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MCHENRY COUNTY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES of DECEMBER 10, 2019
6:30 P.M.
LOST VALLEY VISITORS CENTER

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

President Semel called the December 10, 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, Development Director/ Executive Director of McHenry County Conservation Foundation
Yvonne Semel, Administrator
Elizabeth Kessler, Advisor, Executive Director, McHenry County Conservation District (arrived at approximately 6:45 P.M.)
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 the minutes of the October 8, 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 Progress Meeting with District Board President and District Board Liaison. President Semel, Executive Director Flavell, Secretary Eisbrener, District Board President Vern Scacci, and District Board Liaison Thomas met to discuss the supporting role of the McHenry County Conservation Foundation. President Semel felt it was a productive meeting and a good first step toward establishing the cooperative goals and objectives of the District and the Foundation. President Semel wants to make sure that the two boards get to know each other and that they have a unified approach to supporting conservation in McHenry County. The financial focus on fundraising was highlighted. President Semel discussed his desire that the Foundation focus on special projects that have a broad public appeal and that the District fund operations. President Semel wanted assurance that any projects supported by restricted funds are completed so that the Foundation can communicate with donors where funds have gone. District President Scacci presented conceptual plans that would include the Foundation and highlight the strategic part it plays in fundraising and District support. President Semel suggested the District Board of Trustees and the Foundation Board of Directors get together to make that connection. District President Scacci felt a social gathering could help the synergy that needs to be developed.

5.1b Pedal, Paddle, Saddle Planning Kick-Off

President Semel advised that the Foundation needs to set a date to begin planning the 2020 Pedal Paddle Saddle. Administrator Semel will send out a Doodle Poll to help select a date for the planning meeting. President Semel asked for any dates that do not work: Monday date options are February 10, 17 or 24.

5.2 Treasurer's Report

5.2a Financial Review

Treasurer Becker said there was not much to report. The highlight is the funding toward the Clean Energy Grant. In October there were salary and office supply expenses which cancelled out grant income. The Facebook Giving Tuesday promotion brought in \$1,600 for the Foundation.

5.2b Current Account Activity

Secretary Eisbrener asked how much money had been raised towards the Clean Energy Grant. Executive Director Flavell reported that \$5,900.00 had been raised thus far.

6.0 DIRECTOR AND BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

6.1 Conservation Congress 2020: Vice-President Ivers

The Conservation Congress 2020 event is set for February 8, 2020 and the District is hoping to ramp up excitement for the District's 50th Anniversary. The Foundation-sponsored keynote speaker is Richard Louv. There will be breakout sessions and book signings. A primary breakout topic is health and nature. There is an expected attendance of 100-125 people. Vice-President Ivers thought that people may show up just to hear the keynote speaker. Director Dreher recalled that the event was open to the public last year. He wondered if delegates who attend this Conservation Congress

will be updated on accomplishments since the previous Congress. Advisor Kessler said an executive summary went out about a month after the last Congress. President Semel asked how people register if they do not register as delegates. Director Dreher asked about inviting schools; Vice-President Ivers said that two "Next Gen" delegates will be invited from each area high school. President Semel suggested pulling in students from the county Science Fair. Executive Director Flavell said the Foundation will have a table and marketing materials at the Conservation Congress. Secretary Eisbrener volunteered to staff the Foundation table. Director Dreher felt it would be advantageous for a Foundation Board member to say something about the Foundation. Executive Director Flavell said she would look into the ability through Salsa to text donations to the Foundation. President Semel suggested that someone from the Foundation introduce the keynote speaker. Director Dreher suggested that a list of potential projects be available at the Conservation Congress. District President Scacci thought the District should be able to come up with something.

- 6.2 McHenry County Conservation District Report: District Board Liaison Thomas
Nothing at this time.
- 6.3 Friends of Hackmatack Annual Meeting: Director Dreher
The annual Hackmatack meeting was three weeks ago. The keynote speaker was Jim Herkert, Director of Illinois Audubon Society and a grassland bird expert. The talk was about grassland birds that are on the decline around the country with the exception of Northeastern Illinois. The discussion centered on the importance of eco-tourism and attracting birders to the area to see birds that are more common locally, but much less abundant elsewhere. President Semel suggested doing bird tours in the area which would attract more birders. Jim Herkert reached out to Dave Miller about birding tours in the area. Secretary Eisbrener suggested the Foundation have a live trail cam to watch a video about birds in the area as a marketing tool. Director Dreher pointed out the excitement around the piping plovers in Chicago.
- 6.4 Openlands Annual Luncheon: Director Dreher
Director Dreher, Advisor Kessler and Executive Director Flavell were at the annual Openlands event. Director Dreher described it as the conservation event of the year. At \$150 per person, it is a good fundraiser for Openlands. Director Dreher said the message at the event was very inspiring.
- 6.5 Green Living Expo: Secretary Eisbrener/Director Gorman/Vice-President Ivers
Secretary Eisbrener said he had a long conversation with Mike Buehler, who is petitioning to get on the March 2020 primary election Republican ballot for McHenry County Board Chairman. Buehler seemed very interested in conservation. A number of people signed up interested in receiving information about the Pedal/Paddle/Saddle event. Again, the posters were a huge hit.

7.0 BOARD BUSINESS

7.1 Approval of Annual Membership Dues Renewals

7.1a Chicago Wilderness

Executive Director Flavell felt we should stay at the same level we were in the previous year. Director Dreher felt we did not need to be on the Council. President Semel made the motion to continue our annual support to the Chicago Wilderness for \$150.00, Secretary Eisbrener seconded the motion. All were in favor.

7.2 Establish 2020 Meeting Dates

President Semel proposed that we have an annual meeting in January as per the Foundation By-Laws to elect officers. A letter needs to go to the District to renew Directors Gorman and Dreher's seats on the Foundation Board. The District's next board meeting is December 19. President Semel proposed the last week of January for the next meeting to serve as the required Annual meeting: Treasurer Becker suggested January 28. At this time the 2020 dates would be the second Tuesday of each month - February 11, April 14, June 9, August 11, October 13, and December 8, as well as the January 28 Annual Meeting.

7.3 Consideration to Support District Safety and Wellness Fair Expenses in an Amount not to exceed \$350.00

In conversations Executive Director Flavell had with the District Leadership Team around ways for the Foundation to engage with District staff, leadership suggested that the Foundation support staff initiatives. One opportunity shared was that the Foundation get involved with the District's Staff Safety and Wellness Fair by sponsoring a massage therapist. Director Dreher felt it was a non-traditional way to reach out to the District. President Semel expressed some hesitation in having the Foundation sponsor this type of event. He mentioned the desire to have the Foundation support programming or specific environmental projects rather than use this approach. President Semel made the motion to support the Wellness Fair. A vote was made. The motion did not pass. The Foundation declined to support this event.

7.4 Consideration to Support District All-Staff Expenses in an Amount not to exceed \$706.00

The Foundation was the featured presentation at the District's All-Staff and Foundation board were encouraged to attend. Executive Director Flavell spoke to the importance of supporting and encouraging District staff, as they are the implementers of all of the District's work and should be the Foundation's biggest advocates. Vice-President Ivers made the motion to support the District's All-Staff Expenses not to exceed \$706.00. There was further discussion during which there was hesitancy expressed toward supporting this event and possibly just donating half of the cost. In consideration that the Foundation was given credit for the event, the motion was withdrawn and restated to consider covering half the cost of the breakfast. Vice-President Ivers made the motion to support the District All-Staff Expenses in the amount of \$350.00. Secretary Eisbrener seconded the motion. All were in favor.

7.5 Consideration to Participate in the District's Adopt-a-Trail Program

Executive Director Flavell discussed an idea brought forth by the District Leadership Team that a section of the bike trail be sponsored and maintained by the Foundation Board. Executive Director Flavell's hesitation is that we would be responsible for maintenance of the trail and she cannot do that alone; it would need to be a Board endeavor. It would involve one hour per month during the March/April through November/December season. The trail would be a mile long section. Executive Director Flavell suggested adopting a highly visible part of the trail - possibly the Ridgefield Trace. There would be a sign posted that portion of the trail is sponsored by the Foundation. After further discussion, Executive Director Flavell asked if we wanted to claim a section in Algonquin - part of the Prairie Trail. President Semel made the motion that the Foundation adopt one mile of the Prairie Trail south of the

trailhead near Meier Drive. Vice-President Ivers seconded the motion. All were in favor.

8.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

8.1 Strategic Plan Implementation

8.1a FY2020 Mid-Year Fundraising Progress

8.1aa Year-End Giving

To date the Foundation has brought in \$25,860.29. Last year the annual appeal total was around \$22,000.

8.1ab #GivingTuesday

The District assisted with logos for Giving Tuesday promotions. Executive Director Flavell, Treasurer Becker and Director Dreher set up Facebook pages for Giving Tuesday. Director Dreher's fundraising efforts brought in over \$600.

8.1ac ICECF Grant

The ICECF Grand currently has \$5,900.00 in donations - almost all of the donors are new, with the exception of the \$2,000.00 gift from an existing donor.

8.1ad Big Woods

The Big Woods fund will be shifting over to management by the Foundation. The total donated thus far is \$2,305.00

Conservation Congress 2020 sponsorships have also been coming in. The Foundation agreed to sponsor the event by contributing \$10,000.00 to bring in the keynote speaker. Director Dreher suggested contacting Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs. Executive Director Flavell said she has been involved with several Rotary Clubs in the area.

8.1b Prospect Meetings

Executive Director Flavell has been in contact with a representative from Nicor Gas in reference to sponsorship for the Conservation Congress 2020 as well as volunteer opportunities for their staff. She has given Nicor Gas possible dates for volunteers to get involved with District events.

8.1c Community Engagement

Director Dreher and Executive Director Flavell had a meeting with a current Foundation donor to discuss getting people involved in fundraising efforts. Director Dreher said the donor verified several things regarding Board development and how to target the county audience to be effective in fundraising. She also discussed selecting tangible projects for fundraising and to recognize the separation of the Foundation from the government agency that the District represents.

Executive Director Flavell had a tour of Main Stay Therapeutic Farm, met their Executive Director, and briefly talked about the potential for partnership between the organizations. Executive Director Flavell gave a presentation to the Richmond-Spring Grove Area Rotary Club. She was asked about funding needs for the District.

The Community Foundation had an event that Executive Director Flavell and Director Gorman attended. Executive Director Flavell also is involved in discussions around the Foundation being the beneficiary of an established annual fundraising event in 2021 or 2022.

8.1d Board Development

8.1da 2020 Board of Director Goals

Executive Director Flavell commented that Directors should set goals for their board service and she encouraged the Directors to think of goals they aim to accomplish in 2020.

8.1db Board Prospects

Discussion focused on how the Board can move forward to bring in new board members. Executive Director Flavell said she will reach out to board members after the holidays to discuss future Foundation board goals.

8.1e New Website Progress

Training on the website is happening now - it is proposed to launch before the end of the year.

8.1f Community Fundraiser at Local Restaurant

President Semel commented at the last meeting about having a community fundraiser at a local restaurant. The Foundation would get between 10-25% of the proceeds from the partnering restaurant. The event needs to be marketed to enough people to make it worthwhile. The Foundation event would need to be promoted on both the Foundation and District media outlets. Participating organizations earn on average \$1,000.

9.0 ADDITIONAL BOARD BUSINESS

9.1 Direct Funding Needs

Advisor Kessler sent out a list of projects, including the Aviary and Blanding's Turtle enclosures, which will be worked on over the winter. Advisor Kessler said the District will update the Foundation on the status of these projects. There was also some discussion as to when funds are provided for different projects, as at times some may require funding in advance.

9.2 PDRMA Insurance Renewal and Updates

PDRMA Insurance has been renewed for the upcoming year. The Foundation is excluded from sexual misconduct coverage. That coverage is typically used for organizations that interact with children.

9.3 Board Engagement Opportunities

February 8 - Conservation Congress; January 18 - Volunteer Fair (11:00-3:00pm at LVVC); December 13 - American Community Bank Open House (3:00-6:00pm); December 14 - Barrington Greenway Initiative Work Day at Hickory Grove- hosted by the District.

9.4 Eligibility for Grants

There are some grants the Foundation currently is not eligible for given our supporting organization status. Nancy Gonsiorek is evaluating whether we may qualify as a Public Charity given our changing income sources. She will notify us upon completion of our annual financial compilation.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, President Semel made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Dreher seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at Lost Valley Visitor Center at 6:30pm. (if needed).

Respectfully submitted,



Ray Eisbrener, Secretary