

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE JOHNSON COUNTY
CONSERVATION BOARD AND THE JOHNSON COUNTY BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS
AUGUST 17, 2011**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Dubuque Street Trail Winter Maintenance Responsibilities and Expectations..... | 1 |
| Bond Utilization, Cabins for Kent Park, Kent Park Lake Impairment Status, Sutliff Bridge Area Plans and Communication..... | 14 |
| Bond Utilization | 14 |
| Cabins for Kent Park | 18 |
| F.W. Kent Park Lake Impairment Status..... | 19 |
| Sutliff Bridge Area Plans | 20 |
| Communication | 20 |

Chairperson Harney called the joint meeting to order in the F.W. Kent Park Conservation Headquarters Building at 2048 Highway 6 NW at 6:31 p.m. Conservation Board members present were: Alice Atkinson, Amy Bouska, Tom Hoff, Gerald Morgan, and Christopher Voci. Also present were: Conservation Director Harry Graves and Assistant County Attorney Susie Nehring. Johnson County Board of Supervisors members present were: Pat Harney, Terrence Neuzil, Rod Sullivan, and Janelle Rettig; absent: Sally Stutsman. Staff present were: Johnson County Board of Supervisors Executive Assistant Andy Johnson, Conservation Office Assistant Dory Kjosa, and County Auditor’s Recording Secretary Nancy Tomkovicz.

**DUBUQUE STREET TRAIL WINTER MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES
AND EXPECTATIONS**

Sullivan said when the Dubuque Street Trail (the Trail) extension was first discussed, the County applied for a grant. The grant application stated that the County would be responsible for clearing the Trail. He clarified that the County never received that grant. Conservation Director Harry Graves confirmed. Sullivan asked if the County is obligated to clear the Trail. Graves said no, not from a grant standpoint. He asked Rettig if nine applications were submitted on the different phases of this project. Rettig said the County has grant applications that are paying for it, however the question is whether those applications state that it is the County’s obligation to clear the Trail. She thinks the County submitted the same application to the Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County (MPOJC).

Sullivan said he has been under the impression that the County was obligated to clear the Trail, but is not sure that it is a good idea. The County’s obligations have never been clear. Harney said they discussed minimal maintenance, but he does not think a decision was made regarding snow removal on the Trail. Rettig disagreed. She said when the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) was initially formed the County began receiving calls from residents wanting snow removed from the Trail. The Board then made it clear that

as soon as the Trail was complete the County would maintain it. She told Harney a formal vote was taken at that meeting and he can reference the minutes if he has any doubts.

Sullivan said he remembers that. Rettig said that decision was made after the Board received a recommendation from the TAC. Sullivan said that decision was partially driven by the funding sources and the fact that the Board told residents they would be responsible for maintenance. He said it sounds like the County's only obligation is to fulfill their promises. Rettig said she does not know the answer to that because she did not apply for the MPOJC funds. There are two separate grants from MPOJC that have paid for this and she is not sure whether they included winter maintenance. However, she is sure that the Board informed residents that they would maintain the Trail as soon as it was completed.

Neuzil said the Board may have thought that the grant was forcing that decision upon them. Given the nature of budgets, governments often have to reprioritize their commitments. It would be nice to know if winter maintenance was mandatory.

Graves said clarification for that can probably be received from MPOJC Assistant Transportation Planner Kris Ackerson or MPOJC. Harney said it would be advantageous to look at the grant requirements. Assistant County Attorney Susie Nehring said it is certainly not binding. After the discussion that was had in 2010 it was her understanding that winter maintenance is not included. The discussion was based on the representations made which stipulated that the County would perform winter maintenance, not that it was an obligation of the grant. She recommends getting a final answer to that, particularly if the Board is considering not funding winter maintenance.

Harney said the Board originally discussed providing minimal maintenance. Later, the discussed cleaning the Trail due to its heavy use. As a tradeoff, the County might choose to not clean or maintain other trails. He thinks the Board would not necessarily want to use snow plows on the trails if they did not have to in order to maintain them.

Rettig said prior to her appointment to the Board of Supervisors, the Board received calls from residents who were upset that the Trail was not being maintained. At that time the Board said the County would maintain the Trail once it was completed. Therefore, the County did not maintain the Trail in 2010 because it was not complete at that time. If the Board is going to renege on that, they should do so in a public meeting. This is an urban trail, unlike the trail which will connect to F.W. Kent Park (Kent Park) or the trail from Solon to Ely. She hopes those two trails do not receive winter maintenance in order to make them more available for cross-country skiing or snowmobiling. People expect to be able to walk on the Trail in the winter. If Trails Funds are not going to be used, then the citizens of Johnson County need to be informed in a formal public meeting.

Conservation Board Member Tom Hoff clarified that Rettig thinks the Trail should be maintained year-round, while the trail to Kent Park or other trails should not receive the same maintenance. He believes the trail connecting the Butler Bridge to North Liberty

should not be maintained, however his group of friends would like to be able to ride their bikes on the trail to Kent Park during the winter. He asked why Rettig's wishes and desires trump his.

Rettig said if the trail is large enough to be plowed and still be used in part for cross-country skiing, then Hoff should make that decision. There are trails that are meant for winter sports and others that are not. However, thousands of people live on the Trail route so it is essentially a city sidewalk. People have the expectation that the Trail will be plowed, just like the trail along the Iowa River. Rettig said the City of Iowa City prioritizes their trails and maintains them accordingly. In a year with a lot of bad weather, there are bound to be trails which do not get plowed. There is a difference between winter sports and the expectation of walking one's dogs and taking one's children on a trail.

Graves said the grant application for the Clear Creek Trail stated that the trail would be used for winter sports and would not be plowed. Hoff said the Clear Creek Trail was a Conservation Board project, and this Dubuque Trail was not. He believes it is the Board's decision to give Conservation the funding to maintain the Trail. If Conservation is given the dollars, they will do the best job that can be done.

Rettig said part of the problem is the Conservation Board's independent attitude. Conservation feels as though they are not part of the County, which troubles her. Other counties that have embraced trails do so without that separation. Together they are going to decide how to fund trails and what level of maintenance to provide. Hoff disagreed. The Conservation Board sits in a different capacity than the Board of Supervisors. The Conservation Board is appointed to represent the 130,000 citizens living in Johnson County. However, the Board is elected and, therefore is responsible to the certain contingencies that helped get them elected. Each Board members goals may be good for their supporters, but they may not be good for the other Johnson County citizens Hoff represents. He is not against the Trail. Rettig said if Hoff wants to plow the trail to Kent Park, he can. However, the Conservation Board pledged to embrace winter sports.

Hoff said he is not suggesting that trail to Kent Park be plowed; he was simply making a point that people want different things, making it difficult for the leaders to choose sides. He said the Conservation Board also receives calls from residents asking why some stretches of the roads within Kent Park are closed during the winter. After listening to these complaints, the decision was made that keeping all of the roads in Kent Park open, throughout the winter months, would not be the best use of County money. That is the Conservation Board decision, not his. If the Board of Supervisors wants the Dubuque Street Trail maintained during the winter, Conservation will do it.

Conservation Board Member Amy Bouska said the Conservation Board asked Graves to solicit bids in order to gather more information about maintenance costs. She said it sounds like they need to research the grant obligations.

Sullivan asked if All Seasons Lawn Care and Snow Removal (All Seasons) is the

only company that submitted a bid. Graves said yes. He said Nehring has been instrumental in putting this together. Conservation first looked at the trail from Dubuque Street to West Overlook Road. They decided to budget for snow removal for a certain number of times and inches of snow accumulation. When that ceased, there would be no more snow and consequently there would be no more funding. They know the folly of that.

Graves said the decision was also made that it would be wrong to add ice melt or sand to the Trail. Snow cannot be removed without creating ice. Conservation received a quote in 2010 from All Seasons. He said Assistant County Attorney Andy Chappell brought to their attention that it was not in accordance with the snow ordinance at that time. He asked Nehring if that is correct.

Nehring said the Trail is in the right-of-way and, therefore gets special legal consideration. There is a legal reason why the County must keep this Trail's snow plan specifically articulated in the Snow and Ice Removal Policy. The current Snow and Ice Removal Policy reads that "...no snow removal or ice control on sidewalks or trails within the County right-of-way." If a decision is made to do something different, there will have to be a corresponding change to the Policy. There is some statutory immunity that can apply as long as the County maintains consistent policies that apply to it.

Nehring said the County can have other policies. For instance, the County could stipulate that the Clear Creek Trail will not be plowed. However, the Trail does receive special treatment due to its proximity to the right-of-way. The issue is difficult because the Trail is not a typical rural trail. It operates more like an urban sidewalk.

Nehring said at the last joint meeting they discussed a bid the Conservation Board received from Quality Care. The individual who provided that information had left their firm and Quality Care no longer wanted to be involved. She said Graves worked hard to get two bids, which the Conservation Board reviewed. In terms of the per snow event costs, All Seasons offered a much better price and seemed to be more realistic and have a better approach. That is why the Conservation Board originally wanted to work with that company. Due to liability concerns, All Seasons would not perform the snow removal in a manner desired by the County and was uncomfortable moving forward.

Nehring said the new bids reflect All Seasons' proposal, in terms of the various prices. All Seasons' Owner Shaun Slaughter thinks he needs to be given discretion to apply deicers and sand when he felt it was appropriate. There are some options listed in the contract in terms of how much expense the County wants to incur and the various pavement applications. She said Slaughter strongly recommended not using any deicers on new segments of the Trail because it would damage the concrete. She said Slaughter would only agree to apply deicer to those segments if the contract included a provision stating he will not be held responsible for any damage that might be caused to the concrete. She said Slaughter has a lot of concerns about doing snow removal without applying sand or salt. That is why there are three different bids available to the Board.

Nehring said Slaughter attempted to give some estimates by stating average snowfalls from previous years. However, there was also some discussion regarding proper snow removal, during which time Slaughter stated that he needs to be authorized and allowed to access the Trail during any measurable amount of snowfall in order to prevent ice buildup. The bid includes rough estimates for the total cost based on average snowfalls. Doubling the average number of snowfalls might be a more realistic cost of snow removal.

Graves said this contractor would indemnify the County by using these basic parameters, which was the issue in 2010. Nehring agreed. Conservation Board Member Christopher Voci clarified that Slaughter is talking about clearing the Trail to the level he is comfortable with. Graves and Nehring said yes. Nehring said Slaughter was not willing to enter into the contract under those terms unless he had the discretion to do the job the way he felt would be appropriate. She said Slaughter could not make that statement without providing the Board with some service fee estimates.

Hoff clarified that Slaughter will indemnify the County. If an accident occurs while Slaughter is doing his work and a lawsuit soon follows, then Slaughter's indemnification will be worthless. Voci said it will be worth the amount of Slaughter's insurance policy. Hoff said it will not stop there simply because Slaughter has an insurance policy. He is concerned that someone might sue Slaughter, the County, as well as the Conservation Board because they are the entity that contracted with Slaughter to perform the snow removal. It will be a difficult situation for everyone involved.

Graves said according to Insurance Associates of Iowa City Partner and County Insurance Agent of Record Bob Saunders everyone will be covered if engaged in a lawsuit. Rettig said it is for this reason that the County carries an umbrella liability policy. The same is true of roadways. Individuals are sued more often because of road accidents than trail accidents. That is why the County has a liability policy. Voci said insurance policies are incredibly effective at driving settlements because the incentive is to go after the deep pocket. The settlement stops at the bottom of the pocket. Once the insurance runs out, there is nothing left.

Voci said Slaughter is well-aware of what needs to be done in order to comfortably running his business. Meaning, Slaughter knows what insurance policy he needs to have. There is always a risk, but Slaughter has made the decision that the risk is worth taking. If a lawsuit is brought against the County, it would not be the first and would certainly not be the last. Rettig said she thinks the County is currently involved in at least five ongoing lawsuits.

Harney asked Nehring if there is a legal expectation for the County to clear the Trail. Nehring said the County should either do it properly or not do it at all. The worst option would be if the County committed to winter maintenance half-heartedly. She said the City of Coralville has decided that they are not responsible for clearing trails in order to take away the public's expectation. People will use Coralville trails at their own risk. Iowa City has taken an opposing approach as they are responsible for clearing all of their

trails. Iowa City has approximately 20 people with the sole responsibility of removing snow from trails following an average snowfall. Iowa City has designated a substantial amount of staff to doing that. There is a one inch trigger, meaning if snow falls over a weekend staff is contacted and trails are cleared only after that one inch trigger is hit. However, during the week, Iowa City sends staff out to clear the trails right away.

Nehring said Coralville does clear the walkway to one of its schools on a consistent basis. Graves clarified that Coralville clears the walkway into Kate Wickham Elementary School because a public sidewalk does not exist. Nehring said Coralville thinks that by starting to take responsibility, they will increase their liability. She has looked at the research on the two opposing approaches and the important thing is to have the County's policy reflect what is done. It is important to not go down the middle, which is where the discussion was headed in 2010. It is her legal opinion that Slaughter be given the ability and decision-making power to clean the Trail well and to the amount that he is comfortable with to satisfy their standard, an appropriate industry standard, and to satisfy their liability. Otherwise, the County can stipulate that homeowners be responsible for clearing the Trail, which is what has been going on thus far.

Nehring said the County could also clear the Trail section by section because different sections of the Trail possess different characteristics. The section of the Trail connecting the Butler Bridge to West Overlook Road is much more of an urban sidewalk than the section connecting 275th Street to North Liberty. There is a large difference in the number of people who have homes immediately adjacent to those two sections of the Trail. Harney said he knows individuals living north of North Liberty who ride their bicycles on the Trail to get to work every day. If the County is going to maintain the Trail, he wants the maintenance to extend beyond snow and ice removal. He wants tree limbs, brush, and sand removed from the Trail in the spring, as well as for gravel to be put down at intersections.

Rettig said this maintenance has been budgeted for. She asked how much the County budgeted for winter trail maintenance according to 2010's estimates. Graves said he thinks the Conservation Board requested \$6,900 with 10% contingency. Rettig clarified that the Board provided the fund for \$7,900 and passed a budget which stated that. Graves agreed. He said around that time the issue pertaining to the Snow and Ice Removal Ordinance came into effect. He said the County budgeted \$7,590. Rettig clarified that Nehring's memorandum states that \$7,900 was budgeted for. Graves said he submitted a proposal to the Board for \$6,900 with a 10% contingency, totaling to \$7,590. Nehring said she could be mistaken about the amount.

Rettig said the Board had previously budgeted \$175,000 for Capital Projects for trails. She clarified that in order to clear this Dubuque Street Trail, the Board had been moving funds from the Capital Projects Fund to Conservation. Graves said yes, that was the proposal, but the Snow and Ice Removal Ordinance issue arose and halted that discussion.

Nehring clarified that it was the decision of the Conservation Board to use that money

to clear the Trail from Butler Bridge to 275th Street because the other section of the Trail was not finished. Graves said that is correct. Nehring said that had a one inch snow trigger and no deicers of any kind were allowable. Graves said in light of the Snow and Ice Removal Ordinance issue, and the incomplete Trail, the Board elected to not provide any snow removal until the Trail was completed up to North Liberty.

Rettig said that was the prior budget. The Board knew the Trail would be finished when the current budget was created. Graves said \$7,590 was budgeted for in 2010 to fund Trail maintenance up to 275th Street. There are three quotes: Butler Bridge to West Overlook Road, Butler Bridge to 275th Street, and Butler Bridge to North Liberty. For an average year, Slaughter's quote is \$4,440 for snow removal from Butler Bridge to West Overlook Road. However, after looking at the road salt, ice melt, salt/sand, and trail inspections it would be wise to double that amount to \$8,880. The basic snow removal quote for the section connecting Butler Bridge and 275th Street is \$6,360. Doubled, that quote would then be \$13,720. To maintain the entire Trail, aside from deicers on the newest portion which the contractor would not be responsible for, the quote is \$7,520 for snow removal. Doubled, the amount is \$15,040 and would be funded from the County's Trails budget.

Graves said Conservation chose to work with Slaughter because he gave the County a realistic bid in 2010. He said the County can put this out to bid, but Slaughter has worked hard with him and Nehring to provide some realistic figures.

Bouska said at the Conservation's Board last meeting, they voted unanimously for Graves to provide this information to the Board. By doing it this way, the Board could decide what they wanted to do when it came time for the budget. She said Harney rightly pointed out that they should look at brush removal as well.

Hoff said the Trail must be impeccably maintained nine months out of the year. However, it is not practical during the winter. Rettig said the County is not doing that now. She said there has been an erosion problem for the past five years. Hoff said that is another decision for the Board to make. To him, those are two separate issues.

Graves said the Trail segment from Butler Bridge to West Overlook Road is over ten years old. It is miraculous that it has had no structural maintenance and only one tree limb issue. In 2000, the Iowa Department of Transportation Office of Systems Planning's original estimate for trail maintenance was \$1,500 per mile. Factoring inflation into the estimate raised it to \$1,899 per mile in 2010. He thinks that is unrealistic if snow removal is included. It is imperative that money should be set aside for structural maintenance in a Trails budget. There was a climate-related blow-up issue with the new concrete and the County must provide funding for it. That is another segment of the budget. The Conservation Board wanted to be proactive regarding winter maintenance. That way they know what they are doing when starting to prepare budgets in September 2011.

Rettig said the Board already made a decision for FY12. They can change their votes

if they want, but they voted for an FY12 budget that either had \$7,500 or \$7,900 in it for winter maintenance for the Trail. If these estimates are accurate, the Board would have to do a budget amendment to increase that amount or transfer money from Capitals to trails maintenance. The FY13 budget is a completely different discussion.

Graves said the decision the Board will need to make is whether they want to amend the budget for the entire Trail, for Butler Bridge to West Overlook Road, or for Butler Bridge to 275th Street. Sullivan said the Board does not necessarily have to amend it, because they do not know what the coming winter will hold. Graves agreed. Sullivan said there is \$7,900 to spend on winter maintenance, and if the County overspends the spring amendment is still available. If the County spends \$15,000 on winter maintenance for the Trail, they can move \$7,000 to Conservation to pay that bill. He feels as though he has made a commitment to at least try and plow the Trail. However, it is not necessarily something he is committed to doing for time immemorial. In the future, if the County's budget is affected, the Board may need to review winter maintenance funding for the Trail.

Graves said the Conservation Board needs to know what direction the Board wants them to give a contractor regarding how much winter maintenance the Trail should receive. Rettig said she agrees with Harney in that the Board made the commitment that once the Trail was completed, the County would provide winter maintenance for the entire length. Although there are not any homes between 275th Street and North Liberty yet, there will be people who use that segment of the Trail. Simply because there are no homes does not mean there would no longer be any use for the Trail in the winter. The Board made a decision in 2007 to provide winter maintenance upon its completion and if the Board wants to reconsider it, then three Supervisors should say so.

Hoff asked Rettig if she does not want the new concrete to be deiced. Rettig said she does not want to use salt on new concrete which means using more sand. Sullivan said Slaughter addressed that issue in his bid. Nehring said any kind of ice removal on new concrete could damage the concrete and invalidate the warranty. Harney and Rettig said plain sand would not harm the concrete. Nehring said her understanding from Slaughter is he did not think sand alone would adequately address the issue of ice removal.

Rettig said she is sure that is what Slaughter believes, but Iowa City has moved away from using snow melt because of its environmental impact and is using more sand. If the County chooses not to use snowmelt on the segment from 275th Street to North Liberty, then they should use signs to notify the public that icy conditions may exist. She does not want to use snowmelt on new concrete.

Graves read the disclaimer from the proposal according to the following: "On the new section of trail no deicer is recommended by the deicer manufacturers because the deicers will destroy new concrete. If the snow is removed from the new section of trail, ice will be left on pavement and will create dangerous conditions. The least harmful to remove concrete would be ice melt. All Seasons will not be held liable for damage to concrete." Harney said he thinks a good contractor would minimize salt use. The sun

will take care of most of the ice in non-shaded areas. Once the Board gives the Conservation Board direction, they will move forward with this contractor.

Sullivan reiterated that if the cost of winter maintenance for the Trail from Butler Bridge to North Liberty stays under \$7,900 that is great, but if it goes above that amount the Board has the option of doing a spring amendment to the budget to move money from the Trails Capital Fund to Conservation. Neuzil said another option is to end winter maintenance once the \$7,900 is used. Nehring said she would strongly advise the Board to not do that. Neuzil asked what the Board budgeted for. Harney said they cannot predict any amount of snow removal. There could be a lot of snow and ice or very little.

Neuzil said it sounds like maintenance costs will be more than \$7,900. Sullivan said that is the amount the Board has budgeted. Rettig said the Board actually has \$175,000 budgeted for Trails. Neuzil said the Board budgeted approximately \$8,000 for winter maintenance. Neuzil said if the Board thinks the actual cost will be greater, they should discuss that. He thinks a lot of people would question why the County would spend \$15,000 to remove snow on a rural trail.

Hoff said although the State and the counties went over budget in 2010, they still have to maintain rural roads for commerce purposes. However, the Board should have the discretion to stop spending on maintenance after a certain point. No one is going to get extremely upset if they cannot use the trail recreationally, but the roads must be kept passable for people to commute between Iowa City and North Liberty for work. As a taxpayer, Hoff agrees with Neuzil that a specific amount was budgeted and if they want to go beyond that amount, then another conversation is needed. Sullivan said in that case, they would probably have to use signs to show the trail is closed.

Neuzil asked what type of maintenance the County has provided from Butler Bridge to West Overlook Road. Sullivan said nothing. Neuzil asked if signs were posted. Graves said no. Nehring said the trail was open the majority of last winter because private residents were clearing it. Graves said there were also parts of the trail that were not being cleared. Nehring said the County will not be able to put up signs at all of the trail's access points.

Harney said the County prioritizes the roads according to what will be cleared first and when. Sullivan said the Board could vote to do something different, but the Board did say the County would provide winter maintenance for the trail. His proposal is to clear the whole trail using the budgeted amount and if maintenance costs exceed that amount the Board understands they can access the Trail's Capital Fund and use that to cover the difference. In subsequent years, the Board will have to decide if they want to make this expenditure. For now, it has already been budgeted.

Neuzil said it is not already budgeted. It is already budgeted for only half the amount. Sullivan said the Board has a certain amount budgeted but has no idea how much they will spend in any given winter; snowfall is unpredictable. Voci said there may be something the County can do to even out maintenance budgeting. Hoff said yes, budget

the same amount each year, just like health insurance.

Neuzil said asked if it would be possible to apply a maintenance schedule to the trail. Rettig said the County has to have a policy and must follow it. Nehring said the County cannot have a policy that states that once they spend the \$7,900, they do not have to provide any more winter maintenance. Even though that may have a common sense appeal, her recommendation is not to do that.

Neuzil said the Board can put it back on their agenda because the rules have changed with the cost being twice as much. He asked if the Board could create a policy stating the County will not perform winter maintenance on the trail unless there are at least four inches of snowfall. Nehring thinks the Board could create a policy like that, but thinks it will be difficult for a contractor to agree to perform snow removal under those circumstances.

Graves said if they have use on the trail and ice builds up with snow on top, it is not easy to clear that down to the concrete. Hoff asked if the three-inch trigger comes from Slaughter. Graves said no, the trigger is measurable snow. Neuzil said one-quarter-inch snowfall is measurable. Hoff clarified that the proposal says measurable to three-inches. Nehring said Slaughter will charge the same amount for clearing one-quarter inch of snow as clearing two and one-half inches of snow.

Graves said on average, they have two six-to-ten-inch snowfalls. Though there was over 15 inches in some places in February 2011. It is impossible to say how it will work. Neuzil said it is easy to predict that winter maintenance will total more than \$7,900. Graves said he thinks that is a given.

Nehring said the proposal does reflect that Slaughter would treat ice. Harney said the City of Iowa City does not treat Scott Boulevard between Highway 1 and Herbert Hoover Highway. Rettig said Iowa City has a list of trails to maintain that are ranked by usage. Iowa City maintenance crews start at the top and work their way down the list. If it snows again when they are clearing a trail in the middle of the list, they start back at the top of the list. During a really bad winter there will be trails that Iowa City does not end up treating. Sullivan said one trail could be cleared ten times before another is cleared once. Rettig said that is right, Iowa City does not guarantee that trails will be cleared every day.

Neuzil asked if anyone knows what the City of North Liberty's snow removal policy is. Nehring said North Liberty is starting to develop quite a few of their own trails. Graves said the trail section in front of Penn Elementary School has recently been paved. Rettig said when Iowa City originally paid for the trail along Scott Boulevard, the residents in the developed land area are responsible for maintaining the trail. Nehring said the City of Coralville has done that too. Property owners are required by ordinance to clear four feet of a wide sidewalk, not the whole eight feet.

Sullivan suggested moving forward with what the Board budgeted, see how it works,

and reevaluate it in a couple of years. Since the Board already told the public that the County would provide winter trail maintenance they should do it, but they reserve the right to decide whether to continue after a couple years.

Neuzil said he is uncomfortable moving forward, given the nature of the new numbers that were just presented to them. Nehring said the approved amount was \$7,900 with a one-inch trigger and no deicing. Sullivan said that may be true, but the bottom line is \$7,900 is in the Conservation Board's budget. Graves said no, after the discussion with the County Attorney, no money was appropriated as a line item to the Conservation Board for trails.

Neuzil asked if there are any other bids for snow removal. Graves said the Conservation Board can pursue more bids if the Board wants. As far as he knows, Quality Care does not have a snowplow, they use a broom. Graves said it would be risky to depend on a broom all winter as there are times in Kent Park when a plow cannot be used and they must use a loader or a road grader instead. Harney said there are low areas on the trail where that will be necessary.

Sullivan again suggested moving forward with what the Board budgeted. Rettig said she thinks the Board has already made a decision on this topic and if they want to change their minds they must give the public notice, discuss it again at a Board meeting and vote on it. Harney said he is in favor of placing it on an agenda to discuss at a future Board meeting, and in the meantime research whether the grants specify that the trail must be cleared. Neuzil said it is a different story if the grants make that specification.

Nehring said there are two issues. One is whether the Board wants to move forward for 2011/2012 knowing that the terms have changed. The other thing is to get some guidance for the 2012/2013 year as to whether it will be appropriate to budget more money and how much.

Bouska asked if there is additional information that the Board will need, such as the cost for tree removal. Sullivan said Secondary Roads Maintenance Superintendent Kevin Hackathorn said he has only had to remove a tree from the trail once. He said when it happens, the Board will deal with it, but it is such a rare occurrence. Rettig said if sand will be used then sweeping would be necessary at the end of the season.

Hoff said Iowa City may take the gravel off Butler Bridge and the approach by the quarry, but they do not do it often enough and it is very dangerous. Nine months of the year the trail deserves better maintenance than it is currently receiving. Graves said Butler Bridge is Iowa City's responsibility. Hoff said he does not care whose it is. Harney said there are driveways further on up the road with the same issue.

Rettig said she agrees with Hoff, in counties that embrace trails, there has been a partnership with conservation boards and work as a team. In Johnson County nobody is in charge of trails. She thinks the Board has asked Conservation multiple times to do it and there has not been a clear answer from Conservation saying they will embrace trails.

Hoff said the Conservation Board has said they will embrace trails. Graves said Conservation provides a budget every year the Board has asked for one. For various reasons, Conservation did not follow through with snow removal. That is why Conservation brought this issue forward now so they could move forward with it. Sullivan said this topic clearly needs to be addressed by the Board at a future Board meeting. If the Conservation Board can be present that would be great, but at a minimum, Graves probably ought to be there. He knows the Board said in the grant applications that the County would maintain the trails, but he is not sure how binding that is or what would happen should the County choose not to maintain the trail.

Rettig said that when the County applied for state and federal recreational trails grants, the County said they would maintain the trails. She was not involved when the County applied for MPOJC grants. She said that since TAC was tasked to advise the Conservation Board and to maintain the trails, she does not think they should be holding meetings without TAC members present. To her knowledge, the TAC does not know about the current meeting. Graves said this was discussed at the TAC meeting and he is surprised TAC Chairperson Terry Dahms is not present. Sullivan said once the Board schedules another meeting, they should make sure TAC members are also invited.

Hoff said trail maintenance will be the face of the Johnson County Conservation Board regardless of whether they contract out the winter maintenance. He said he already received a call regarding how unwise it was to build the trail the way it was built. The caller already thought the Conservation Board was responsible for trails. Hoff said he assured the caller that Conservation will take care of the trail if asked and provided the resources.

Bouska said when she was a TAC member, she read emails from homeowners complaining about the lack of trail upkeep during the winter. She said the Conservation Board unanimously voted for Graves to give the Board of Supervisors information to make a decision. The price has changed, so she asked the Board to give direction to the Conservation Board on how to handle maintenance this year, as well as guidance for the FY13 budget.

Sullivan said, speaking for only himself, he is troubled that there whenever they hold a joint meeting with Conservation trust issues arise. For example, if a large tree falls across the trail, Secondary Roads is trained to deal with that and once they clean it up, Conservation would reimburse Secondary Roads. Likewise, the Board would make sure the trails money was disbursed to Conservation. He feels sad that this relationship between the two boards has an underlying lack of trust. Conservation Board members were appointed in good faith to do the best they can. If something extraordinary happened, the Conservation Board can ask the Board for help.

Hoff said that it should work that way, but at some point in the future, there will be other Supervisors in office and other individuals serving on the Conservation Board. He does not want to make decisions today that he might regret in the future. Harney said he

thinks the solution is pretty simple. The Conservation Board and the Board of Supervisors need to reach an agreement that Conservation will maintain the trails and the Board of Supervisors will fully reimburse them for that. The Board of Supervisors needs to take formal action approving such an agreement and if the Board of Supervisors does not live up to the agreement, then the Conservation Board will cease trail maintenance.

Rettig said the Board budgeted \$200,000 for trails twice. For three or four years, the Board has budgeted \$175,000. There has been a six or seven fiscal year commitment to trails. If a future Board decides to not fund trail maintenance, the Conservation Board would put up a sign that says the trail is closed and to call the Board office with any complaints. With a six or seven year commitment to building trails, the County needs to have a maintenance commitment.

Rettig said the legislature wants to take \$4 million away from the County in commercial property tax rollbacks. If that happens, Conservation staff will be cut down to two staff members because the County will not be building or maintaining trails and they will likely have to close Kent Park.

Rettig said that since the Board decided they wanted to build trails, the Board has consistently funded them. If future boards do not fund trail maintenance, then Conservation should simply close the trails and refer complaints to the Board Office. Rettig said she does understand the trust issue, but only to a certain degree. The Conservation Board is part of the County and no different than other County departments. The Conservation Board is not a separate entity. If the Board chooses not to fund trails, the voters will decide whether they care.

Graves said there is no confusion in his mind that the Conservation Board is part of Johnson County. If the Board gives the Conservation Board direction to budget a specific amount for trails, then that is what they will do. He has submitted a trails budget to the Board each time the Board has requested. Sullivan repeated that the Board of Supervisors, the Conservation Board, and the TAC need to discuss this at a future meeting.

Nehring said the Conservation Board is not adequately staffed nor does it have the necessary equipment to perform snow removal. The level of trust extends beyond Johnson County to potential service provider who will want to be guaranteed they will be paid.

Rettig said they have discussed this at length today, and obviously the Board will need to vote again. However, they lost sight of the fact that ten days ago, Johnson County opened its first real trail and she has heard from the public they are very happy with it. The details do matter, but the ribbon has not yet been cut on the new trail and they are discussing what will happen in ten years if trail maintenance is not funded.

Graves asked the Board to notify him when the next meeting will be held and what to put in the budget line item and he assured the Board that whatever they ask him to

include in the trails budget line item will be done. He presumes everyone else present feels the same. Neuzil said it would be nice to know if maintenance is mandated or not.

Nehring said when the Conservation Board asked for bids in the fall of 2010, they received two bids and when broken down to the per snow event cost, All Seasons' price is better, and they provide a more realistic estimate. Quality Care made their bid in a way that the price seemed lower, but did not appear to be very realistic and when broken down to per snow event, Quality Care was higher than All Seasons.

Neuzil asked for clarification of the different proposals. Hoff said each page provides an estimate for different trail sections. Nehring said the first line under the heading "Snow Removal" distinguishes which section of the trail the proposal is for. Graves said in reference to the first page, Butler Bridge to North Liberty is the full length of the trail.

Hoff asked if each of the three segments of the Trail included in the proposals from Slaughter are approximately one-third of the total length. Sullivan said almost. Graves said multiplying the cost by two to get the total cost including ice melt would not apply to the section of the Trail to North Liberty from 275th Street since they cannot treat the concrete with deicers for the first year. Harney said a Board meeting will be scheduled to make a decision and hopefully the Conservation Board can be present.

BOND UTILIZATION, CABINS FOR KENT PARK, KENT PARK LAKE IMPAIRMENT STATUS, SUTLIFF BRIDGE AREA PLANS AND COMMUNICATION

Bond Utilization

Graves said the goals and criteria for the bond issue that was first adopted in June 2011 include: to protect drinking water sources and accomplishments that have been done in that regard. The Clear Creek area does protect drinking water sources, and that property was acquired with bond funding. The goals are also to protect watersheds of the Iowa and Cedar Rivers and the Clear Creek area, and the Ciha Fen does that as well. The Ciha Fen property is within the Cedar River Watershed.

Graves said another goal is to protect forests. Both the Clear Creek area and the Ciha Fen both have timber on them. The bond issue also includes protecting and enhancing wildlife, habitat, and protecting existing green space, and conserving land of adjacent areas where buffering is beneficial. Buffering existing areas has been in the Iowa Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for many years.

Graves said providing hubs and linkages for hiking, walking, and biking trails is the purpose of the Clear Creek Trail.

The Bond funds have been utilized as follows: to date the Board has budgeted \$1 million for the Clear Creek Trail. That included land acquisition and 60% of the estimated costs of trail construction. The other 40% of the estimated cost of trail

construction is leveraged by the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Grant for approximately \$512,000, 90% of which the County has already received.

Rettig asked if \$1 million of the bond is being applied toward the first section of the Clear Creek Trail. Graves said the \$1 million essentially reimburses the acquisition for part of the Barnes property and for the construction of Clear Creek Trail. Rettig said it cost about \$500,000 to buy the land. Graves said he thinks it was around \$330,000 for the land and around \$700,000 for the Clear Creek Trail. The trail project is \$1.2 million. Rettig asked if \$500,000 is a grant. Graves said yes, they leveraged that just as they said they would do all along. Rettig said the County only got 50% leverage. Graves said the County received 40% leverage. Rettig said it is \$1.5 million. Sullivan said out of \$1.2 million the County received \$500,000. Graves said that is 40%. Rettig said Graves said he is spending \$1 million on the land and the trail. Graves said the trail is what was leveraged and not the land acquisition. He said in just a minute, he will be speaking about leverage on another property that will offset some of that.

Graves said the Ciha Fen grant application was sent to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and the Conservation Board requested a budget amendment for basically \$286,908.75. Conservation has requested 60% of that from the IDNR REAP fund. This is one of two nutrient-poor fens, which remain in Iowa and the state has a commitment to that. He thinks this project will rate well on a grant. However, they have yet to see if it will rate well enough to be funded.

Graves said there are some interest costs over and above the purchase price of \$286,908.75, that will be paid out of the REAP account of the Conservation Board. This property could not have been acquired without the intervention of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF). This is the most nettlesome public land acquisition deal Graves has ever been involved with.

Rettig asked how much the REAP grant is for. Graves said they are applying for 60% of the purchase price. If the grant is not funded, then the whole purchase would come out of the Conservation Bond. Rettig said she will have to abstain from voting on this when it comes before the IDNR Natural Resource Commission. Graves said he understands that. He said if this is grant-funded, then the actual cost to the Conservation Bond will be \$114,763.50. The County will have \$172,145 in grant funding to leverage again and that makes the money work for the County.

Sullivan said that is very important because the Board promised people that that would happen. Graves said he was the one making the promises so he feels strongly about that. As soon as this property is acquired it will be a great cause celeb. This is a unique property with unique features. Graves said that the onus will be on the Conservation Board to ensure that well-meaning visitors will not inadvertently "love it to death."

Graves said one of the central features is the fen property which has a very rare floating mat of vegetation. There are few of these mats in the world. One of the things

the Conservation Board will be budgeting for in the coming year in the management plan development is the signage to educate the public that it is a unique place worthy of protection.

Rettig said the County is not receiving the multiplying effect they expected. Rettig said they told the public it was possible to get a 2.5 times multiplying effect. Graves said he never said they would receive a multiplying effect of 2.5 per time. However, that potential is there in the future. Rettig said if the County has spent around \$1.3 million and has a \$500,000 grant, and that is the only multiplying effect, then they are not doing that well. Either the County is not applying for enough grants or not seeking enough private contributions.

Graves said the greater issue is the ability to acquire property. He said the two bond funded acquisitions the County has done are of the highest quality. The Ciha Fen has 254 documented plant species and more documented on places each year. It is one of the rarest existing fens. Some guidelines for appraising fen property are the highest and best use, comparable sales, and income capitalization approach. The four comparable sales on this property were within one mile of this parcel, all of which were rural residence sites. Perhaps the quantity of bond-funded acquisitions is not as large as they would like; the quality is superlative.

Neuzil said when he was hearing promises for grant leverage, it was in 2007 to 2008 and the economy had not quite tanked yet. The attitude toward government is people want everything but do not want to pay taxes. Rettig said part of the leveraging is Conservation easements, donations, or renovation easements. Graves agreed. Rettig said if the County receives a recreation easement from the Solon to Ely Trail, that counts. Graves said exactly, he does not think the funds could have been spent any better. However, the County cannot buy or negotiate easements with an unwilling landowner. The Conservation Bond ballot language specifically prohibited condemnation.

Graves said in addition to the purchases listed, there have been dialogues with three landowners, the properties were appraised, and the landowners did not want to sell the properties at the appraised values. Following the passage of the Conservation Bond, in November 2008, Conservation was told to budget \$1 million and theoretically they had \$1 million of properties to acquire. However, the owner of the larger property decided not to sell, which is their prerogative. A similar thing has happened on three other occasions as recently as this past spring. There is also land that has sold for \$11,000 in Iowa and land sold for \$10,200 just across the Linn County line. These events skew the market.

Graves said at that time they successfully negotiated a right of first refusal on 22 acres adjacent to Kent Park on the northeast corner. At some point that will be acquired to add to Kent Park and will protect the Easterly Valley of Kent Park, buffer Kent Park, protect the watershed of Clear Creek and subsequently the Iowa River.

Graves said other accomplishments include the Williams Prairie State Preserve

(Williams Prairie). The Conservation Board has negotiated an agreement, with The Nature Conservancy of Iowa, whereby the 20-acre Williams Prairie State Preserve will be transferred to Johnson County. One of the stipulations of The Nature Conservancy was that the value of the Williams Prairie be used, by the Conservation Board, as leverage for future grants. Thanks to the funding from the Board of Supervisors, the Conservation staff has provided intense care and management for the Williams Prairie and because of that, the Prairie is in better shape than it has ever been.

Graves said they are three years into the bond issue, and all expenditures have been leveraged to the very best of their ability. Harney said he encourages Conservation to continue doing that.

Hoff said the wording indicates that they may spend up to a certain amount of dollars but does not state they have to spend it. Graves said the future of commercial property tax is going to drive a number of things. Early in this dialogue, in the presentations that Graves first made to the Board on the \$20 million, 25% of that would be used for maintenance. They learned that the Iowa Code expressly prohibits that. After discussion, the Board agreed to provide funding for maintenance as the properties were acquired. Now the game is changing, and may continue to change dramatically in the coming years. Additional land is not being created. At some point in time land prices may decline. The type of land Conservation is interested in is not prime agricultural land, but prime agricultural land has a ripple effect on everything.

Sullivan said the amount of land owned by elderly widows is phenomenal. Hoff said 60%. Sullivan said plenty of land will be changing hands in the not too distant future and the County will have the same chance to acquire it as anyone else. Graves said the spring 2011 *Leopold Letter* states that 55% of Iowa's farmland is owned by people over the age of 65 and 28% of the land is owned by those over the age of 75. Graves said there are many opportunities for individuals to write off donations on their taxes and the tax credits are better than the donations. Rettig said the tax credits are better than selling the land in some cases. Graves agreed, depending on the donor's income bracket.

Hoff said not until recently have investors purchased farmland as a pure investment. Graves said the *Leopold Letter* states that more than half of the farmland in Iowa is rented and the areas of the state containing the most fertile agriculture land have tenancy rates ranging from 61% to 70%. Those figures represent absentee landowners renting to local farmers. Hoff said much of the absentee landowners were families renting the land, but now, people are buying land in the same way they would buy 5,000 shares of stock. Sullivan said his family sold 600 acres to a group of doctors.

Graves said children of spouses of farmers are less likely to continue operating a farm. Hoff said because of the bond issue, Johnson County is in a very unique situation in Iowa. When the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation receives a proposal to buy a piece of property like the fen property, the first question that is asked is who will fund the repurchase agreement. Johnson County has the authority to bond for an additional \$19 million, which is pretty impressive. Rettig said this puts the County in a unique position

to apply for every possible grant because the County has the matching funds available. Johnson County should be applying for every possible grant. Graves agreed and added that the grant application has to be for something that can be purchased or that one can negotiate an easement for.

Cabins for Kent Park

Graves said design services for camping cabins at Kent Park was budgeted in FY12 and he anticipates budgeting for construction in the FY13. Ideally, it would be nice to work with a design-build firm. There are probably some tremendous opportunities to leverage some of this with unique design. Sullivan said park cabins are proven cash generators. Graves agreed. Sullivan said if the County is going to add land and the Board cannot provide Conservation with extra money to staff it, then Conservation will have to generate it through the cabins.

Hoff said he thinks the cabins are great. Hoff asked if it is right to charge a cabin user \$60 per night instead of \$30 in order for the County to earn extra revenue to support other Conservation endeavors as opposed to requiring every property owner to pay a fixed dollar amount. The other philosophy is to collect a minimum amount from everyone in Johnson County and then charge a users' fee. That is the philosophical question and he does not know the answer. Sullivan said he thinks they should do both. Rettig agreed, user fees are a very important part of this.

Graves said cabins are currently being rented across Iowa for \$100 per night without complaint. Harney asked if Graves wants to build log cabins. Graves said no, but the public does not want to use extremely primitive facilities. Rettig said cabins used to be more costly to build but now there is more affordable design and new prefabricated structures. Graves said that is a reasonable approach to design.

Graves said the State failed to take advantage of an opportunity 20 years ago to generate revenue with a park user fee. Every successful park program across the United States has a park user fee. The Iowa Conservation Commission passed a park user fee that had many exemptions. The Iowa State Park user fee was ultimately scrapped. The result was the development and adoption of the Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP) intended to pick up the slack at \$30 million per year. However, it has never been fully funded. Realistically, user fees are a part of any equation.

Rettig said she wants the record to reflect that she does not support a park user fees. She thinks people should be able to enjoy nature without paying for it. However, amenities such as camping, cabins, or beverages should be paid for. Sullivan agreed, although he could understand a beach fee if a lifeguard were on duty.

Rettig said Conservation does not have a budget for the cabins yet because they are still in the design phase. She asked if this is something the County can bond for. Graves said yes, parks are included in the bond. Rettig asked if the Conservation Bond money can be used. Graves said Conservation reserve funds are set aside for that purpose.

There are many opportunities depending on the innovative design.

Rettig asked if Conservation Bond money can be used for cabins. Graves said yes. Rettig said Hoff just said no. Hoff said he was thinking of the \$1 million minimum bond. Graves said he thinks everyone present voted for the following Bond Referendum which he read accordingly: "Shall the County of Johnson, State of Iowa, be authorized to acquire and develop lands with public access provided, to be managed by the Johnson County Conservation Board in order to protect the water quality in rivers, lakes, and streams, protect forests, to improve air quality, protect natural areas of wildlife habitat from development, and provide for parks and trails at a cost not exceeding \$20 million and issues a General Obligation Bond in an amount not exceeding \$20 million for that purpose to be repaid in not more than 20 years."

Hoff said he disagrees that cabins are included because parks are made up of land and habitats and not facilities. Rettig and Harney said the lawyers can answer that. Sullivan asked if Nehring could consult with Dorsey & Whitney LLP Partner Robert E. Josten and report back to the committee. Graves said sure.

F.W. Kent Park Lake Impairment Status

Graves said currently, Conservation is awaiting full funding of the Lake Restoration Program with IDNR in 2013. He recently consulted with IDNR Lake Restoration Program Coordinator Mike McGhee regarding the Kent Park Lake project. He said McGhee stated that IDNR Natural Resource Biologist Jason Palmer is doing lake monitoring on the outlet of Kent Park Lake, which is funded through Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS). He said Palmer's data will be beneficial in IDNR's analysis. However, the future impetus to move the Kent Park Lake forward centers around funding availability. The Lake Restoration Program was reduced by over 30% for FY12. If this trend continues, projects such as Kent Park Lake will continue to be put on hold. The best they can now hope for is a return of full funding beginning July 1, 2012, which will allow them to bring some current on-hold projects and additional projects into active restoration status. Graves said he awaits July 1st with bated breath.

Rettig said the Iowa Senate Democrats did not fully fund lake restoration. The Iowa House of Representatives and the Iowa Governor were going to fully fund it. She was asked to talk to them about how the Iowa Senate Democrats were less pro-lakes than the Republicans. She holds no hope until there is another election. Graves said he is glad Rettig said that because it takes the pressure off of him. He knows until November 2012 there is not a breath of hope. Rettig said there needs to be another election for the voters to decide whether they like the new budgeting with \$300 million of additional money in the bank. Graves said in the meantime, the lake impairment languishes.

Voci asked Graves how much money the Conservation Board asked for from the IDNR. Graves said they never got far enough to ask for any money. The baseline work being done with IDALS funding will provide some of that. The County will be looking at a lot of funding challenges in the coming years.

Graves said people can come to the lake, fish, and eat the fish and swim without any fear. There is a photograph of a 20-pound catfish caught at Kent Park Lake last week. In addition, someone caught a 23-inch bass last week too. The water is safe and the beach water is tested after every rain event. The coliform bacteria count is the lowest measurable quantity and will not hurt humans, but it is not fit for drinking.

Sutliff Bridge Area Plans

Graves said a group of graduate students from the University of Iowa School of Urban and Regional Planning worked on the development of the Sutliff Bridge Vision for the Future document. Rettig and Graves said the students did a great job. Graves said he and Sutliff Bridge Authority (SBA) Representative Sarah Brannaman agreed they would begin developing some interpretive plans. As he has said all along, the thing that appeals most to people is the historical interpretation of Sutliff Bridge and the natural surroundings. It is his understanding that the SBA will fund these plans through their account.

Rettig said there are historic grants available in Iowa. She thinks the County can leverage SBA money for matching funds with some grants out there to try to preserve every SBA dollar for maintenance. She is hopeful that SBA will be able to pay for the accoutrements for Sutliff Bridge, but she thinks there are many \$1,500 or \$2,000 grants the County could secure, especially with the help of a grant specialist soon to be employed by the Board of Supervisors.

Graves said the Sutliff Bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places which will help the rank for funding purposes. Presumably by August 2012, the Sutliff Bridge restoration will be nearing completion.

Communication

Graves said he thinks this has been a wonderful dialogue and welcomes the opportunity to meet with the Board any time. He apologized for being unable to meet with the Board to talk about the structural issue on the trail and he never heard back about the Key Issues Meeting.

Rettig said the Linn County and Story County Boards' of Supervisors each have a Board member appointed to their Board of Conservation. Across the board, it appears that some larger counties have a liaison because it gives the Board a point of contact without having to hold an open meeting. She is curious whether the Conservation Board thinks a liaison process would be beneficial.

Graves said the Board appoints the members of the Conservation Board and Board of Health. Rettig said yes, but then they do not receive updates from them. Graves said he hopes the Board hears from Graves frequently, perhaps they do not hear from him enough. Sullivan said the Board has a tendency to hold a meeting with Graves once per

year in what is typically a long meeting. He suggested that Graves meet with the Board three times annually for 15 minutes instead.

Graves said he has talked with Executive Assistant Andy Johnson about scheduling that. He said the Conservation Site Visit Meeting with the Board is coming up. He asked if the Board thinks the current meeting, the site visit, and the presentation of the annual report in December, are a reasonable number of encounters. Johnson said that is three meetings. Rettig said it seems like the only time the Board hears from the Conservation Board is when they want money and she does not think that is a great relationship. If the Conservation Board wants greater buy-in there needs to be more communication.

Graves said he presumed that of all of the County's organizations, the Board probably receives as many favorable comments about Conservation as any. Sullivan said the Board and the Conservation Board would clearly benefit from more frequent conversation with each other. Graves suggested he and Johnson work on a schedule. Sullivan said more frequent and less lengthy conversations will be better.

Graves said the Conservation site visit with the Board is scheduled for October 5th. He typically gives a presentation and annual report in December. He asked if there is anything else the Board would like to schedule in the meantime. Graves said he can attend every meeting if the Board wants, but he does not think that would be a productive use of anyone's time. Rettig said she encourages more informal conversation about what is going on.

Graves said he will make an effort to visit with Board members more frequently. He assiduously attends Department Heads meetings and gives lengthy reports, but only because he has something to say. Sullivan said if the Conservation Board would like a Board member to attend a Conservation Board meeting the Board would try to accommodate that request.

Voci asked if other boards have liaisons. Rettig said yes, she serves on the Livable Communities for Successful Aging Policy Board and is the pseudo liaison to the Trails Advisory Committee although they attempt to rotate the liaison appointment. Sometimes Supervisors serve on boards and are sometime non-voting liaisons to them. She is also the Chatham Oaks, Inc. liaison and attends meetings when she can, but cannot attend every month.

Neuzil requested that Conservation include Board members in the distribution of any press releases issued to the news media. He said there was an instance when he learned more about a Conservation land purchase from a newspaper article than he had from Conservation staff. Graves said he will take the responsibility for sending that press release, which was born out of a public meeting. Sullivan said he is to blame as well, because he has known Landowner Howard Ciha his whole life and Graves told Sullivan about the press release and Graves probably had the understanding that Sullivan was going to share that with the rest of the Board.

Adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Attest: Tom Slockett, Auditor
By Nancy Tomkovicz, Recording Secretary