

MINUTES OF THE DEKALB COUNTY CEDAR CREEK DRAINAGE BOARD MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

Vice Chairman Jim Deetz called the Cedar Creek Drainage Board meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., Thursday September 19th, 2019. Present was Jim Deetz and Dennie Taylor. Chairman Bruce Laub was unable to attend.

ALSO PRESENT: Cedar Creek Drainage Board Attorney Shannon E. Kruse; Administrative Assistant Brenda Myers; Surveyor Mike Kline and staff member Nate Frye.

IN ATTENDANCE: Don Grogg; Jacqueline Rowan; Brian Roemke; Therese Brown; Rod Renkenberger; Allen Haynes; Sara Delbecq

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Dennie Taylor to approve the Cedar Creek Minutes of April 25th, 2019 as presented, seconded by Jim Deetz, motion carried.

DISCUSSION: Brian Roemke (21721 Anthrup Road, Harlan Indiana) stated that he asked for a meeting due to problems on Cedar Creek in DeKalb County. A 'grass roots' approach can and does work, State Road 101 in 2015 was scheduled to be chip and sealed, he called the trucking company and school systems and last year they resurfaced it to heavy trucks pass, that's what grass roots can do. Recently in working with the Allen County Drainage Board and Commissioners, they got it approved to increase an assessment for the Hamm Joint drain which goes up into DeKalb County, it took twenty-two months from the time he requested it, and he shared that to make everyone understand that this is not an overnight fix and it may take 3-5 years but he wanted to encourage everyone here. It is up to the Board and everyone sitting in this room to faithfully, religiously, every two weeks make phone calls or send emails, reach out to the Izaak Walton League, The Friends of Cedar Creek and engage them and build relationships. The DNR is responsible for removing limbs and any other things that could be a hazard to anyone canoeing, if this is brought to the right people and getting Friends of Cedar Creek engaged, with time you could see much success.

Don Grogg agreed stating that in DeKalb County this drain is used recreationally; he and Jackie have met with Therese Brown several times and discussed this issue with Cedar Creek and she is taking this very seriously.

Brian Roemke said he spoke with Casey Jones who is with Acres Land Trusts and he is very interested and mentioned that as a possible aide in flooding, they have an area that water could be diverted to in high water stage to help with flooding situations.

Therese Brown said that she would love to know what has transpired at some of these meetings because whenever she tries to find when a meeting is being held she cannot locate times/dates. Therese has spoken with David Van Gilder who he and his wife are very prominent with Friends of Cedar Creek in trying to figure out when we can all sit down and have a conversation, they are key to the dialogue; what is the depth of the group in proactive aspect and structure.

Nate Frye said there are several stakeholders ranging from small landowners to the Van Gilder's who can bring influence; different needs and aspects have been discussed.

Allen Haynes stated that he has presented at a 'Friends of Cedar Creek' meeting and feels there is a lot of interest coming from that group and the time is now to bring a group together to start talking about this drain.

Don Grogg suggested that instead of waiting for Cedar Creek to hold their next meeting that they should form a meeting getting all the entities that this affects to have a round-table discussion to talk about how we can move forward.

Rod Renkenberger said the MRBC would assist but being this is a legal drain they would need to take a second seat to the Drainage Boards. It was questioned if the NERC would be an avenue that could be beneficial.

Therese Brown said trust seems to be the biggest issue from actions of prior/current surveyors with things that have happened. Having an outside entity with a simple agenda that outlines what the objective is as well as the long term goal, having all of the appropriate party representation in attendance with no one trying to ward over one over another, making all an equal player at the table with their concerns.

Brian Roemke felt that the DNR would be the best choice as the facilitator due to buffering the trust but Allen thought it might be better to look at someone from the Extension office because they have facilitator's to do things such as this.

Allen Haynes will contact both DeKalb and Allen County Extension offices to try facilitating and getting a meeting put together.

Therese Brown stated that neither DeKalb County or Allen County have an issue between those two bodies they are the ones calling the meeting, as in they both are Drainage Boards and facilitating the meeting and asking for those individuals to participate by an invitation for discussion regarding the Cedar Creek scenic waterways and drainage issues; invite those individuals to come and participate because our main goal is to make this an environment for both recreation and drainage.

Drainage Board Attorney Shannon Kruse stated that the practical problem is that the Cedar Creek Drainage Board jurisdiction ends at the county line, this is a scenic river in Allen County so legally speaking, there are steps that would need to be taken in order for the DeKalb County Drainage Board to be a lead in this.

Allen Haynes stated that he would talk to Alicia working with both Allen County and DeKalb County Extensions; a commissioner from each county; a member of the Drainage Board and then someone from the DNR to do a smaller group/steering committee for now and then have some email correspondence around that.

Dennie Taylor wanted to make sure that there were people involved who know the situation of the drain.

Brian Roemke stated that Sara Delbecq who is the President of the DeKalb County Farm Bureau and Supervisor on the DeKalb Soil and Water Conservation District is present and she has an immense amount of resources, more State wide than locally however locally can still add a lot to assist in agriculture. Brian felt that she or someone in the group should be on this Board with the amount of clout that they have.

Sara Delbecq stated that she is the President of the DeKalb County Farm Bureau and she is also a supervisor on the DeKalb Soil and Water Conservation District so it gets at both of the sides that Allen is talking about. Sara said personally she would put herself in the generic category because she doesn't know where the logjams are and she is not familiar with the creek and all the challenges but with the grassroots of starting this, she would be happy to be at the table speaking for both parties that she is associated with.

Jim Deetz stated that Cedar Creek is the main source for drainage; this area is only inhabitable because of drainage. Ag has got to buy into this, we are going to have to change the way we farm and do things; these Boards have got to get out into the Ag community, getting them interested and holding a big seat here and having input. Government also has to be involved.

Allen Haynes stated that he would make contact with those desired to be on a steering committee, informing all here of where they are at on scheduling a meeting for planning.

Allen Haynes stated that in regards to the Feasibility Study that was done, he has been talking with Mike Kline and he presented the study information to the Cedar Creek Board members stating that what they would like is for the Board to read through these and then hold a meeting so they can look at next steps; if applying for Grants, he needs that submitted before January 15th, 2020. The City of Auburn is moving ahead with their park south of State Road 8, that was not an area that was highlighted or looked at so Mike is trying to decide if we are going to do work on the creek in that location per this study, the best time to do it is when that park is being built, not after.

Mike Kline stated that the logjam that had been down towards the county line (where a contract was pulled) as he was contemplating rebidding so in checking the area, there are no longer logjams as Cedar Creek cleaned itself with all the rains. Mike asked the Cedar Creek Board approval to let all the permitting agencies know that those permits are no longer needed and ask that they void the permits.

A motion was made by Dennie Taylor to allow Mike Kline to make contact with all agencies involved in canceling/voiding the permits for the logjam, seconded by Jim Deetz, motion carried.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned.

James Deetz, Vice Chairman

Brenda F. Myers, Administrative Assistant