

Natural Resources Economic Development Board Meeting
Monday, January 22, 2024 5:30 PM
Carbondale Main Street, 121 S. Illinois Ave. Carbondale, IL 62901

Call to Order

(5:39pm)

Present: Greg Legan, Gary Apgar, Molly Maxwell, Amy McMorrow-Hunter, Blake Mulholland

Absent: Kie Layne

Also Present: Phillip Carrier, Kevin Lister

Approval of Minutes

I. 2024-65 Approval of November 27, 2023 Minutes

A motion was made by Maxwell, seconded by Mulholland, to approve the November 27, 2023, minutes as presented. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

II. 2024-66 Approval of December 18, 2023 Minutes

A motion was made by Mulholland, seconded by McMorrow-Hunter, to approve the December 18, 2023, minutes as presented. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Communication

Legan shared with the committee that he had received an email from Patrick Horstmann regarding a letter of support to move the Illinois High School Association state fishing tournament from Carlyle Lake to Kincaid Lake. The NRED board discussed and agreed they were in support of the change. A motion was made by Mulholland, seconded by Apgar, to approve Legan sending an email to Patrick Horstmann endorsing his efforts to move the state fishing tournament to Kincaid Lake. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Reports

III. 2024-67 GIS

No update given.

Old Business

IV. 2024-68 Bike Path Plans: Antero Group

Maxwell explained to the NRED board that the Antero Group focused on strategic and engineering plans for all different types of recreational facilities throughout the country. She also mentioned that her and Legan had a conversation with the group regarding updating the county's greenways and bikeways plan. Maxwell commented that the group saw potential for Southern Illinois to be an outdoor recreation hub. She commented that her and Legan would be

traveling to Chicago the following week to discuss what the Antero Group could offer. This led to a brief discussion regarding funding.

VI. 2024-70 IDNR/NRED Memorandum of Agreement

Legan commented that Calvin Beckman was instrumental in helping move forward a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and NRED on a semiformal basis. Legan commented that he had sent it to the State's Attorney's Office for approval. Carrier commented that the MOU would require communication between the entities. Legan mentioned that he wanted to emphasize that NRED was not a tourism bureau and expressed his concerns about promoting the group as such.

V. 2024-69 Recreation Survey: Next Steps

Legan began a discussion regarding the next steps that NRED would be taking now that the recreation survey had been completed. He commented that the most important things would be awareness, access, and upkeep. Legan noted that people are not aware of many of the recreational sites, and in many cases, access to those sites is an issue. He also commented that much of the infrastructure for the sites is in need of upgrading. This discussion led to the next agenda item regarding public transportation.

New Business

VII. 2024-71 Recreational Bus Route

Legan began a conversation regarding improving access to outdoor recreation sites via public transportation. Legan suggested adding bike racks to buses which could provide transportation to outdoor recreational areas, essentially creating a bus route for citizens to access public recreational sites. He noted that he had spoken with the Jackson County Mass Transit director, who seemed receptive to the idea but noted tight budgets. This began a discussion regarding funding and avenues to take such as fundraising projects, grants, and potential donations. The group liked the idea of creating a bus route for the public to access the recreational sites. McMorrow-Hunter commented that she felt it would be a great opportunity to see where people go and what they want to do and that it would allow more kids to get out of the city and enjoy nature. McMorrow-Hunter also commented that it would be a great idea to have electric bikes at the stops for people to use on the bike paths.

Towards the end of the discussion, Mulholland mentioned that he had spoken with someone who was interested in joining the NRED board. He also mentioned the county's new resource coordinator who will be working in the County Board office. Mulholland also commented that as for next steps with NRED, he felt it was important to make the board's presence known, especially with the County Board. Lister commented that it would be a good idea when NRED projects came up to be on the Real Property agenda and to come with a plan laid out and a detailed budget request.

VIII. 2024-72 Approval of Payroll Expenses

A motion was made by Mulholland, seconded by Maxwell, to approve paying Phillip Carrier 20 hours for payroll expenses. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Carrier commented that he was working on taking the information from the Recreational Survey and creating a Google map of recreational resources in Jackson County. He also commented that he was working with Google to update map coordinates for many of the recreational sites. Maxwell commented that she felt some next steps would be to reach out to the tourism

agencies to see what type of data and format NRED could provide to help support them.

IX. 2024-73 Approval of Miscellaneous Expenses

Legan commented that he had two expenses: the monthly Otter software charge and reimbursement for his train ticket to Chicago. Maxwell commented that her expense was reimbursement for her train ticket to Chicago.

A motion was made by Apgar, seconded by Mulholland, to approve Legan's and Maxwell's miscellaneous expenses. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Good and Welfare

Maxwell commented that the Recreational Trails Program grant is open and is due March 28th.

Adjourn

(6:49pm)

A motion was made by Maxwell, seconded by McMorrow-Hunter, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by unanimous vote.