

BLACKHAWK HILLS



Resource Conservation and Development
Jo Daviess • Stephenson • Carroll • Ogle • Whiteside • Lee

**Blackhawk Hills RC&D Council Meeting
Monday, January 26, 2009
Carroll County Courthouse
Mt. Carroll, IL**

MINUTES

Attendance

Edie Block, Carroll County Board
Cathy Brunner, Carroll County Area Representatives
Kim Monk, Jo Daviess County Board
William Tonne, Jo Daviess County SWCD
Isaac Mercer, Lee County Board
Tom Millard, Lee County SWCD
Ron Colson, Ogle County Board
Lynne Kilker, Ogle County SWCD
Sam Newton, Stephenson County Board
Karen Nelson, Whiteside County Board
Tim Keller, Whiteside County SWCD
Glen Kuhlemier, Whiteside County Area Representative
Bob Dean, USDA-NRCS
Dave Dornbusch, RC&D Coordinator
Theresa Wittenauer, Economic Development Professional
Julie Jacobs, Blackhawk Hills RC&D Executive Secretary

Call To Order

Cathy Brunner, RC&D President, called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Introductions

Cathy Brunner welcomed new Council Member Kim Monk. Mr. Monk is replacing Beth Baranski as the Jo Daviess County Representative. Cathy had everyone introduce themselves.

Minutes

Isaac Mercer made a motion to approve the November 24, 2008 RC&D Council Meeting Minutes. Karen Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Finances

Karen Nelson presented the Financial Report and explained that the expense to Aurora Loan Services is for John Huggins, Blackhawk Hills' VISTA person. Mr. Huggins will be providing the RC&D with written reports. William Tonne made a motion to approve the Financial Reports as presented and to place them on file for review. Tom Millard seconded the motion. Motion carried. The Financial Reports will be placed on file.

Unfinished Business (Progress Reports and Actions)

Coordinator's Report – Dave Dornbusch's report was shared with the Council Members prior to the meeting. Dave added to his report that he assisted the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Offices with reviews of contracts. Dave also informed the Council that Blackhawk Hills RC&D will have a Civil Rights review by NRCS on February 25th at 11:00 a.m. in Galesburg at the NRCS Office located at 233 South Soangetaha Road. Dave invited Council Members to attend the review if they like. Dave also has been contacted by Michele Miller that the marketing plan is completed. The Council had approved giving \$4,000 towards this project from the State funds we received. Dave will provide Julie Jacobs with the information so that the Small Business Development Center can be paid.

Economic Development Professional's Report – Theresa Wittenauer's report was shared with the Council Members prior to the meeting. A progress report for the Economic Development Administration has been submitted and a copy was attached to Theresa's report. Theresa added to her report that she compiled a Shovel Ready List of projects for the Economic Development Administration. The Shovel Ready Project List includes economic development projects in the RC&D area that are ready to go, where construction can start in June or July. She passed around the list of projects. William Tonne asked if any other groups in our area were submitting their own list. Theresa was not aware of any, hopefully they all submit their projects through us. She will include the list of projects in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Five Year Report. Another big project she is working on is the Broadband Taskforce. Sterling had not submitted any Shovel Ready projects.

New Business

Leave Request – Theresa Wittenauer asked for approval on her maternity leave request which was shared with the Council Members prior to the meeting. Theresa is due on February 14th. She would like to work from home eight hours starting the first week in March. She is planning to work on the CEDS Five Year Plan, will submit all normal reports and timesheets and may attend a meeting or two. She will do a transitional period in April, coming in three days a week. Lynne Kilker made a motion to approve Theresa's leave request. Edie Block seconded the motion. Motion carried. Cathy Brunner wished her luck on behalf of the Council.

Employee Handbook – Dave Dornbusch handed out a sheet explaining changes he is recommending to the Council concerning the Council Leave Accumulation Policy. It has been awhile that the Handbook has been revised. Dave suggested that the Council's employees earn leave on a pay period basis versus monthly. Dave developed a table as to how much leave would be earned depending on hours worked. This would give a Council employee that works 80 hours a pay period an additional five hours of annual leave and eight hours of sick leave a year. Dave also recommends that the Employee Committee update the Handbook and present it to the full Council at the May meeting. Lynne Kilker made a motion to approve the new leave

accumulation policy and that it goes into effect February 1, 2009. Ike Mercer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Election of Officers – Tom Millard, Nomination Committee, announced the slate of officers as William Tonne as President and Ron Colson as Vice President. Cathy Brunner asked twice for any other nominations. Glen Kuhlemier made a motion to accept the slate of offices by acclamation. Karen Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Tom explained for the new members benefit that the President can serve for three consecutive years. Cathy Brunner will stay on the Council as the Carroll County Area Representative. Karen Nelson stated that she has served as Secretary-Treasurer for three years but is willing to step down if anyone would like the position. The Secretary-Treasurer position is appointed by the President.

Annual Meeting – Cathy Brunner reported that the Planning Committee has held two meetings. The Annual Meeting will be held at the Candlelight Inn Rock Falls. Carolyn Brown Hodge, Lieutenant Governor's Office, declined to be the guest speaker due to the Governor situation going on. Norm Walzer, Northern Illinois University will be asked to present on rural economic issues. The date will be either April 2 or 3 depending on when Norm is available. Candlelight Inn's meeting room holds 100 people. We are celebrating 35th year of existence. The Planning Committee has decided on the Worker of the Year recipient but it will not be made public until the Annual Meeting. The Committee also decided that we recognize the Council Members that have hit milestones on serving on the Council. There will be a choice of three meals for the lunch. Invitations will be mailed as soon as the final details are made. The March Council Meeting will follow the Annual Meeting.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Bob Dean, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, thanked Cathy for the work she has done and has been glad to work with her and also Glen Kuhlemier in the past. He looks forward to working with the new officers. He thanked the Council for allowing Dave to help out with the contract reviews. NRCS had six weeks to review all their contracts. One thing NRCS learned from doing these reviews is that the contract agreement they have with Blackhawk Hills RC&D on the office space is in violation of the rules. William Gradle, NRCS State Conservationist, called Bob on Friday informing him that something will have to be done with Blackhawk Hills RC&D Office space agreement. NRCS is not allowed to be in an agreement with a non-government entity. Presently NRCS has a lease agreement with Lou Pignatelli, Landlord, for all the NRCS Office located in Rock Falls. NRCS in turn has an agreement with Blackhawk Hills to pay for some of the lease amount. There are a couple of options that can be looked at. Blackhawk Hills could lease and office and donate space for Dave. Dave could be located in a nearby NRCS Service Center. Bob stated that Bernita Clark, NRCS Contracting Officer, will be in contact with the Council concerning this issue.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Cathy Brunner reported that the Committee met on December 23, 2008. Minutes from that meeting were handed out. Topics that were discussed were Julie Jacobs' position and salary, New IRS Policies, Thank You(s) for meeting room usage, Annual Meeting, and Broadband Taskforce. Julie reminded the Council Members to turn in their Conflict of Interest document to her as soon as possible.

Marketing Committee – Working on getting some promotional items for the Annual Meeting.

Illinois Association of RC&Ds – Cathy Brunner is happy to report that the IARCD is willing to pay up to \$1,250 for her to attend the Leadership Forum in Washington. William Tonne will also attend the Leadership Forum on behalf of Blackhawk Hills RC&D. Cathy is working on compiling information to take to Washington. The Keynote Speaker at the Leadership Forum will be the Secretary of Agriculture who is a big supporter of the RC&D program in the past. Julie Jacobs added that IARCD will be sending Blackhawk Hills a check for \$166 for refunding us for some of expense of sending Cathy to the Leadership Forum in 2008.

Regional CEDS –Theresa Wittenauer reported that at the November CEDS Meeting the committee began the preparation for the 5-Year CEDS document. One issue that came up was access to broadband infrastructure and the need for it for economic development. William Tonne spoke about the Broadband Taskforce Meeting that was held on January 9, 2009. There were about 25-30 people at the meeting. Theresa had provided the Council Members with an intense report on the January 9th meeting. Mr. Tonne would like to see a Shovel Ready List be put together for broadband projects. Design Mill and the Savanna Army Depot would be two projects that are ready to go. William encouraged the Council Members to find shovel ready broadband projects in their county and to let the RC&D Office know.

Galena Trail & Coach Road Society – Tim Keller reported that the Society will meet tomorrow at 11:00-2:00 at the Galena Steak House in Dixon. Julie Jacobs added their regular board meeting is February 17th at 10:00 at our office.

US 20 – John Cox said the Galena bypass is a shovel ready. The Intersection of Route 20 and 84 is ready to go. Theresa Wittenauer added that she had contacted the Illinois Department of Transportation and they have a shovel ready list and the road projects on our shovel ready list are included in theirs.

Highway 30 – Karen Nelson announced that the Illinois Department of Transportation is holding an Open House on January 29, 2009 at the United Methodist Church in Morrison, IL from 1:00 to 7:00 PM. The proposed 4 or 5 corridors will be presented. Glen Kuhlemier added that the Community Advisory Group will meet again on February 2, 2009 from 2:00-4:00 PM at the Whiteside County Courthouse. Kim Monk added that Senator Durbin has an expanded website and Route 30 is listed in his earmarks.

Driftless Area Initiative (DAI) – Della Moen provide a written report. Dave Dornbusch will be participating in a DAI teleconference tomorrow morning.

Next Meeting – The next Council Meeting will be held following the Annual Meeting on either April 2nd or 3rd.

Roundtable Discussion

Karen Nelson report that she learned at the Whiteside County Executive Meeting last week that a new truck stop will be built next to Hawkeye Truck Repair by the Wal-mart Distribution Center. The paperwork has just started. There will be three phase in the development of the truck stop. The first phase will be completed in 2010. The Morrison Hospital is planning an expansion for about \$3 million.

Tom Millard – Spoke about trying to get a three phase ComEd line to his house. ComEd wants to charge him \$55,000. Tom had contacted Troy Rudy about a wind turbine but it would be beneficial for him.

Lynne Kilker spoke about the windmill project in the Ashton and Franklin Grove area. The project would bring about \$1.8 million to the school system.

Kim Monk reported that the Black Hawk War anniversary is coming up and he would like to see something happen to celebrate the anniversary.

Ike Mercer stated that he will bring pictures of the Dixon Riverfront project.

Edie Block announced that the Tri County Economic Development Corporation was formed and is taking place of the Carroll County Economic Development Corporation. Tri County includes Carroll County, Jo Daviess County and a small portion of Whiteside County.

Tim Keller announced that the Whiteside County Annual Meeting will be held on February 5th at 6:00 PM.

Sam Newton shared that he attended the Inauguration.

Julie Jacobs thanked the Council for hiring her for more hours and she is looking forward to the new excitement.

Cathy Brunner thanked the council for everything and she will be turning things over to Mr. Tonne.

Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.