



MONROE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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MONROE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 16, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Armstrong, Sharon Laverdure, Roger McFadden, Chuck Gould and Craig Todd.

DISTRICT STAFF: Kristina Heaney, Roger Spotts, John Motz, Barbara Bistras and Diana Flint

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS: Brian Winot, John Lyman

Cooperating Agencies: Shane Kleiner-DEP, Jennifer Matthews-NRCS, Alec DeLong-PA Fish and Boat Commission

PUBLIC: Leslie Berger, Jack Fessett, Paula Heeschen, Alec DeLong, Cory Lyon, Rachel Heller and Paula Heeschen

Bob Armstrong called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.

Board Meeting Minutes: Bob Armstrong asked for approval of the August 19, 2021 board meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Craig Todd, seconded by Roger McFadden, to approve the August 19, 2021 board meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Technical Report:

Lori Kerrigan provided the report in the board packet. She was out at a Management Summit so Kristina reviewed the technical report.

Roger McFadden asked about the several topsoil reporting issues. Kristina stated that we're still receiving out of state fill material. She noted that the reporting process is moving quicker due to the proactive approach being taken. She also stated that DEP is understaffed so field sampling and inspection is delayed.

EE Report: Roger Spotts stated that school programs have started, but have been a challenge due to the pandemic. Each building within the school districts has different COVID protocols. They've been able to go into schools in the Pleasant Valley, Pocono Mountain and East Stroudsburg school districts. He noted that our staff is vaccinated and wears masks in the schools. Next, Roger stated that the bird seed sale is

scheduled for October 23rd. The bird seed prices have gone up, causing us to increase prices. All current members have been notified of the change to end memberships by mail, e-mail and on our website. There has been no negative feedback and we've gotten a number of donations through the bird seed sale.

Roger mentioned that the bad storms recently have done some damage to our trail system. He also mentioned that the gravel driveway at Meesing needs some work due to the recent storms. He said this will be done in November, and is just a matter of moving the gravel around, which can be done by hand.

Bob asked if the public bog walks were still going on and Roger responded that they are, masks are required and groups are limited to 20. School groups are also allowed and can be a little larger to include the whole classroom. Roger clarified that we're still charging people, but no longer have separate member and non-member rates. The bog walks were \$4 for members and \$6 for non-members and they're now \$5 for everyone. Bob asked how we can create awareness of Kettle Creek. Roger stated that we're using social media a lot more than we used to and are also getting the word out at community events. Roger attended Youth Field Day last weekend, which consisted of 250 kids and their families. He also stated that building visitation has increased as well as trail usage. Roger stated that building visitors and program attendees are tracked as well as donations. Newsletters will still be printed if someone requests one, but he stated that most people are now asking for it by e-mail or reading it on the website. Roger McFadden asked how many newsletters were being mailed out and Roger stated that approximately 200 this year, but it was higher in the past.

Sharon asked Roger if he considered speaking at TOALC, they are an active senior organization in the county. Roger responded that we have two bog walks scheduled with TOALC this fall and that Leslie works with us to schedule programs with them. Craig asked if we ask people for their e-mail address when they register for programs. Roger noted that we aren't currently doing that but can consider it in the future. We do refer them to our website and social media. Program registration is still by phone and can't be done online but this may change in the future. Roger also stated that we have a large following with Facebook and Instagram. Bob noted that he's requested for credit cards to be accepted at the gift shop and Kristina said this is being discussed at Strategic Planning meetings.

District Managers Report: Kristina provided the report in the board packet. She stated that there was a Strategic Planning meeting on Monday, 9/13/21. She provided the Board with the draft mission statement. " Monroe County Conservation District recognizes our quality of life is directly related to the quality and integrity of our natural resources. Our mission is to maintain, protect and restore the natural resources of Monroe County through science based education, partnerships and advocacy". She next expressed that the draft goals are: 1. Provide education to a broad and diverse constituency. 2. Administer agreements with state local and federal entities. 3. Develop and strengthen current and future partnerships. 4. Maintain soil and water resources in the county. 5. Provide governance, management and fiscal responsibility.

Kristina mentioned that we would typically have a Christmas luncheon for the board, staff and some of our cooperating partners. We're not sure if Stroudsmoor would be able to host this due to COVID and if we'd feel comfortable having this event. She mentioned possibly looking at a safer alternative and asked for thoughts on this. Bob mentioned that a buffet wouldn't work during COVID and Barbara mentioned that Stroudsmoor has to get back to her with available dates and if an event is possible at this time. Bob

feels that it would be good to have something since it wasn't held last year, which Kristina agreed with but mentioned looking into safer alternatives, possibly with less people.

Dirt and Gravel, Low Volume Roads: Middle Smithfield Township-Knob Hill: Documents on this project were supplied in the Board packet. John Motz mentioned that Cory Lyon had a project in Middle Smithfield Township, which is a paved road. An initial traffic count came in at less than 100, but this was done on the weekend and the program requires the count to be done midweek. The Planning Commission is redoing the count this week, with the results being available on Friday. He stated that a QAB meeting was held last week and the grant request for this project is \$26,611.25. Bob asked what amount of cars traveling make a road qualify for low volume. John stated that it was 500 or less per day. The counts are required to be done on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. John also stated that the township will be providing the labor and equipment, the grant will cover the materials.

Jack Fessett mentioned about the flooding in the Bridge Street area near McDonald's caused from the last two storms. He also said that the road near Ray Price is falling into the creek. Kristina responded that if the township comes forward, the Conservation District can assist with applying for a grant to complete the repairs but explained that the District won't pay for the repairs.

A motion was made by Chuck Gould, seconded by Sharon Laverdure, to approve the Knob Hill grant for \$26,611.25, contingent upon the traffic count being below 500 midweek. Motion carried.

Office Assistant Sr. Hire: Kristina stated that there are five interviews scheduled for the position next week. She will send out resumes and interview times to the Board and is looking for approval based upon how the interviews go. She'd like to see the position filled in early October and explained that if the approval waits until the next Board meeting, the person can't start until November.

A motion was made by Craig Todd, seconded by Roger McFadden, to approve the ability to hire for the Office Assistant Sr. position. The motion carried. Sharon abstained from the vote.

Invoice List as of 9/15/21: The invoice list is included in the board packet. A motion was made by Roger McFadden, seconded by Sharon Laverdure, to approve the September 15, 2021 invoice list. Motion carried.

Balance Sheet as of 8/31/21: A motion was made Craig Todd, seconded by Roger McFadden, to approve the balance sheet for 8/31/21.

Bob asked Kristina to explain the changes that have been made to the Sunshine Act. Kristina explained that all agendas must be finalized and provided to the public. No changes can be made to the agenda within 24 hours, it must be made publically available at all meetings and no motions that would have a financial impact to the budget can be made that were not represented in the agenda. Kristina explained that we post the agenda on Friday before the meeting and that there should be no last minute changes. She stated that the county salary board publish their agendas the Friday before, with no changes allowed. At times, this doesn't coincide with our meeting schedule, making the hiring process very time sensitive and causing us to work a month ahead.

Cooperating Agency Reports

DEP-Shane Kleiner stated that the district nomination process is in full swing. He also noted that a webinar is scheduled for September 22nd from 10-11 for the director nominating process. He also mentioned that virtual meetings are still encouraged. He stated that attachment B on Clean Water Academy should be submitted for new employees. He mentioned a virtual webinar that occurred on July 28th on exceptional value wetlands. He also said that the USDA has funding for racial justice and inequality and stated that the PACD meeting will be held on October 8th. Kristina replied that we are hosting the meeting, which will be held at Wilkes-Barre. Currently, almost everyone is attending virtually.

NRCS-Jennifer Matthews referred to her report supplied in the board packet. She stated that the one conservation stewardship program applications are wrapping up. They are also assisting the district with the Growing Greener nutrient management grant.

PA Fish and Boat Commission-Alec DeLong introduced himself as the new Waterways Conservation Officer for south Monroe County.

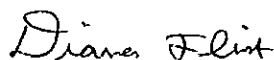
Craig commented that Pat Ross resigned in June and asked if the Commissioners have talked to John about the status. Craig stated that it would be a good idea to contact John to give him an update. Sharon replied that Greg Christine coordinates that.

Public comment: Jack Fessett mentioned about the road washing out near Kemar Drive and Eastern Belmont Pike. Kristina responded that she'll be attending an emergency management webinar concerning grants for stormwater resiliency. She said it's up to the municipalities to apply for the grants and to seek assistance and that the Conservation District will assist but can't be the one applying for the grants. Sharon agreed that the townships have to be the ones responsible since they are the ones that give permission for work to be done.

Shane also noted that he's taking responses from the community on the need for emergency permits. The DEP can be contacted if there is damage from the recent storm.

Bob Armstrong adjourned the meeting at 8:59am

Respectfully Submitted,



Diana Flint
Office Assistant Sr.

**THE NEXT MCCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY,
October 21, 2021 AT 8:00 AM at the Monroe County Conservation District**