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MCHENRY COUNTY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES of OCTOBER 8, 2019
6:30 P.M.
LOST VALLEY VISITORS CENTER

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

President Semel called the October 8, 2019 meeting of the McHenry County Conservation Foundation to order at 6:40 pm. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

2.0 ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Shawna Flavell, Executive Director, McHenry County Conservation Foundation
Yvonne Semel, Administrator
Elizabeth Kessler, Advisor, Executive Director, McHenry County Conservation District
Vern Scacci, Board President, McHenry County Conservation District
Linda Thomas, Board Liaison, McHenry County Conservation District

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

None

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one from the public attended.

4.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 After reviewing minutes of the August 13, 2019 - Regular Meeting, President Semel made the motion to accept the minutes, Director Dreher seconded the motion. All were in favor.

5.0 OFFICER'S REPORTS

5.1 President's Report

5.1a Youth and Family Center Acknowledgement

President Semel spoke about the Foundation's funding of bus transportation to a District program at the Hollows in Cary for students supported by the Youth and Family Center of McHenry County. He encouraged this type of outreach for under-represented communities: working with established NGO's that are better suited to identify students and helping to meeting their needs rather than through a scholarship program.

5.1b September First Friday Concert

President Semel and Yvonne Semel attended the event and President Semel discussed the First Friday Concert. Some ice cream was sold, but it was a cool evening with little inventory sold. Executive Director Flavell shared about the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) Grant before the concert. It was noted that having an intermission increased the sale of ice cream.

5.2 Treasurer's Report

5.2a Financial Review

Treasurer Becker thanked the Board for the flowers and cards she received following the passing of her father. She discussed August's profit and loss statement. The bulk of the August and September donation activity was related to the ICECF Grant. One individual donated \$2,000.00. The primary expenses were office supplies used for several large mailings.

5.2b Current Account Activity

Treasurer Becker discussed the volatile markets and financial status of our accounts. She confirmed that our Inland account's interest is still at a competitive rate. She said that funds could be transferred from the account if needed.

6.0 STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 FY 2020 Workplan

6.1a FY 2020 Fundraising Progress

Executive Director Flavell discussed the progress of the work plan. She said the number of donors over the past year has almost doubled from the number over the last five years. She said 40 new donors have donated to the Foundation. Most had been a result of donations to the ICECF Grant. Many of the District volunteers were new contributors. She said the focus right now is on cultivating new donors, with hopes that more funds would be coming in the future. She feels that with new brochures and a new website, we are in a position to move forward. Secretary Eisbrener said he is very comfortable with where things currently stand with progress. Treasurer Becker feels a lot of foundational work was done over the past year and we are positioned to move forward to bring in more dollars.

District Executive Director Kessler commented on the challenges of having projects from the District to talk about with people who are thinking about donating to the Foundation. Day-to-day maintenance doesn't bring in the interest of donors that new, major projects would. Executive Director Flavell felt the volunteers who donated to the ICECF Grant may continue to donate to the Foundation - they just needed to be asked. She confirmed the importance of tangible projects to receive donor gifts. People want to see the direct impact of their donations. District Executive Director Kessler wondered if the Board felt it would be better to have one project to focus on

or several different projects for people donating to select from. President Semel felt having different projects would reach different interest groups. Treasurer Becker felt 2-3 choices of projects would be a better option than just one choice or too many choices. Director Gorman suggested using the 3-Ws and have a project that covers each of the Ws. President Semel used the example of bringing bison to Nachusa. A very high level of funding was achieved because it was an exciting project. Executive Director Flavell said that there are some District projects that can be repackaged in a way that makes them more appealing. She reiterated the importance of personal relationship development. President Semel also made a comment about "naming" rights for different projects. District President Scacci and District Executive Director Kessler discussed that a Board Administrative Policy on sponsorship and naming exists; however, there is flexibility with this and "naming" can happen. District President Scacci also discussed the option of having several different projects to capture a variety of interests. President Semel commented on past District projects that the Foundation funded, but were never completed. We would need to ensure completion of projects in the future, perhaps by providing funds at time of completion. Treasurer Becker wondered if the District/Foundation truly know what the people of McHenry County want in their county. District President Scacci gave the example of Prairieview Nature Center needing extensive repairs and upgrades. Funding at that level would be greatly needed as the District doesn't have funds to initiate the project. Director Dreher commented that having a wide-ranging package to present to potential donors could be effective.

6.1b Donor Survey Results

The survey was sent out to 90 people who donated to the Foundation over the past five years. Executive Director Flavell discussed the different questions and comments from the survey. There were 10 surveys returned by email, three by mail. The interests of people in the survey were quite varied. Those surveyed said they would recommend the Foundation to a friend. Director Dreher commented on having a newsletter to send to Foundation donors to let people know what we have been doing. President Semel indicated that the increased frequency of information related to Foundation activities appearing in Landscapes over the past few months was encouraging, and perhaps a time and cost efficient means to convey most of the information to the public.

District President Scacci commented on the importance of projects with sustainability. Executive Director Flavell asked District Executive Director Kessler about projects scheduled by the District for the upcoming year. District Executive Director Kessler discussed the possibility of providing project donations at a level helping to cover Executive Director Flavell's salary. District Executive Director Kessler commented that it takes time to get return on an investment. Treasurer Becker commented that she doesn't have a good grasp of District projects and would like to have a better understanding of District needs. District President Scacci would like the Foundation to give the District an idea of where they can get the funds for different projects - who is their donor base and what is their interest? District Board Liaison Thomas also commented on projects mentioned by District President Scacci and suggested that the Foundation market projects that need funding to the funding community. Director Dreher wondered if projects could be done in increments. He used an example of land restoration in 100-acre increments for a 10,000 acre plot of land restored over a period of 10 years.

6.1c Donor and Board Prospects

Executive Director Flavell handed out a list of potential major donors. She encouraged Board members to network with people they know to bring in these major donors. She said that if a Board member sees anyone on that list that may be a potential donor, to let her know. Director Dreher said he knows people on these lists but wondered what the next step would be to connect with them. Executive Director Flavell said she would talk with Board members to help them understand how to approach potential donors. She handed out the new Planned Giving brochures to the Board members to distribute as needed.

6.1d Fundraising and Event Opportunities

Executive Director Flavell presented a handout about the Full Circle Foundation. They are a Foundation located in McHenry County. They generally provide \$10,000-\$20,000 in grants. Director Dreher asked if this was a family foundation. Executive Director Flavell wasn't certain. Director Gorman will find out what types of things this Foundation typically funds. Application for this grant is to be submitted by October 31st. Director Gorman said that education is very important to this Foundation.

Executive Director Flavell asked the board their opinion on hosting a celebratory event for donors to the ICECF grant once the grant is successfully completed (October 2020). Members of the Board felt that this would be a good opportunity to steward donors and build those relationships.

President Semel mentioned again that many restaurants in the area donate a percentage of the proceeds from a single night to non-profit organizations they partner with. He had suggested that the Foundation get involved in participating. Executive Director Flavell was looking into the specifics of setting up a benefit night. President Semel felt that it is a simple win-win project if we can include names tied to the District Facebook page. District Executive Director Kessler suggested trying one restaurant and seeing how it goes. Director Dreher commented on the Openlands Annual Luncheon event. He suggested that Executive Director Flavell try to go to network with people who may be potential donors to the Foundation. Cost of the ticket is \$150 per person.

7.0 DIRECTOR AND BOARD LIASION REPORTS

7.1 McHenry County Water Forum: Dennis Dreher

This forum was focused on flooding in McHenry County and held at McHenry Community College. The District was also at the event and directly relevant to the discussion, showcasing the importance of land conservation.

7.2 McHenry County Conservation District Report: Board President Scacci and District Board Liaison Thomas

Linda had nothing to discuss at this time.

8.0 BOARD BUSINESS

8.1 Authorization to Contract with Eder, Casella, & Co to Retain Nancy Gonsiorek, CPA to Prepare Fiscal Year 2019 Financial Summary and IRS Form 990

President Semel made the motion to formalize a contract with Nancy Gonsiorek and Eder, Casella, & Co to prepare our financial summary and IRS Form 990 for fiscal year 2019. Treasurer Becker seconded the motion. All were in favor.

9.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

9.1 Fiske Memorial Update

Executive Director Flavell will discuss this more later - nothing at this time.

9.2 Grant Writing Volunteer

Mark Dueger volunteered to help with grant writing.

9.3 Foundation Brochures

Brochures were distributed to the Foundation Board.

9.4 Foundation Website

There was not much new to report. Executive Director Flavell is in contact with Becky Hoag in reference to the current website maintenance.

10.0 ADDITIONAL BOARD BUSINESS

10.1 Establish 2020 Meetings Schedule

Second Tuesday of each month - February, April, June, August, October and December

10.2 Date Selection for Pedal, Paddle, Saddle 2020

Sunday, June 14th, 2020 - Deb Chapman, the District's Education Manager, asked for a date to avoid scheduling conflicts

10.3 Board Engagement Opportunities

Green Living Expo - Yvonne Semel, Director Gorman, Vice-President Ivers and Secretary Eisbrener; Stewardship and Restoration Volunteer Appreciation MCCD, January 15, 6:00-8:30pm, LVVC. It would be nice to have a representative of the Foundation present; February - Conservation Congress - Saturday, February 8

11.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, President Semel made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Gorman seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 10, 2019 at Lost Valley Visitor Center at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Ray Eisbrener, Secretary