

FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING

3:30 PM - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2015

LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - LOWER LEVEL

FLORENCE NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER

FLORENCE, WI 54121

PRESENT:

SUPERVISOR / CHAIRMAN

SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER

SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER

SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER

USFS DISTRICT RANGER

DNR – COUNTY FOREST LIAISON/STATE LAND FORESTER

FORESTRY & PARKS ADMINISTRATOR

FORESTRY & PARKS BUSINESS MANAGER

ED KELLEY

ED WENGER

JOHN HALADA

LARRY DZEKUTE

HARV SKJERVEN

HENRY SULLIVAN

PATRICK SMITH

MARY PODNAR

Absent or excused: Larry Neuens

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Ed Kelley, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

2. APPROVAL / AGENDA

It was moved by Supervisor Dzekute seconded by Supervisor Halada, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as posted.

3. APPROVAL / MINUTES

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Dzekute, and unanimously carried to approve the Forestry & Parks minutes of May 13, 2015.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Forestry & Parks Administrator Patrick Smith shared with the committee that there have been both positive and negative comments regarding the new boat launch fees.

5. AGENCY REPORTS

A. HARV SKJERVEN - USFS DISTRICT RANGER

USFS District Ranger Harv Skjerven updated the committee on the specifications and requirements for projects on the stewardship agreement with the County.

There will be three new employees located in Florence office within the next six weeks. Adam Felts will be the new NEPA Coordinator, Justin Bournoville will be the new Ecologist, and Ben Walker the new Forester.

The USFS has gotten feedback on their recent recreation cuts. Budgets have been cut by Congress – therefore recreation has taken the hit. Areas on the west side of the state have been especially hurt.

The USFS currently have nine timber sales going on right now. Work in the woods have been tough given the amount of rain there has been.

B. HUBER RESOURCES

Tony Derleth from Huber Resources was not in attendance. Administrator Smith reported that Derleth was in the office a few weeks ago regarding damage to a road on their property.

C. DNR-HENRY SULLIVAN

DNR-County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester Henry Sullivan reported that there are two active sales going on in the Pine Popple Wild Rivers area right now. He thanked Administrator Smith because these jobs were open due to his work on the incidental take on the wood turtle.

He then passed around the Spring 2015 Timber Sale Bid results and was extremely pleased with the outcome. The State sold three out of the four advertised sales which totaled \$263, 037.25. The job that did not sell had some difficult access issues.

The County crew helped with 266 acres of prescribed burns in the Barrens area.

The State will begin a conservation infrastructure project to improve the road that goes out to Savage and Robago Lakes. Six to eight inches of gravel will be placed on the road. Work will also be done on the road going out to Meyers Falls.

Sullivan informed the committee that the funding for the Resource Center has been re-instated. However, statewide, there will be three forestry positions eliminated from the private forestry program. He believes Florence is safe seeing as it is understaffed as it is.

6. COUNTY FOREST

A. TIMBER SALE UPDATE

Administrator Smith said the County is busy with active timber sales.

B. APPROVAL TO AWARD SPRING TIMBER SALES

Smith passed out the Spring 2015 Timber Sale Bid Summary and was extremely happy with the results. All seven sales sold totaling \$862,456.00. Smith reviewed each sale with the committee. Smith then passed around Florence County Forest Sold Values from 1983 – present. It showed just how well the County actually did from this Spring bid. However, he noted that we should not get used of numbers like this. With “highs” come “lows”. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Dzekute, and unanimously carried to accept the 2015 Spring bids.

C. PARKS & SKI HILL ASSISTANT POSITION

The decision to hire Aaron Johnson as the new Parks & Ski Hill Assistant has been approved by Personnel. Today was his first day of work.

D. VEHICLE REPLACEMENTS

Smith put together a Capital Improvement Plan for vehicles for the Forestry & Parks department. He passed around the Capital Improvement Plan and discussed the different options and potential costs / savings to the County. He wants to take advantage of government discounts that are available to the County. Chairman Kelley suggested possibly going back to having 1% of timber sales going toward equipment as it had in the past. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Halada, and unanimously carried to have Administrator Smith work with Financial Manager Joe Bester and work on a vehicle replacement strategy.

E. WCFA SUMMER TOUR

Smith reminded the committee that WCFA Summer tour will begin on July 7th – July 9th.

7. RECREATION

A. US2 RAILROAD BRIDGE

Smith wanted the committee to be aware that the Michigan DNR is interested in partnering with the Wisconsin DNR to help maintain the US2 railroad bridge in order to get ATV's across it. Currently the snowmobile club owns this bridge and will not allow ATV's to cross it due to insurance reasons. The Michigan DNR is willing to take over ownership if the Wisconsin DNR would agree to help with the financing to fix it. For some reason, the Wisconsin DNR is not interested with helping. Smith has been in contact with Wisconsin DNR officials to see what the concerns are. Smith will be attending a meeting at Pine Mountain on June 17th to discuss this issue. He will let the committee know what he finds out.

B. PARKS

The parks have not been very busy. Smith passed around and discussed the Boat Launch Revenues Report.

8. AMINISTRATOR REPORT

There has been a lot of work being done to the Dog Park located at the Resource Center and Smith reported that it is coming along nicely.

Work is mostly done at the Keyes Lake Park – now they are just waiting for the grass to grow.

The Resource Center has been approved to receive a new generator to support IT back-up.

9. COMMITTEE MEMBER'S COMMENTS & CONCERNS

There were no comments or concerns.

10. BILLS/REVENUES – FORESTRY & RESOURCE CENTER

It was moved by Supervisor Dzekute, seconded by Supervisor Halada, and unanimously carried to approve bills being paid by the Forestry and Parks and the Florence Natural Resource Center for the month of May.

11. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Dzekute, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 4:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Podnar, Business Manager
Florence County Forestry and Parks