

Minutes of the Warren County Conservation Board

- i. The Warren County Conservation Board held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 14, 2016, at the Annett Nature Center, 16656 118th Avenue, Indianola, Iowa. Meeting called to order by President Kreidler at 7:00 p.m.

Those present:

Absent:

Mick Kreidler, President

Sue Boll, Vice-President

Joe Gavin, Secretary

Ace Hendricks

Ron Miller

Comprising a quorum of the board,

Also present:

Absent:

Jim Priebe, Director

David Youngblut, Op Coordinator

Karen Johlas-Szalkowski, Naturalist II

Mark Wilson, Natural Resources Specialist

Doug Gaumer, Conservation Technician

Logan Roberts, Naturalist I

Tyler Seuferer, Conservation Technician

Guest(s): Approximately 150 people attended, including Warren County Board of Supervisors Crystal McIntyre and Dean Yordi, West Des Moines staff Tom Hayden, Duane Wittstock, Brian Hemaseth, and Sally Ortgies, numerous members of the Friends of Warren County Conservation, and a large number of citizens, including those on the attached speakers list. More people attended, and spoke, but some speakers list sheets were removed after the meeting

- ii. Informational item: Great Western Trail/Veterans Parkway:

President Kreidler welcomed the attendees. She had the West Des Moines staff, Conservation Board staff, and Conservation Board members introduced. She outlined how the meeting would be run and asked all those wanting to speak to be patient and respectful of other speakers.

West Des Moines City Engineer Duane Wittstock talked about the Veterans Parkway project and its current status, using a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation will be in the meeting minutes as an addendum and will be available on the Warren County Conservation Board website on December 15, 2016.

Following the presentation, questions were taken. Questions included:

How many property owners will be impacted? This question could not be answered because an alignment has not been chosen.

Were trail users invited to meeting held while the study was being conducted? Not specifically.

How many workers will the Microsoft site support? Up to a 1,000 at a time while under construction, much less when operational.

How is the road project being funded? Through a 12–15 year TIFF.

Will the trail be closed during construction? Options for keeping a trail connection open during construction (should an option using a portion of the Great Western Trail right-of-way be selected) are being looked at and it would be planned to keep the trail open.

What communication has been utilized to keep Orilla homeowners informed?

Has Microsoft been asked if they support altering the trail? No.

Have businesses along the trail been consulted?

Warren County Supervisor Crystal McIntyre asked why the trail corridor was chosen as the preferred alignment and who has final authority on whether the corridor can be used. West Des Moines staff said the corridor uses the highest and most level path in the area. An Iowa Attorney General's opinion says that the Conservation Board has the authority to approve or deny permission for use of the corridor.

Other questions and points included:

- Interim trail surface

- The irrelevance of if the trees in the corridor are long or short-lived

- Impacts on tourism

- Impacts on business

- Future increases in traffic loads and long-term goals for the area
(from several points of view)

- Future zoning changes

- Studies on habitat impact in the corridor and changes to that habitat

- The water source for the Microsoft project

- Ownership and disposition of the trail corridor

- When Microsoft construction will begin (2017, according to West Des Moines)

- The long-term value of developments like Microsoft and Facebook

- The actual need to build the road

- Dates by which action must be taken

- Will there be a downtown connection for the road project

- What models are used when talking about the anticipated growth of the area

- The security of funding for the road from Microsoft

President Kreidler opened the floor to statements from attendees. The following people spoke (this is not a complete list and the spelling of some names may be incorrect): Mark Ackelson, Time Lane, Melinda DeCarlo, Eric Baker, Carl Voss, Roger Netsch, Duane Sand, Kim West, Traci Bochensted, Tony Pfaff, Rick Swalwell, Erin Van Waus, Patty Campinelli, Steve Fuller, Mike Armstrong, Lee Hill, Forest Ridgeway, John Thompson, Gretga Shouthall, Tom Hoekeman, Amy Pousson-Noonam, Tim Hugunin, Webb.

Most of these speakers were trail users and, if a road has to be built, overwhelmingly favored Alternative A from the West Des Moines presentation. At least two speakers spoke against Alternative A because it splits properties.

President Kreidler thanked West Des Moines staff for their participation and thanked all those that attended the meeting.

- iii. Joe Gavin moved to table reading of the minutes of the November 2016 meetings. Ron Miller seconded. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- iv. Joe Gavin moved to table reading of the November 2016 Staff Reports. Ron Miller seconded. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- v. Business Agenda:
 - a. Old Business: All old business was tabled.
 - b. New Business:
 - 1. Informational item: Great Western Trail/Veterans Parkway was discussed under Business Agenda item ii.
 - c. Other Business:
 - 1. The Conservation Board directed that Jim Priebe ask the Board of Supervisors to schedule a work session to discuss long-term planning for trail maintenance.
- v. Financial reports were distributed.
- vi. Bills were approved and signed.
- vii. Joe Gavin moved to adjourn. Seconded by Ron Miller. Motion carried by unanimous vote at 10:01 p.m.

Joe Gavin, Secretary
Warren County Conservation Board