a questionnaire titled, "Board Self-Assessment Results." Director Dreher commented that building a pool of new candidates and clear and specific fundraising expectations for board members are areas to work on. Executive Director Flavell feels that the Board has a lot of passion for what they do as Board members, but development of the Board is the weak point. Director Dreher asked about the MCCF Board Assessment Tool and wondered if we could discuss it further at the January 31<sup>st</sup> meeting.

4.2i Executive Director Roles and Responsibilities - Executive Director Flavell discussed her Job Description outlined by the District. Liaison Brandt asked if Executive Director Flavell felt the current Job Description was accurate and she discussed how it covered her current role and responsibilities. Director Dreher commented that there was no reference to the role an Executive Director plays in Strategic Planning Leadership. It was determined that this is not included in her job description, but was covered in the MOU. The time frame for the Strategic Plan is currently a three-year schedule.

The District's State of Conservation will be held on February 7, 2019 from 6:00-8:00pm and all are encouraged to attend.

## NEXT STEPS

- Next Planning Date - Executive Director Flavell will send out a Doodle poll
- Finalize Mission/Vision Statements
- Approve Board Roles and Responsibilities (at the January 31<sup>st</sup> meeting)
- Complete SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis
- Review Draft of Strategic Plan (Created 4/2018)

## 5.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further conversation concerning the Strategic Planning Meeting, President Semel moved that the meeting be adjourned. Treasurer Becker seconded the motion, which passed without dissent. All were in favor. President Semel adjourned the meeting at 9:27 p.m. The next Strategic Planning Meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2019 at Lost Valley Visitor Center.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ray E. Eisbrener".

Ray Eisbrener, Secretary