OTTAWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

OTTAWA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes

Regular Meeting, USDA Service Center, Grand Haven MI
7pm, Tuesday March 15th, 2022

Attendance:
Megan Boos, Executive Director
Lexie Kasper, Administrative Specialist
Benjamin Jordan, Watershed Technician
David Pyle, Chairman
Tim Van Dyke, Vice Chairman
Douglas Grotenrath, Treasurer
Callie Melton, Director
Lester Langeland, Director
Roger A. Bergman, Ottawa County Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER: 7:04

- **Invocation:** David Pyle

Election Results:

- Winners of the 2022 election for Board of Directors are Rivka Hodgkinson with 122 votes, and Matt Hehl with 120 votes.
- Aaron Potts received 109 votes.

Farewell to David Pyle and Lester Langeland:

- Both members are leaving the board. OCD staff and other board members put together awards and thank you gifts for each member, and discussed planning a "going away" event in June.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Motion to approve the minutes:** Lester Langeland **Second/Support:** Callie Melton **Vote:** Passes

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Matt Hehl wanted to publicly thank Lester Langeland for his service

STAFF AND PARTNERING AGENCY REPORTS

Megan Boos, Executive Director- Report
Lexie Kasper, Administrative Specialist – Report Keely Dunham-Adkins- WM CISMA Coordinator- Report Natalie Bekins- Invasive Species Project Coordinator - Report Caryn Dawson- MAEAP Technician - Report
Forest Pest Technicians-Report - Report
Heather Varboncoeur, NRCS District Conservationist –Report
Ben Jordan, Conservation Technician- Report
Sarah Bowman, Watershed Technician-Report
Alex Svoboda, RCPP Project Manager-Report
Kyle Hildebrandt, Soil Conservation Technician-Report
Ben Savoie, Forester-Report
MDARD-Report

Program Highlight: Program updates for the last fiscal quarter-*Megan Boos*

- Megan gave a brief overview of what the OCD has been focusing on including elections, tree sale, native plant sale, etc. Focus on RCPP and the work to finish supplemental agreements with the federal government, and program rollout on March 23, 2022.
- Update on Pigeon River WMP and potential future 319 funding & existing 319 funding in BRDC and Crockery/Sand.
- CISMA continues to work with priority list invasives in multiple counties /HWA program continues to identify and treat trees infested with HWA. Fee for service work was mentioned and provides supplemental OCD income.
    - Rivka asked how additional CISMA/SOGL grants would help us increase our capacity/meet the need to address invasive species concerns & what are our needs? Megan answered that vehicles/vehicle maintenance was one concern & that there were many others.
- MAEAP update includes recent verifications, re-verifications over the next few months, and general outreach/guiding landowners to other programs and cost share. Training, contacts, networking, involvement in projects.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Annual Meeting:** *Determine if we want to hold a Celebration in June in place of our March annual meeting or skip it this year in hopes to hold a meeting*
    - OCD decided to postpone the annual meeting due to covid concerns.
    - **Motion to discuss holding a June/July event:** Doug Grotenrath **Second/Support:** Lester Langeland **Vote:** Passes
        - Discussed several venues including Grand Ravines, Ottawa County Farm, Hemlock Crossing. Everyone seemed to agree with Hemlock Crossing
        - Discussed several dates in June. Lester proposed that it is not held on the same night as a board meeting, so it doesn't distract from OCD business.
        - Discussion ended with agreement that it should be postponed but that details can be figured out later.
    - **Motion to hold an event in June (tentatively June 14):** Doug Grotenrath **Second/support:** Lester Langeland **Vote:** passes
- **Resolution requests from Lester Langeland:** David Pyle
    - Lester feels that the NRCS policy regarding wetlands & eligibility for NRCS funds is turning off farmers and micromanaging what farmers do with their land. When landowners have converted wetlands without authorization/permitting to do so, they

may be ineligible for funding and may need their cases/individual fields to be reviewed by NRCS staff. Lester has mentioned that the process is extremely long and difficult to work through. Lester would like to send a letter from the district to encourage this policy to be reviewed.

- **Motion to discuss Lester's letter:** Lester Langeland **Second/support:** Callie Melton **Vote:** Passes
  - Doug isn't necessarily against this policy being reviewed but is worried about the Conservation District being the one to write it and has mentioned that several employees and partners of the district are not comfortable with the letter being written "from" the district.
  - Tim wants to mention that we're not legislators, but that the district could draft a letter informing legislators and the NRCS that policies like this can potentially turn famers off & discourage participation in district/NRCS programs. Getting Farm Bureau to write a letter with the Conservation District as a signee might be a better route.
  - Dave mentions that he understands the concern but is opposed to writing this letter because he feels that the district doesn't set, or enforce these rules, so that it's not necessarily our place to get involved in this way.
  - Commissioner Bergman asked if we could invite Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peter's staff to join us in a meeting to hear concerns.
  - Further discussion was had regarding the district's place being the one to write this letter. Some attendees were concerned about the optics of the district's name being used to raise an issue of an individual board member, while not discounting that the issue should be discussed at some level.
  - Discussion ended with no clear resolution, but board members and some staff are willing to pursue the issue and see how it could be better addressed.
- **Motion to send letter with Ottawa Conservation District's signature:** Dave Pyle **Second/support:** Lester Langeland **Vote:** One yes, two no. Motion fails.

- **Strategic Planning:** Lexie Kasper, update
  - April 21 the OCD is meeting with the facilitator at 1pm to discuss the strategic plan & next steps. Originally the meeting was planned at 9am but it has been rescheduled for the afternoon.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Financial:**
  - December, January, & February bank reconciliations and bill payment: See financial packet for our profit & loss, balance sheet, and account reconciliations. (Vote)
    - Megan and the board discuss the board packet. Callie asks to explain the MACC funding. Is it a fee/payment? Megan answers that it's a payment - OCD is helping MACC and OCD with several services.
    - **Motion to pay the bills:** Dave Pyle **Second/support:** Lester Langeland **Vote:** passes.
  - Amend appropriations: This amendment is to account for new streams of funding. You will find the act in your board packet. (Vote)

        - **Motion to amend appropriations:** Doug Grotenrath **Second/support:** Lester Langeland **Vote:** Passes
- **Board Governance**
    - Short discussion on board of directors training and catching new members up to speed.
    - Next board meeting will involve voting for roles for all board members.

- **MiFarmLink:** Introduction and information
    - Megan explains the MiFarmLink program to board members & passes along information. Several board members wanted to know additional information about the program and were concerned about whether the program would be feasible/successful in the future.
- **Annual Plan of Work:** Review, document is included in your board packet for your review
    - Megan explains the annual plan of work and hands it out to the board. Gives examples of action items listed in the plan, breakdown of items/staff working on them, timeline for action items, how they will be evaluated, budget, etc.
    - **Motion to approve annual plan of work:** Doug Grotenrath **Support:** Callie Melton **Vote:** passes
- **Tree Seedling and Native Plant Fundraiser:** Lexie Kasper, Update
    - Tree sale is going well - already over 100 orders & some species are running out. Megan mentions that the Tree sale is on the 15th of April & she would like assistance with the annual tree wrapping day. Tuesday the 12th is volunteer wrapping day - Does the board work with groups/volunteers that could assist? April 13th is the staff/board member wrapping day.
    - Mentions native plant sale & that they can be purchased at cost for employees or board members. Native plant workshop on April 25th at Hemlock Crossing.
- **Grants**
    - **Executing:**
        - MISGP CORE 22 (Funding for coordinators wages)
        - MISGP C (Strike team) 22
        - NatGLC (National Grazing Lands Coalition) grant: Supplemental funding for our Cultivating Resilience Field Day
        - WAM Funding
    - **Preparing:**
        - Sustain our Great Lakes (SOGL) Funding for continued invasive species treatment in 2023
    - **Pending:**
        - Bass River Deer Creek Restoration Project Phase 4

CORRESPONDENCE:

PA 116: N/A

ADJOURN – next meeting: April 5th, 2022

Motion to adjourn: Lester Langeland **Supported:** Doug Grotenrath **Vote:** Passes

Signature

David Pyle

Board Chairman

Ottawa Conservation District o 16731 Ferris Street, Grand Haven, MI 49417
Phone: (616) 846-8770 x5 o Fax: (855) 701-4370