

NORTHERN COUNTIES LAND USE COORDINATING BOARD

Minutes

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Kootasca Senior Center, Northome, MN

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. by Chairman Fink with the following in attendance. (All actions of the Board were supported unanimously unless otherwise indicated.)

Member Counties Present:

Commissioner Brian Napstad, Aitkin
Commissioner Jim Johnson, Cook
Commissioner Charles Lepper, Koochiching County
Commissioner Scott Larson, Lake
Commissioner Ken Moorman, Lake of the Woods
Commissioner Skip Swanson, Pennington
Commissioner Dennis Fink, St. Louis

Counties Not Represented:

Marshall County
Roseau County

Others Present:

Mike Carroll, Department of Natural Resources
Craig Engwall, Department of Natural Resources
John Chell, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
Richard Lehtinen, Koochiching County Environmental Services Department
Douglas Skrief, NCLUCB Staff

Introductions

Agenda Additions

- 1) John Chell, brief update from ARDC
- 2) Craig Engwall, Shoreland Rules update from DNR
- 3) Scott Larson, Wildfire Mitigation

Administrative Actions

1. Approval of Minutes:

January 3, 2008 meeting
m. Larson s. Johnson

2. Financial Report:

The Treasurer requested consistency of reference to the Northome meeting facility in the running account balance, namely "Kootasca Senior Center."

The Treasurer recommended that an \$8.70 adjustment be made to the running account balance of the General Account to coincide with the St. Louis County Auditor's report of January, bringing the balance to \$48,328.65. The Land Use Conflict Management balance is \$15,005.28.

Motion to accept, with adjustments, the account balances.
m. Napstad s. Swanson

3. Bills: A) Kootasca Senior Center: estimated \$55 for Feb. 7 meeting
B) The Executive Director: \$1399.67 Professional Services and expenses
Motion to accept. m. Lepper s: Larson

4. Treasurer's Report on State Auditor's Findings

The Treasurer directed attention to the Auditor's report to clarify the amounts budgeted and spent under the Land Conflict Management grant.

The Treasurer recommended joining the general and special fund accounts to create coinciding running tallies, county auditor and state auditor accountings.

Motion made to empower the St. Louis County Auditor upon approval from the Auditor of the State of Minnesota to combine the General and the Land Conflict Management Account into one account known as the General Account. The Board will supply any additional information requested by the State Auditor.

m. Napstad s. Johnson

The Treasurer requested that a quarterly, or monthly, statement be supplied by the St. Louis County Auditor.

The Chair will supply a copy of the Final Report of the Land Conflict Management Account to the Executive Director.

Correspondence and CWRA

The Chair distributed a copy of a letter from U.S. Rep. James Oberstar to Mr. Eric Coleman, newly-elected President of the National Association of Counties expressing his desire to work with Mr. Coleman, especially after NACo's resolution of July 2007 in opposition to Mr. Oberstar's efforts on the Clean Water Restoration Act.

CWRA: Comm. Napstad added that in regard to the Clean Water Restoration Act that the Board of Water and Soil Resources' Wetland Committee met and reviewed the progress of the legislation, and while no formal position was taken, agencies and BWSR staff appeared not enthusiastic to support this legislation, noting Minnesota's sufficient, strong regulations and rules already in place.

The Chair requested reports on experiences with the Clean Water Act. A NACo Task Force is addressing Clean Water. NACo has restructured the debate, moving from whether "navigable waters" language is in or out and shifted to what is good or bad in the CWA itself.

Mr. Chell noted that he had been in Washington at a National Association of Regional Councils meeting and that concern was expressed over Oberstar's CWRA legislation, noting that the Corps of Engineers and EPA don't have the administrative capacity to carry out the changes.

Discussion Issues

LOCAL

1. NACo Steering Committee for Public Lands: The Chair called for participation on land use committees of NACo. The Association of Minnesota Counties will be appointing members over the next 3 months. The Chair will make District 1 members aware of these openings.

2) Shoreland Standards: Motion made to empower the Chairman to appoint two members and an alternate to the Shoreland Standards Planning Committee, with the alternate from the Arrowhead should that appointment reflect regional distribution of membership.

m: Lepper s: Larson

3) Wildfire Mitigation: Mr. Chell announced an appropriation signed by President Bush awarding \$450,000 to ARDC for implementation of a Wildfire Sprinkler Program with funds to be passed through to counties to protect fire prone residences. ARDC agreed to manage the fund. The funds will not be distributed in 2008. A full application for the appropriation is due March 15. Primary residents are to be given priority. Grants will need 25 percent private landowner cost share.

Comm. Larson announced that U.S. Senator Klobuchar has contacted St. Louis and Cook Counties. The Senator would like to see a bricks-and-mortar program written by Lake, Cook and St. Louis Counties for wildfire mitigation, to create defensible spaces around threatened properties

4) Updates from Mr. Carroll:

a) Con-con Ditch Rule. A final Ditch Rule may be signed by Governor Pawlenty the first week of March. The DNR must produce a benefits table. A transparent process will then help to review and implement the process to uncouple past from future payments.

b) Mississippi Headwaters State Forest OHV Plan. After hearings, a revised plan was created to be presented to the DNR Commissioner on Feb. 12. Some challenges are still expected. Non-motorized proponents took their concerns to the national level. Discussion will continue.

c) Ditch Berms: Discussions are being held on the question as to whether ditch berms are township roads. The DNR and other ownerships differ in opinion on the potential use of abandoned 1910 ditches.

d) Bovine Tuberculosis: Bovine TB in deer and elk are being monitored. No occurrence is confirmed in elk, which are entering from Manitoba. Farmers are concerned about losing certification. Future staff updates to the Board were offered.

e) Funding Cuts: Budget cuts to DNR are possible as competing demands from infrastructure needs, education, etc. are growing.

5) ATV Open Houses: Mr. Engwall reported that ATV planning Open Houses were held in International Falls and Northome. A report will be made to the Koochiching County Board.

6) ATV Trails: Comm. Napstad reported on the 75-mile Soo Line Trail meetings affecting Itasca and Aitkin Counties. Three of seven segments, in more populated areas, need additional public support. A thorough process is in place, and the Soo Line route may not accommodate a circle route as suggested by Rep. Hackbarth.

Mr. Carroll added that public meetings were held for the Northern Border ATV trail. Public meetings were held and the second round of processing is occurring. The first trail sights should be announced by June or July. Updates will be provided. The Cloquet Valley Plan has not been signed by the governor.

7) Social Indicators Testing Phase Update: The Chair distributed a copy of correspondence supplied by Comm. Beckel concerning a Social Indicators Project for a Nonpoint Source Pollution project update, a topic that may be discussed at a future meeting of the Board.

STATE

1) Forest Fragmentation Issues: Mr. Engwall reported that he had recently testified to the state legislature on related issues. Mr. Engwall offered to summarize some issues at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Carroll announced a proposal from BSWR for a family forest legacy program and noted Cass County may propose a revolving fund for the purchase of industrial forest land.

2) Forest Industry Sales: The Chair requested input on whether there is interest in hearing an update from the timber industry. Comm. Lepper recommended that someone representing contract loggers address the board.

FEDERAL

1) Clean Water Act – See Correspondence above.

2) Haze Regulations - The Chair requested input on whether there is interest on the Board to form a response to the recent presentation to the Board on Haze Implementation Regulations.

Mr. Chell reported that The Range Readiness Initiative in St. Louis and Itasca Counties has addressed the issue as it might put Northeast Minnesota into a non-attainment area and a mission allocation program which leads to choosing among industries to maintain.

Motion to direct the Executive Director to contact environmental divisions of related industries, including mining, wood products, and energy plants to gather input on how we should respond appropriately to the Haze Implementation plans.

m.: Larson s: Johnson

The Director was directed to send the handout materials from the Haze presentation to members.

3) Lynx – The Chair noted that the Board may need to resubmit a position on critical habitat for the Canada Lynx being that a revised critical habitat proposal is due in federal court February 15.

VISION

1) Educational Opportunities The Chair opened discussion on whether to offer educational sessions, fulfilling the educational component of the charter of the Board. Suggestions included gathering a list of issues surrounding Shoreland Regulations and having representation from both sides of issues. The Board agreed to put Shoreland Education on the next agenda.

2) Meeting time The board agreed to return to a 9:30 a.m. meeting time, beginning at the next meeting in Chisholm.

Next Meeting Date and Location

March meeting: March 6, 2008, 9:30 a.m. MR Classroom, Iron Range Resource Center, Chisholm, MN.

Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Douglas Skrief, Administrator and Exec. Dir.