

BLACKHAWK HILLS



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

**Blackhawk Hills RC&D Council Meeting
November 24, 2008
Lanark Heritage Center
Lanark, IL**

Minutes

Attendance

Edie Block, Carroll County Board
Cathy Brunner, Carroll County Area Representatives
Beth Baranski, Jo Daviess County Board
William Tonne, Jo Daviess County SWCD
Isaac Mercer, Lee County Board
Tom Millard, Lee County SWCD
Chuck Moen, Stephenson County SWCD
Della Moen, Stephenson County Area Representative
Karen Nelson, Whiteside County Board
Tim Keller, Whiteside County SWCD
Glen Kuhlemier, Whiteside County Area Representative
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 6:07 PM.

Minutes

Chuck Moen made a motion to approve the September 29, 2008 RC&D Council Meeting Minutes. Isaac Mercer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Finances

Julie Jacobs explained some items on the written Financial Report. The Comprehensive Regional Plan funds received from the State should be added to the budget. Chuck Moen made a motion to amend the budget to include the Comprehensive Regional Plan funds. Karen Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Julie also explained the change from the retirement line item and the flexfund line item. Chuck Moen made a motion to approve the Financial Reports as presented and to place them on file for review. Tim Keller seconded the motion. Motion carried. The Financial Reports will be placed on file. Julie also reported that the IRS has changed rules for Tax Exempt organization and there are some policies that the Council will have to adopt. Cathy Brunner asked for a copy of the new rules.

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 NRCS is going under an audit and he has been charged with oversight and evaluation duties for three counties beginning today and it will end December 31st. He is hoping it won't be a huge amount of time.

Economic Development Professional's Report – Theresa added to her report that a Roundtable for the Riverlands project will be held December 17th in Elizabeth. If you know of someone who should attend, let Theresa know. Robert Sawyer from the Economic Development Administration came out to the Savanna Army Depot on Halloween. Discussed the LRA doing an Ecotourism Study. Julie Jacobs stated that funding from EDA is coming in quicker with the new electronic system.

New Business

Employee Matter - Della Morn made a motion to go into Executive Session with the purpose of discussion being the budget and a personal issue. William Tonne seconded the motion. The Council went into Executive Session.

The Council came out of Executive Session. Chuck Moen made a motion to offer Julie Jacobs \$24,000 plus benefits for a 4 days a week. Edie second. Motion carried. Cathy Brunner appreciates Julie working around the Council's budget.

Soil & Water Management Workshops - Chuck Moen reported that there will be a Soil and Water Management Workshop on February 18th. The Workshop will be held at 18 different locations. Chuck would like to attend the Freeport workshop on behalf of Blackhawk Hills RC&D at a cost of \$45.00. William Tonne made a motion that the Council pay the \$45.00 registration fee for Chuck Moen. Karen Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Dave Dornbusch recommended that Chuck provide the Council with a written report highlighting the workshop.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – The Committee has not met recently. Julie Jacobs recommended that the Executive Committee meet prior to the end of the calendar year to approve policies that are required by the IRS.

Marketing Committee – Dave Dornbusch stated that the Council could have M45 write a Marketing Plan for us and use some of the State Planning funds we received. The staff will contact M45 to see what it would cost to have them complete a Marketing Plan for use.

Chicago/Rockford International Airport – Ron Colson stated even though the airport has struggled with passenger service. The Cargo freight is 21st largest in the Nation. The Rockford Airport fees are \$2-3 million less than O’Hare. Logistics at the Airport are great.

IL Association of RC&Ds – Cathy Brunner reported that the Association is still. Jim Elliott has stepped up to take the leadership. Will meet soon to decide what the group wants presented at the Leadership Forum. The Leadership Forum will be held February 9-10 in Washington, DC. Cathy would like to attend but would like to try and get the State Association to pay her way. William Tonne is interested in attending. Chuck Moen made a motion to approve someone from Blackhawk Hills Council attend the Leadership Forum. Ron Colson seconded the motion. Motion carried. The Association is meeting more via teleconference. Cathy would like to see the Association’s website get up in running. There might be an opportunity for Julie Jacobs to update it.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – William Tonne reported that at the meeting last Thursday fiber optic was discussed. Theresa Wittenauer sent out a survey to economic development people in the six county area to help us update the five year plan. She sent them home with some paperwork have them come up with the strengths and weaknesses of the region. Changing how we have the wish list. It will be a chart with jobs tied to it, the cost and who is in charged of it. Nothing set in stone. William Warren said our 5 year plan didn’t meet their guidelines. We need to keep Bill happy.

Galena Trail and Coach Road Society – Tim Keller reported that there was a meeting in Princeton but he was unable to attend.

US Route 20 – William Tonne stated that with Obama being elected that the Freeport bypass of Highway 20 completion is on the horizon. Since they are looking for project that are ready to go. It’s important to let Senator Durbin and Congressman Manzullo know.

Highway 30 – Karen Nelson reported that her and Glen Kuhlemier both on the citizen group. They met on November 5th in Morrison. Four routes have been selected. IDOT

will do studies on the 4 routes. Follow as close to possible as to the present Route 30. The next meeting will be selecting a route but not until Spring of 2009.

Driftless Area Initiative – Della Moen reported that the DAI is to meet in December but she has not heard anything yet. Dave Dornbusch had included in his report of a meeting Blackhawk Hills held with the SWCD to discuss DAI. It was a productive meeting and the information discussed at the meeting will be shared with William Gradle, NRCS. Chuck Moen added that a DVD was made on the DAI. The Blackhawk Hills RC&D Office received a copy. Della was interviewed. It will be shared at a future RC&D meeting.

Small Business Development Center – Dave Dornbusch reported that the SBDC is seeking \$4,000 for assistant in developing a plan or work and marketing plan for the development of a website for our communities. The funds would come from the State Planning funds. Ron Colson made a motion to approve the new measure. Chuck Moen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Broadband Taskforce – William Tonne said that last Thursday at the Regional CEDS Meeting it was discussed the need of knowing where the fiber optic lines are in our region. There was a lot of discussion as to why it is important for economic development in our area. Nathan Greiner presented to the Council on how the need of broadband infrastructure was important for his company to operate in Jo Daviess County. The Regional CEDS Committee would like to form a taskforce to explore, educate, and pressure local government to push for governmental spending on accessing existing broadband infrastructure in our six county regional. Della Moen made a motion to approve the formation of a Broadband Taskforce. William Tonne seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Roundtable Discussion

Edie Block reported that things at the Thomson Prison have been delayed due to a lawsuit at the Pontiac Prison.

Tim Keller stated that if it weren't for Abe Lincoln Thanksgiving would not be on the 4th Thursday of November.

Della Moen reported that the Stephenson County SWCD is applying for a grant to purchasing barrels for rain gardens. Tim Keller said Whiteside County SWCD is doing that also.

Ike Mercer reported that the Dixon riverfront project is moving along well.

Karen Nelson reported that the Route 30 Coalition will be going to Washington again. Whiteside County Board lost four board members and gain four new ones.

Beth Baranski announced that she will no longer service on the RC&D Council but would like to continue to report Earth Team Volunteer hours.

William Tonne regretfully reported that Lester Johnson, Jo Daviess County SWCD Resource Conservationist, passed away.

Cathy Brunner stated that she graduated on November 2nd. Cathy also thanked that Council Members that might be attending their last Council meeting.

Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.