

FOREST, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Douglas County Board of Supervisors

Monday, March 27, 2023, 9:30 a.m., Forestry Headquarters

9182 East Hughes Avenue, Solon Springs, Wisconsin

Meeting called to order by Chair Liebaert.

1. ROLL CALL

Present – Mark Liebaert, Joseph Moen, Mary Lou Bergman, Nick Baker. Absent – Steve Long. Others present – Shelley Nelson, Ken Fastner, Sig Degitz, Greg Kessler, Jon Harris, Clint Meyer, Will Cooksey, Lynn Zimek, Sarah Kendall, Jim Latvala, Bill Whiteside, Craig Golembiewski, Cheryl Westman, Committee Clerk.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to approve minutes from February 27, 2023, regular and March 7, 2023, timber sale meetings. Motion carried.

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- a. **Budget:** Whiteside reviewed the budget ending February 28, 2023.
- b. **Forest Management Operations:** Golembiewski reported 5 active timber sales, 7 available for direct purchase on website; reforestation – seedlings to be delivered late April 2023, and aerial seeding to be completed soon; staffing - one LTE Forester starting end of May, interviewing two other candidates this week.
- c. **Parks and Recreation:** Meyer reported storm damage requests for reimbursement approved by WDNR; winter snowmobile trails still open; working on spring projects; deadline for annual rec trail grant applications April 15, 2023; Gordon correctional workers cutting firewood for parks; staffing – two summer park worker positions still open for recruitment.

4. ACTION ITEMS/REFERRALS

- a. **Black River Forest Land Conservation Project (The Trust for Public Land):**
 - 1) **Property Acquisition:** Map in packet identifying parcels for potential acquisition. 311 parcel property would be valuable addition to the county forest. A WDNR stewardship grant would be sought to cover half of acquisition costs, plus additional grant(s) to cover all or a portion of remaining half. Direct county funding contribution also may be requested if necessary. Acquisition would be assisted and facilitated by The Trust

for Public Land. Extension of existing access easement rights to the general public currently being reviewed and is unknown at this time.

- 2) **Enter into Contract for Sale of Real Estate Purchase Agreement or Option Agreement:** Approval of either option requested to best facilitate transaction with The Trust for Public Land.
- 3) **WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship and Other Land Acquisition Grant Program Applications:** Requesting approval to move forward with WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship and similar land acquisition grant program applications to fund the purchase.
- 4) **Release of Capital Reserve Funding (Land Acquisition):** If additional county funding is necessary, amount to be determined at a later date to be brought back to committee.
- 5) **Application for County Forest Law Entry:** Requesting approval of application for county forest law entry of property upon acquisition.

ACTION (RESOLUTION): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to conceptually approve partnering with The Trust for Public Land, moving forward with the Black River Forest Land Conservation Project property acquisition as presented contingent on establishing guaranteed public easement access to the property, entering into either a contract for sale of real estate purchase agreement or option agreement with The Trust for Public Land, WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship and similar land acquisition grant program applications, application for County Forest law entry acquisition, and forward to County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. **#1.17 Pesticide Ordinance Exemption Request (WDNR):** Application and maps in meeting packet. Greg Kessler provided request overview for treatment of two small areas of non-native and invasive Black Locust at DCWA and Hilltop Road utilizing individual basal bark and/or cut stem treatments. Alternative methods were attempted prior to request. Two applications will be required, one each over a two-year term.

ACTION: Motion by Moen, second Bergman, to approve #1.17 Pesticide Ordinance Exemption Request from WDNR for a 2-year term at DCWA and Hilltop Road sites as proposed. Motion carried.

- c. **Rescind Exemption Request for Ordinance #5.04 All-Terrain Vehicle and Utility Terrain Vehicle Routes and Operation (County Highway Y West):** A request to rescind the approved August 31, 2022 exemption for Ordinance #5.04 to close a section of Highway Y (west) to all motorized recreational vehicle operation. The approved February 27, 2023 updated Recreational

Vehicle (ATV/UTV) Operation in County Park Policy allowing for the operation of ATV's/UTV's in county parks starting in 2023 directly conflicts with the approved August 31, 2023 exemption, whereas ATV's/UTV's can now legally operate in Gordon Dam Park but cannot legally access the park via that close section of Highway Y (west). Request to rescind the August 31, 2022 exemption to open the currently closed section of Highway Y (west) to ATV/UTV operation.

ACTION (REFERRAL): Motion by Bergman, second Baker, to approve request to rescind exemption for Ordinance #5.04 All-Terrain Vehicle and Utility Terrain Vehicle Routes and Operation (County Highway Y West) to open that section of Highway Y (west) starting at the westernmost driveway access to Chief Kabemabe Scenic Overlook to that point the county highway officially ends inside Gordon Dam Park to all motorized recreational vehicle operation and refer to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Motion carried.

- d. **#7.2 Land Recreation Ordinance Amendment:** Reviewed – updates made in response to the approved February 27, 2023 updated Recreational Vehicle (ATV/UTV) Operation in County Park Policy allowing for the operation of ATV's/UTV's in county parks starting in 2023, in addition to ordinance language clarification and additional stipulations in ordinance for enforcement purposes.

ACTION (ORDINANCE): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to approve #7.2 Land Recreation Ordinance amendments as proposed and refer to County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

- e. **2023 Capital Improvement and ARPA Project Requests:** Distributed. Request totals \$2,274,000 (priority 1 = \$844,000; priority 2 = \$1,430,000).

ACTION (REFERRAL): Motion by Baker, second Bergman, to approve capital improvement and ARPA project request (grouping tractor/trailer and individualizing sanitary dump station at Gordon Dam Park) refer to Administration Committee. Motion carried.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/CORRESPONDENCE/UPDATES/REPORTS

- a. **Moose River Dog Club Annual Report:** Degitz reported things going well, national event held last fall. 2023 is the 16th year of the courses' official existence on Douglas County Forest land, originally approved in 2008. This year's spring event will not be held due to the wide-scale snow loading tree damage.
- b. **Friends of the Bird Sanctuary Annual Report:** Zimek reported WDNR procured and installed informational signs; hosted a WI Sharptail Grouse

Society meeting; Barrens' Festival to be held in 2023. President of club working with Northwest Sands areas creating automobile tour, maps and additional signage. Sharptail blinds should be available for public use this spring.

- c. **Straight Arrow Enduro Riders Annual Report:** 2023 is the 15th year of the trails' official existence on Douglas County Forest land, originally approved in 2009. Ken Fastner, Public Trails Administrator, reported successful Enduro event last year and improved department communication regarding recent logging in the area.

ACTION: SUSPEND THE RULES: Motion by Moen, second Bergman, to extend the meeting beyond the two-hour time limit. Motion carried.

- d. **Parkland Wildlife Property:** Kessler (WDNR) requesting county consider long-term management of parcels located in Town of Parkland by entering the property under the County Forest law as Special Use designation for purposes of wildlife habitat enhancement and protection. Official request would need to be made to Land and Development Committee if approved, would then be referred to this committee. Full title report for all associated property parcels recommended as next step to ensure no exceptions exist that would conflict with County Forest law entry. Kessler reported a potential cost of up to \$1,300 for title report. Harris to work with Kessler to coordinate title work to be paid for by the Forestry Department.
- e. **Extended Timber Sale Contracts Update:** Distributed – 5 of 21 completed.
- f. **April 11, 2023, Spring Industry Gathering Reminder:** Gathering to be held from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Solon Springs Community Center.
- g. **WDNR County Forest Liaison Report:** Latvala reported working on WDNR assigned timber sale and recon projects and assisting county foresters with timber sale establishments. On target to meet annual time standard commitment, with June 22nd deadline. Attended WCFA spring meeting last week; Douglas County SFI/FSC certification audits tentatively scheduled for 2026.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Baker, second Moen, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Submitted by,

Cheryl Westman, Committee Clerk