

NORTHERN COUNTIES LAND USE COORDINATING BOARD

Minutes

Monday, April 25, 2011

Bemidji, Minnesota

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chair Wade Pavleck with the following in attendance. (All actions of the Board were supported unanimously unless otherwise indicated.)

All Member Counties Present:

Commissioner Fritz Sobanja, Cook
Commissioner Brian McBride, Koochiching
Commissioner Wade Pavleck, Koochiching
Commissioner Rich Sve, Lake
Commissioner Todd Beckel, Lake of the Woods
Commissioner Ken Moorman, Lake of the Woods
Commissioner Don Jensen, Pennington
Commissioner Skip Swanson, Pennington
Commissioner Jack Swanson, Roseau

Others Present:

Commissioner Quentin Fairbanks, Beltrami
Commissioner Joe Vene, Beltrami
Commissioner Daniel Stenseng, Clearwater
Commissioner Jerry Dahl, Mahnommen
Commissioner Gary Kiesow, Marshall
Commissioner Roger Falk, Roseau
Commissioner Russell Walker, Roseau
Dick Moore, Beltrami County Land Commissioner
Craig Engwall, Department of Natural Resources, Grand Rapids
Mike Carroll, Department of Natural Resources
Douglas Skrief, NCLUCB Staff
Kallie Briggs, Consolidated Conservation Joint Powers Natural Resource Board

(Administrative Actions:

1. Approval of Agenda

None

2. Approval of Minutes:

(Postponed to the June meeting)

3-4. Financial Report and Bills:

(Postponed to June meeting)

Correspondence:

(Postponed to June meeting)

Discussion Issues

(1. Delisting of the Timber Wolf Delisting attempts have not been successful to date, reported Comm. Walker. The DNR is in support to delist as is the Farmers Union, the Cattlemen's Association and many other entities. Trapper support must be in place with \$200,000 in funding. Mr. Carroll confirmed need for continued funding and DNR support; he suggested letters of appreciation to congressional delegation for their support. High deer numbers are also of concern, noted Comm. Fairbanks. USDA has paid for cattle damages. Wolves are dispatched. The state has a plan; staffing is an issue. A letter to the Congressional Delegation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and USDA would be in order. Currently, Congress can sign off on the matter which was put forward by Idaho and Montana and had support of Senators Franken and Klobuchar. This amounts to a separation from studies in Michigan and Wisconsin. The DNR can present an update to a joint meeting in mid- to late-summer. Expediency is of issue. Comm. Walker will supply a sample letter to Kallie Briggs. A letter to DNR Commissioner Landwehr would be appropriate.)

Comm. Pavleck called the meeting to order. A motion to authorize Northern Counties Chair to sign a letter of support for delisting of the wolf and support of \$200,000 to be set aside for transition period trapping.

m. Jensen s. McBride

2. Merger of Northern Counties and Joint Powers Comm. J. Swanson recommended Joint Powers avail themselves of the opportunity to discuss the matter. Comm. Walker expressed interest in continued separation with joint meetings three or four times yearly. Meeting times and distance are of issue. More centralized meeting grounds exist in Bemidji and Northome. Comm. J. Swanson recalled meeting with Rep. Fabian recently; the representative offered that a larger group creates a louder voice – from a shared voice if not a merger. Further discussion included support of occasional joint meetings. Consolidation of meetings will be occurring generally. Locally based discussion can better zero in on local issues. Comm. Pavleck noted tighter budgets, consolidation of meetings and inclusion of St. Louis County as means to offers strength of numbers and resources, including St. Louis County’s full-time lobbyist. A review could occur in a year. Twelve counties with about 90% of the state’s public lands create a strong voice, noted Comm. McBride. The people already involved, Comm. Beckel noted, can supply powerful voices.

That the Joint Powers Board remain separate and meet jointly two or three times a year was moved by Comm. Fairbanks and seconded by Comm. Dahl. Comm. Kiesow suggested adding quarterly meetings to the motion. Comm. J. Swanson recommended a goal of two-times in Northome and two-times in Bemidji. The DNR has conflicts on Mondays. After one year the issue will be revisited. Cost of travel will continue to be important; savings would come from where members are on both boards. The Bemidji site could offer remote meeting access.

Support from Northern Counties for the same motion – that the two bodies meet jointly and quarterly and revisit the issue in one year.

m. J. Swanson s. Sobanja

The next joint meeting will be scheduled for July 25 in Bemidji. The Chairs can put together the agenda. The October 6 meeting would be held in Northome (or Grand Rapids) to be settled in July. The December meeting could be part of AMC and be open to any other interested parties, perhaps as a breakout session.

3. Introduction of Dick Moore, Land Commissioner of Beltrami County

4. Update from the DNR Mr. Carroll reviewed recent legislative issues, including invasive species. The first senior managers meeting of the Land Asset Pilot project will be held in May; this will affect northern counties. The DNR has staffing issues due to cutbacks. Rep. Colin Peterson ushered through \$10 million to the Red River Retention Authority. A BWSR bill on wetland credits would change the boundary on where credits can be used.

Comm. J. Swanson recalled a recent meeting with the DNR and Rep. Fabian that touched on land acquisitions. The DNR and the Roseau River Watershed is looking at a potential lake bottom project – a waterfowl improvement project – that will require purchase of private land. Roseau would like to see in regards to whatever acreage is acquired that the state would transfer that amount back to the county it comes from. The proposal would be a problem if it were to mean giving up high ground and commercial forestry land, replied Mr. Carroll. The DNR will look at flood reduction. The DNR is now looking at retaining agricultural production, understanding the negative impacts of taking it out of production. For water quality, habitat and recreation, there will be better focused acquisitions. In the Northwest region there is a challenge to retain agriculture; there will be precision conservation as there is precision agriculture.

Con-con evaluations are proceeding. Past and future payments are of issue. Mr. Engwall reviewed that in the northeast there are three million acres of state land of which 85-90 percent is trust fund land. The state is usually looking to acquire additions to parks or similar purchases. It is not likely to be acre-for-acre. But twice a year the DNR would meet with county land officials with a ledger of what is for sale. Trust land can be auctioned or exchanged.

The lake bottom project does have the potential of the purchase of several thousand acres of private land. The county may say no to acquisition but tends to lose in court, commented Comm. J. Swanson. The county, replied Mr. Carroll, cannot tell a private landowner they cannot sell to a willing buyer. Comm. Sve asked why the state cannot also say no. Mr. Carroll pointed out that the DNR has a mandate by the Legislature to acquire management areas for the production of ducks; they are following their state mission. In that position, a question arises as to whether a natural wildfowl production area should be in ag production. He suggested both might be accomplished. Counties should have a say if there are state funds in play. Another issue is nonprofit purchase of lands that are then transferred to the state.

Mr. Carroll also noted that reservation treaty rights will be challenged over the next two years. Treaties were signed before statehood. Territorial rights are a federal issue but must go through county court systems.

In response to a question on keeping tax-paying families on land through funding programs, Mr. Carroll brought up the access issue and noted that unfortunately in times of budget woes, private land outreach is one of the first programs to be cut. Flood damage control also enters into the picture.

Mr. Engwall responded to Comm. McBride's question on issues surrounding the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act that is a statewide program that offers credits per acre for small owners and large. A small private owner does not need to offer access. The large owners need to offer access. Forest Capital that bought 300,000 acres of Boise land got \$2.1 million from the SFI until Gov. Pawlenty unallotted it. This loss might compel landowners to look for other sources of revenue. Forest Capital is now fracturing its land holding, Comm. McBride added, by leasing out large tracts that result in denying public access to state land. The state will try to protect rights to traditional access, Mr. Carroll said. Comm. Pavleck noted the improved discussions occurring around such issues, supported by Comm. Jensen.

5. Lake County Vacation Rental Ordinance Comm. Sve reported on a current moratorium on vacation home rentals in anticipation of a Lake County ordinance due in August. Related to the issue are House File 1523 now in committee and Senate File 1190. These would allow vacation rental in all zones of counties with a few exceptions. Some counties have spoken in opposition. The measures may take away some local control. Spot zoning has been an issue, Comm. Pavleck recalled, noting a 14- or 30-day minimum that eliminates daily rentals in Koochiching. Comm. Sve added that some resorts are in opposition due to their having to go through licensing while small rentals do not. State taxes also enter the picture in regards to residential classification.

Adjournment at 12:00 p.m. by Comm. Pavleck

Next meeting June 2, 2011, 9:30 a.m. IRR Mining Reclamation Classroom, Chisholm

Respectfully submitted by Douglas Skrief, Administrator