



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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MEMORANDUM

Date: June 11, 2024

To: Lower Platte South Natural Resources District Board of Directors

From: Will Inselman, Resources Coordinator *WI*

Subject: Minutes for Recreation, Forestry & Wildlife Subcommittee Meeting

On Monday, June 10th, 2024, at 5:31 p.m., the Recreation, Forestry and Wildlife subcommittee met in the Large Conference Room. Subcommittee members present: Anthony Schutz-Acting Chair, Mark Spangler, Don Jacobson, John Yoakum, and Ray Stevens. Other attendees were Jason Buss (Nebraska Trails Foundation), Mike Sousek, David Potter, Aaron Clare, Eric Zach, and Will Inselman.

The first item on the agenda was the consideration of a license agreement for an agricultural crossing on oak creek trail. A property that is intersected by the Oak Creek Trail was recently sold and the new owner is requesting that the NRD renew the license agreement in his name. After conversation with the landowner, we found out that another property he purchased a few years ago also had a license agreement for crossing that was never changed into its name. The proposed license agreement covers the crossings identified on both parcels of land owned by this landowner. This license agreement is for pre-existing crossings that were in place when the NRD took ownership of the trail. The NRD agreed to honor these existing crossings as the railroad had done when it was in operation. Staff answered questions about the need to maintain all original crossings and about the need to review other land transfers to make sure license agreements are assigned to current landowners. The license agreement was reviewed by legal counsel prior to subcommittee.

It was moved by Jacobson, seconded by Stevens and unanimously approved to recommend the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to sign a license agreement for private crossing for agricultural purposes on the Oak Creek Trail with Jerry Hofpar.

Motion Passed: 5-0

The second item on the agenda was the consideration of the submission of an Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) grant and cooperative agreement with Nebraska Trails Foundation for a “rail-with-trail” feasibility study from Lincoln to Valparaiso. The Nebraska Trails Foundation has submitted a request to LPSNRD to assist the Foundation in applying for a grant to receive funds to conduct a feasibility study on a potential “rail with trail” route from Lincoln to Valparaiso. The Union Pacific Railroad has agreed to carry out the feasibility study to determine whether a trail adjacent to the existing rail line (on railroad property) would be possible. The NRD would be the agent that would apply for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) grant, administered by the Federal Highway Administration, and would pass the

money through to Union Pacific. The Nebraska Trails Foundation would be responsible for the required cash match and reporting requirements of the grant. The grant submission deadline is June 17th which is prior to our June Board meeting. The Nebraska Trails Foundation and NRD staff are requesting subcommittee support to submit the grant prior to the Board meeting with the caveat that if the Board chooses not to approve the grant submission, the NRD would pull the grant application from consideration. Jason Buss from the Nebraska Trails Foundation was present to discuss the project and appreciation of the NRD to partner on this grant. The grant would be requesting a total of \$100,000, with the Nebraska Trails Foundation responsible for the full match requirement of \$20,000. The NRD would act as the pass through for the grant funds.

It was moved by Yoakum, to recommend the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors approve the agreement with the Nebraska Trails Foundation to submit an Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program grant for the feasibility of a rail with trail from Lincoln to Valparaiso.

***Director Schutz made a friendly amendment to the motion to strike “approve” and insert “ratify the signing of”.**

So it was then moved by Yoakum, seconded by Stevens and unanimously approved to recommend the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors ratify the signing of the agreement with the Nebraska Trails Foundation to submit an Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program grant for the feasibility of a rail with trail from Lincoln to Valparaiso.

Motion Passed: 5-0

Third on the agenda was the consideration of a funding assistance request from the Village of Cedar Creek for a recreational trail project. The village of Cedar Creek was recently awarded a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant for \$250,000 to develop a recreational trail within their community. The NRD had provided them with a letter of support prior to the grant being submitted, offering to consider financial support if the grant was approved. The letter from the Village (attached) requests that the NRD provide funding support of \$69,375.00, half of the remaining costs to complete the total project (\$388,750.00). In the past, the NRD has typically provided 50% of the local match required for match of RTP grants. In this case, would be \$25,000. On multiple occasions this information was provided to the Village and they were notified their request was outside of the traditional scope of the NRD providing funding assistance for RTP projects. Staff fielding questions on the size and scope of the project and provided background information on what the NRD has done historically with these requests.

It was moved by Stevens, seconded by Yoakum and unanimously approved to recommend the Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors agree to provide cost-share for 50% of the local match requirement for the Village of Cedar Creek’s Recreational Trails Program grant, not to exceed \$25,000.

Motion Passed: 5-0

Last on the agenda were staff updates. Reports/updates: New forester introduction and the closing of the conservation easement with Audubon at Spring Creek Prairie.

Meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

PC: RF&W subcommittee file