

NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
McHenry County Administration Building  
667 Ware Road, Woodstock, IL 60098

MINUTES OF FRIDAY, MAY 14, 2010

Chairman McCann called the committee meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following members were present: Mary McCann; Anna May Miller; Virginia Peschke; Scott Breeden and Barb Wheeler. Pete Merkel arrived at 8:31a.m. Yvonne Barnes arrived at 10:03am. Also in attendance: County Board Chairman Ken Koehler; Pete Austin, County Administrator; Cassandra McKinney, Water Resources Manager; Darrell Moore and Mark Phipps, P&D; Ersel Schuster, County Board Member; Dave LeGue, MCCD; Douglas Yeskis and John Hortness, USGS; and interested public.

Mary McCann, Chairman	
Yvonne Barnes	JS "Scott" Breeden
Pete Merkel	Anna May Miller
Virginia Peschke	Barbara Wheeler

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Committee members reviewed the minutes the Natural and Environmental Resources Committee of April 9, 2010. Ms. Miller made a motion, seconded by Ms. Peschke to approve the minutes as presented. The minutes were approved as presented with all members present voting aye on a voice vote. Chairman McCann provided committee members with a flow chart, as indicated in the previous minutes, on the process for recommendations made on the Water Resources Action Plan by the Environmental Committee for incorporation into County Ordinances.

Mr. Merkel arrived at 8:31a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEW BUSINESS

*Resolution to designate July 20, 2010 as McHenry County Farm Day:* Committee members reviewed a Resolution to designate July 20, 2010 as McHenry County Farm Day. Mr. Darrell Moore joined committee members to answer questions surrounding the Resolution. Ms. Wheeler stated she had presented this idea to send to local farmers to let them know that their contributions are valued by the County. Farm Day is scheduled for July 20<sup>th</sup> since this is the time that Farmers Markets are booming. A request has been sent to McCog (McHenry County Council of Governments) requesting they consider adopting a similar Resolution as well. Ms. Peschke made a motion, seconded by Ms Wheeler to recommend approval of the above Resolution as presented. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a voice vote. Ms. Wheeler stated the Farm Bureau has been informed of this Resolution and they will be trying to get the Villages and Municipalities to adopt a similar resolution as well.

*Resolution authorizing a fiscal sponsorship agreement between the Agricultural Conservations Easement and Farmland Protection Commission and the Land Conservancy:* Committee members reviewed a Resolution authorizing a fiscal sponsorship agreement between the Agricultural Conservations Easement and Farmland Protection Commission and the Land Conservancy. Committee members were informed that by forming a sponsorship with the Land Conservancy they will be able to hold funds for them through their 501C3. This will allow ACE to further agricultural preservations. The States Attorney and attorney for the Land Conservancy worked on the appropriate language for the agreement. This will allow ACE to have programs that inform the public of the need to preserve farmland and allows them to go for grant funding as well. Some of the money will be used for educational pieces. Ms. Wheeler stated a referendum may be a possibility in the future. The money for ACE will be kept separate and allows for tax deductions. Ms Wheeler made a motion, seconded by Mr. Merkel to recommend approval of the above Resolution as submitted. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a roll call vote (Breeden, Merkel, Miller, Wheeler, McCann) Ms. Peschke abstained from voting as she is a board member on The Land Conservancy Board.

*McHenry County Conservation District – Interviews:* Committee members interviewed Craig Frank, Dave Brandt and Jeff DeHaan for appointment to the McHenry County Conservation District. One applicant withdrew his application and Mr. James Albright was unable to attend today's committee meeting. Committee members stated that they had interviewed Mr. Albright was interviewed last year. Committee members were informed that there is one position that will be open on the District's Board which will have a five year term. Mr. Dave LeGue, the President of the Trustees for the MCCD was available to observe and answer questions that may arise from the committee or applicants. Committee members suggested that they get a copy of the list of who is on a current board or commission with their terms so they are able to make more informed decision. After the interviews, Ms Miller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Breeden to recommend the appointment of Dave Brandt to the McHenry County Conservation District Board for a term of five years. The motion

## NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

May 14, 2010

Page 2

carried with all members present voting aye on a roll call vote (Breedon, Merkel, Miller, Wheeler, McCann) Committee members stated that Mr. Brandt is from an area of the County currently not being represented on the MCCD board so he would be a good fit.

*Water Planning Area in Northern Illinois (NWPA):* Chairman Koehler joined committee members for discussion on the Water Planning Area in Northern Illinois. Chairman Koehler informed committee members that the group met and they are just beginning the formation of their bylaws. The group is thinking about having elected alternates to serve in case voting is needed on an issue. This is to be on the agenda for their next meeting. This meeting takes place in Elgin if anyone is interested in serving on this group.

A watershed roundtable was held at the County. A lot of the individuals from the various watershed groups did not know each other so this gave them all an opportunity, as we progress to look at what the other groups may be doing and dovetail their programs and grants together. Another meeting will be scheduled in the future.

### OLD BUSINESS

*Nuisance: Property Management Issues:* Chairman McCann informed committee members that Mr. Lehmann created a Quality of Life Ordinance brochure which addresses nuisance issues of the County and what ordinance they can be found in. Property maintenance has become an issue and will be added to the list if more complaints are received. There is nothing in any of our ordinances that addresses noise in residential areas so this issue will need to be addressed. There are more issues concerning abandoned homes. There are health ordinances that address weeds and garbage but not abandoned homes. Committee members were requested to review the brochure and make a list of any issues not being addressed.

Committee members reviewed a draft brochure created by Imagine McHenry County regarding a water forum being held which will include over 20 eco friendly vendors that will be providing information for this event. This is the first draft of the brochure that will provide important information on water education.

May 26<sup>th</sup> is the next scheduled public meeting on the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. This is an evening meeting to allow attendance by the public. A press release has been sent out as well as invitations to the Road Commissioners and Township representatives for inclusion in this plan.

Mr. Merkel informed committee members that the MCCD will be holding an open house on August 14<sup>th</sup> for the Lost Valley Nature Center. The renovations on the nature center are almost complete. Invitations will be sent out for this event.

Ms. Barnes joined the committee meeting at 10:03a.m.

### PRESENTATION

*Stream Gauging and Federal Allocation – United States Geological Survey (USGS):* Mr. Douglas Yeskis and Mr. John Hortness from the USGS (United States Geological Survey) joined committee members for a presentation on Stream Gauging (Gaging) and Federal Allocation – by the United States Geological Survey. Committee members were reminded that the County obtained a \$280,000 earmark to complete a project with the USGS. The USGS will help to answer questions on what will be accomplished with this grant. Mr. Hortness works out of the Illinois Water Science Center in DeKalb. The USGS is a division of the Department of the Interior, which is the Nation's largest earth science agency. They have no regulatory responsibilities but are beneficial to the public both with data collections and interpretations/monitoring. Funding comes from Federal Appropriations and outside sources. The USGS wrote the book on stream gaging, which began in the early 1900's. Actual tracking of water started in 1889 with the Rio Grande River in New Mexico. Water level data is collected in 15 minute intervals. Water data is collected by three different processes. The first is Still Wells, which determines the level of water flow. There are still some of these wells in place and being used though some are getting old or have been silted in. Maintenance and confined space is an issue with these wells. The second way is by a pressure transducer, which is the most common way to measure water levels. This is a "bubbler" type system and the final way to collect data is from a radar gage, which is used if there is a lot of sediment in a stream. This device shoots radar pulses to get water recordings. This device does not work well in snow and ice areas though it is used successfully in sandy streams in the South. The next step is to measure a stream. This is measured over a range of stages which results in stage discharge rating. This tells you how fast water is moving through a site. This process is done physically.

## NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MAY 14, 2010

Page 3

Some of the stream gage options include stage sensing, velocity sensing, rain gages and weather stations depending on the needs and options available. The next step is to transmit the data, which is provided by a real time telemetry system. With these devices they are able to provide information on the web within a couple of hours. This information is provided by satellite relays through the telephone lines. Sometimes this does not work well during storms. All data on line can be viewed anywhere rain gages are placed. Real time stream gages show what the water is like in specific areas though some gages only measure the level of the water.

All USGS' data are public domain with access being available through the internet and local offices. There are currently 225 stream gages in Illinois providing information to local municipalities, counties, universities, and State and Federal agencies. Users collect data for flood forecasting, navigation, withdrawals and releases, water use issues, bridge and culvert design, flood zone mapping as well as information for informed citizens.

A water alert system has just started where if you know the gage number, you can request a message sent to you when the criteria you requested has been met. This includes information regarding water level, temperature, velocity, etc. With "stream mail" you can send in a note with the station id to get the most recent data from a particular site. Field techs check all sites to make sure the gages are being "read" are reasonable. It is easy to tell if something is wrong with the gages and they do account for information that may be off. The techs collect the data and make sure the equipment is working.

Ms. McKinney discussed how the funds from the \$280,000 were earmarked for the project. It was determined funds would be used for the purchase and install of the telemetry on all observation wells in the County. This allows for all of the data to be transmitted and processed daily instead of requiring a person to physically monitor each well. These are maintained by USGS. Additionally, the earmark will cover the cost of installing two stream gages. There will be long term maintenance costs for this part of the project. 50% of the cost would be paid by USGS and the City of Marengo has agreed to pay 25% of the annual operation and maintenance of a gauge site leaving 25% to be covered by the County. Due to the grant, currently there is no cost to install the equipment so right now is the best time to complete this project. Our FY2011 federal request was not accepted this year for water quality testing, therefore, a portion of the remaining funds as well as funds from the USACE will be used to establish baseline water quality measurements in the observations wells. Staff from Planning & Development the Health Department and Groundwater Resources help with the collection of data. The proposed new stream gages would be located along the Kishwaukee River and along Franklinville Creek. These locations would benefit from the collection of data indicating changes in both pre and post development of these areas. Woodstock has already indicated they want to start building near Franklinville Creek. Based on the most current criteria, these would be the best location for these gages. The remaining funds will be devoted to establishing a special web site with a map to host all data for the County information. This map would include a base map with the location of the gages and wells. These gages could be installed sometime this summer or early fall, once permissions for property owners have been received. Permission from owners are needed for placement of the gages. The County does have a list of who owns each bridge in these areas. The consensus of the committee was to go ahead with the project to install standard water level and discharge gages for this project.

### NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Nomm informed committee members that there is an electronic recycling event scheduled at MCC on May 22<sup>nd</sup> for those interested. There is no cost to drop off your electronic equipment. Ms. Nomm stated she would report back to the committee the results of the recycling event. There is a list available on line of the items that will be accepted at this event.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

### FUTURE TOPICS

Committee members were informed that the Environmental Health Department has been contacted regarding the addition of other areas interested in setting up franchise agreements for solid waste pick up.

A report regarding Windmills from MCCD is expected for review in the near future as well.

### ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Peschke made a motion, seconded by Ms. Miller to adjourn the meeting at 11:02a.m. The motion carried with all members present voting aye.

\* \* \* \* \*

**RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD ACTION:**

Resolution authorizing a fiscal sponsorship agreement between the Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission and The Land Conservancy

Resolution to designate July 20, 2010 as McHenry County Farm Day

:ksf