

**MCHENRY COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2022**

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

The scheduled Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the McHenry County Conservation District was called to order at 5:00 p.m. on the evening of Thursday, October 20, 2022, by President Cook at the Brookdale Administrative Offices and via video conference software by ZOOM.

The meeting was available for public access through the same log-on and meeting code as the Trustees. All Trustees were present in person at the Brookdale Administrative Offices and were connected to ZOOM through individual devices for video and a shared connection via conference phone for audio.

The meeting was recorded and posted on YouTube with an accessible link at [www.MCCDistrict.org](http://www.MCCDistrict.org).

**2.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge was led by President Cook.

**3.0 INTRODUCTORY ROLL CALL**

**3.1 Roll Call**

Trustees Present: Bill Cook, President  
Christopher Dahm, Vice President  
Pat Fritz, Treasurer  
Linda Thomas, Secretary  
Reynaldo Gaytan, Jr., Trustee  
Shawn Zimmerman, Trustee  
Llyod Everard, Trustee

Staff & Others Present: Andrew Paine, Attorney, Tressler, LLP  
Kelli Wegner, County Board Liaison  
Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director  
Shawna Flavell, Development/Executive Director of McHenry County Conservation Foundation (Remote)  
Kristi LaMontagna, Executive Administrative Assistant  
Ed Collins, Director of Land Preservation & Natural Resources  
Andy Dylak, Director of Administration & Finance  
John Kremer, Director of Operations, Planning & Public Safety  
Wendy Kummerer, Director of Marketing & Education  
Laura King, Police Chief (Remote)  
Jean Gerstbrein, Accounting Manager (Remote)  
Caitlynn Martinez-McWhorter, Marketing Manager (Remote)  
Amy Peters, Planning & Development Manager  
Val Siler, Land Administration & Preservation Manager  
Perry Weborg, Operations Manager  
Brad Woodson, Natural Resources Manager  
Stephanie Michael, IT Systems Administrator (Remote)  
Ben O'Dea, Parks & Fleet Supervisor  
Gabe Powers, Natural Resources Special Projects Manager (Remote)

Larry Nichols, Building Maintenance Supervisor (Remote)

Public: Mike Evans (Remote)  
Matthew Ewertowski, Trustee Emeritus

#### 4.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS I

President Cook asked members of the public in attendance if they would like to make a comment.

Matthew Ewertowski, Trustee Emeritus and participant in the Hunting Program, spoke to the Board of the Hunting Community's request for the Board to not approve a new Snowmobile Trail Request in the Queen Anne Conservation Area.

Mr. Ewertowski stated that this trail extension would potentially disrupt the hunting zone that is within the area of the requested extension and mentioned that hunters and the overall environmental factor of allowing snowmobiles to use that property.

Mr. Ewertowski mentioned that all hunting program participants pay to hunt for the season and this area is where they currently have waterfall hunting that would be disrupted by snowmobiles.

#### 5.0 PRESENTATIONS

##### 5.1 Pack-In/Pack-Out Proposal

Operations Manager Weborg briefed the Board on a new proposed trash and recycling program called Pack-In/Pack-Out and what staff recommends.

Operations Manager Weborg mentioned that about a year ago it was brought to the District's attention by its current vendor that there would be substantial cost increases to the recycling service.

Operations Manager Weborg mentioned the reason for that being about a year and a half or a little longer, China increased its regulations on accepting recyclables from overseas including in the United States.

Operations Manager Weborg mentioned in looking at that as well as the increase to the services in general led staff to review the District's current trash and recycling program that has been in place for many years.

Operations Manager Weborg mentioned that in doing so, staff came up with a new proposal called Pack-In/Pack-Out, which is nothing new throughout the country but would be a new program to the District that would be openly implemented within the District.

Operations Manager Weborg stated that by implementing this new program, it would keep the natural area beautiful, increase sustainability, protect wildlife and the environment. It will reallocate resources and preserve scenic views. He also mentioned dog waste stations will remain throughout District sites as well.

Operations Manager Weborg stated that currently, there are 175 trash cans and 47 recycling containers throughout the District. Once implemented it will reduce the number of trash cans to 133 and there will be zero recycling containers except at the District's nine shops and three visitor centers.

Operations Manager Weborg mentioned that currently the District is being charged extra for recycling and finding out that when collected, the recycling was ultimately just going into the trash.

Operations Manager Weborg mentioned that by reallocating resources, the District could remove some of the receptacles, saving staff time, contamination and the District money. He noted that there would be a phasing out process to put this new program into motion.

Operations Manager Weborg mentioned that the dumpsters and trash receptacles would remain at the camp sites, pet waste stations would be phased in at trailheads. This also would be a beta program at first with the smaller shelters.

Executive Director Kessler mentioned that with any new program, you try it and evaluate its success. She noted that the District will retain the recycling and trash receptacles and place in storage in the event we need to roll them back out.

Operations Manager Weborg stated that his department would work with the Marketing Department to have signage made that can be placed at strategic locations and they are looking to start the new Pack In/Pack Out program in spring of 2023.

## 6.0 NEW BUSINESS

President Cook asked the Board to look over the draft meeting dates resolution for 2023.

### 6.1 Review of Regular Meeting Agenda Items for October 25, 2022

President Cook stated that there was nothing further to say on agenda items.

## 7.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### 7.1 Snowmobile Trail Request - Queen Anne Conservation Area

President Cook stated that the Trustees received a snowmobile plan addressed to the question of snowmobiling out at the Queen Anne Conservation area, staff looked at this and recommended to the Board that there not be a snowmobile trail at the Queen Anne Conservation area at this time, particularly because there is an eagle's nest and the proposed trail being within a close distance from the eagle's nest that violates certain federal rules.

President Cook mentioned that the snowmobile community previously made a presentation to the Board, who appreciated their remarks and turned to staff and asked if there wasn't an alternate route that might meet the snowmobile club's needs at the same time, be environmentally sound.

President Cook mentioned that when staff looked at that issue, one of the potential conflicts of alternate routes, related to the District's own hunting program, the dates, location and fees for the upcoming season which had already been outlined, published and collected. This requiring the Board to face two constitute groups, the snowmobilers and the hunters and the District's staff wanting to do what is environmentally sound and acknowledged that the District has a responsibility to all the stakeholders in McHenry County.

Executive Director Kessler mentioned that there is good reason why the District goes through a formal Master Plan process when new trails/uses are being explored at a site. The District has heard from hunters and snowmobilers and believes a solution can be achieved, but staff needs time to work out.

Natural Resources Manager Woodson went over a few slides explaining that the hunting program includes water and field hunting at this site in addition to the eagle's nest which is federally protected.

Natural Resources Manager Woodson also mentioned that there are several creek crossings in the proposed trail alignment, one not being on District property that are used only as a farm crossing. It was stated that these are not ideal crossings due to safety and location. He noted that a permanent or temporary bridge may be required which depending upon the solution will require permitting. In addition the proposed location of the trail is directly in the area of the marsh and waterfowl zones.

Natural Resources Manager Woodson mentioned the proposed trails would impact the waterfowl with movement and noise, not only the waterfowl, but the hunters could be disrupted as well if the two were to take place simultaneously.

Natural Resources Manager Woodson briefed the Board on the numbers of hunting opportunities in the waterfowl zones, one of six (16%) marsh hunting opportunities, four of 16 (25%) of the field hunting opportunities.

Natural Resources Manager Woodson mentioned a few possible options to minimize conflict and create a safe route, which include, waiting until the winter of 2023-2024 to implement the proposed trails with a safe creek crossing or to allow hunting to occur from October 22 to January 19, 2023, and then open up to snowmobiling from January 20 to March 10, 2023 with no direct conflict occurring.

Natural Resources Manager Woodson continued with possible options such as allowing hunting to occur from October 22 until December 31, 2022 and then open the site up to snowmobiling from January 1, 2023 which would be a change to the District's hunting program, may require refunding hunter permit fees. If there is no snow, then the area would not be used by hunters or snowmobilers.

Natural Resources Manager Woodson continued with one other possible option, which would allow hunting from October 22 until December 9, 2022, and then open the site up to snowmobiling when/if weather conditions permit. This would be a significant change to the District's hunting program, would likely require a refund to hunters for permit fees, again if there is no snow then the area would not be used by hunters or snowmobilers.

Executive Director Kessler mentioned that the District will move to work toward a solution with both the hunters and snowmobilers to avoid eagles' nests, have safe crossings with permits if require, no hunting conflicts and that staff will need to work through what is reasonable.

## **8.0 OTHER**

None.

## **9.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS II**

President Cook asked members of the public in attendance if they would like to make a comment. There were no comments received.

## **10.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Consideration of a motion to go into Executive Session pursuant 2C1 (Personnel), and 2C5 (Lease/Purchase of Real Estate), 2C11 (Probable Litigation), and 2C21 (Review of Closed Session Minutes) of the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 et. seq.).

A motion was made by Trustee Everard, seconded by Treasurer Fritz, to go into Executive Session pursuant 2C1 (Personnel), and 2C5 (Lease/Purchase of Real Estate), 2C11 (Probable Litigation), and 2C21 (Review of Closed Session Minutes) of the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 et. seq.) at approximately 5:58 p.m. A roll call vote gave the following results: Dahm-yes, Thomas-yes, Gaytan-yes, Zimmerman-yes, Everard-yes, Cook-yes, and Fritz-yes.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **11.0 RECONVENE - IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The meeting was reconvened to order at 6:54 p.m. by President Cook on the evening of Thursday, October 20, 2022, and via ZOOM video communications platform.

### **10.1 Roll Call**

Trustees Present: Bill Cook, President  
Christopher Dahm, Vice President  
Pat Fritz, Treasurer

Linda Thomas, Secretary  
Reynaldo Gaytan, Trustee  
Shawn Zimmerman, Trustee  
Llyod Everard, Trustee


Staff & Others Present: Andrew Paine, Attorney, Tressler, LLP  
Kelli Wegner, County Board Liaison  
Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director  
Kristi LaMontagna, Executive Administrative Assistant

**12.0 ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Vice President Dahm, seconded by Secretary Thomas, to adjourn the meeting. A roll call vote gave the following results: Everard-yes, Dahm-yes, Thomas-yes, Zimmerman-yes, Fritz-yes, Gaytan-yes, and Cook-yes.

Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m. on Thursday, October 20, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Linda Thomas, Secretary

  
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Date