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MINUTES
January 22, 2020

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission met in the third floor conference room at Nebraska Game and Parks Headquarters in Lincoln, NE for the transaction of business, advance public notice having been given through release to news media and official public notice published in the Lincoln Journal Star on January 6, 2020.

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 A.M. Chairman Allen advised this meeting was being held in conformance with the State Open Meeting Act and the act was available for review on the table at the back of the room. The Commissioners introduced themselves. Members present were: Rick Brandt, Lincoln; Dan Kreitman, Wahoo; John Hoggatt, Kearney, Bob Allen, Eustis; Jim Ernst, Columbus; Pat Berggren, Broken Bow; Scott Cassels, Omaha; Dick Bell, Omaha and Doug Zingula, Sidney.

Minutes of the business meeting held October 18, 2019 were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Ernst and seconded by Mr. Brant to approve the October meeting minutes. Voting aye: Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Minutes of the special strategic planning meeting held on December 14, 2019 were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Hoggatt to approve the September meeting minutes. Voting aye: Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Financial vouchers for October, November and December were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Ernst and seconded by Mr. Cassels to approve the financial vouchers. Voting aye: Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Director Jim Douglas thanked the NOEC staff for hosting the meeting the day before and park staff for their help with the evening meal.

The Director introduced two new division administrators, Administration Division Administrator Angie Janda-Craig and Fish and Wildlife Education Division Administrator Lindsay Rogers.

Director Douglas shared the Outstanding Institution Award received by the agency from the Nebraska Fire Council.

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Other items the Director reported on included a mountain lion season update, big game meeting briefing, progress with BOR for the masterplan for the Southwestern reservoirs, Berggren Plan 2.0 and a national legislation update.

End Director's Report

Chairman Allen read the staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the March Commission meeting to consider amendments to Commission Order C06, Coots, Ducks, Geese, Crow

Motion by Mr. Cassels and seconded by Mr. Ernst to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Allen read the staff recommendation to call for a public hearing at the March Commission meeting to consider amendments to Parks Regulations Chapter 5, Section 001.

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Berggren to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Wildlife Division Administrator, Alicia Hardin reviewed the staff recommendation for Commission approval of a permanent easement request from the Southern Public Power District for installation of an overhead power line at Blue Hole Wildlife Management Area in Buffalo County. The new power line will replace an existing smaller one. The easement includes conservation conditions.

Motion by Mr. Zingula and seconded by Mr. Kreitman to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, and Allen; voting nay: Brandt. Motion carried.

Fish and Wildlife Education Division Administrator Lindsay Rogers reviewed the staff recommendation for Commission approval of the Focus on Education Strategic Plan

Motion by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Brandt to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Allen opened the public hearing at 8:39 AM consider amendments to Chapter 4, Wildlife Regulations, Section 004, Threatened and Endangered Species delisting and listings. Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed staff recommendations regarding the addition of the "Sicklefin Chub" to the endangered list, the addition of the "McCown's Longspur" and the "Timber Rattlesnake" to the threatened list, deletion of the "River Otter" from the threatened list and provisions for lawful take of timber rattlesnakes. There was no public comment and the hearing was closed at 8:52 AM

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Ernst to adopt staff recommendations. Voting aye: Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt; voting nay: Kreitman, Berggren, and Allen. Motion carried.

Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval of the Fisheries Tactical Plan for Urban Fishing and Fish Production Needs.

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Motion by Mr. Zingula and seconded by Mr. Kreitman to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Parks Division Administrator Jim Swenson reviewed a changed staff recommendation for Commission approval regarding the Lake McConaughy Visitors Management Plan. In consideration of public feedback, staff now recommends that we take a pause with the proposed action presented, and allow time for staff to work with the local advisory group to assess their concerns, investigate and negotiate alternative solutions, and develop partnerships that assist in resolving the problem issues at the lakes. The status or results of that effort will be presented at the March 2020 Commission meeting.

Motion by Mr. Kreitman and seconded by Mr. Berggren to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Planning and Programming Division Administration Michelle Stryker shared staff recommendation for Commission approval of local community grant awards for the fiscal year 2019 apportionment of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside Assistance Program.

Motion by Mr. Ernst and seconded by Mr. Hoggatt to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Zingula, Berggren, Cassels Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Planning and Programming Division Administration Michelle Stryker shared staff recommendation for Commission approval of local outdoor trail projects for federal funding from the fiscal year 2020 Recreational Trails Program apportionment.

Motion by Mr. Hoggatt and seconded by Mr. Berggren to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Fish and Wildlife Program Manager Eric Zach was present to give an update on the Farm Bill and CRP sign-up.

Planning and Programming Assistant Division Administrator Melissa Marinovich gave an environmental report on various Memorandums of Understandings and Programmatic Agreements the agency has with other entities.

Communications Division Administrator Christy Firestone shared the Venture Parks Progress Video.

Fish and Wildlife Education Division Administrator Lindsay Rogers gave the Critter Moment presentation on Trout in the Classroom and showed a tank of newly hatched trout.

The Chair explained that the committee meeting materials were in their packets, so there would not be Committee Reports.

The next item on the agenda was Commission Officer Elections.

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Motion by Mr. Zingula and second by Mr. Bell to approve the following slate of officers for 2020: Dan Kreitman Chair, Pat Berggren Vice-Chair, and Rick Brandt Second Vice-Chair. Voting aye: Ernst, Hoggatt, Bell, Zingula, Cassels, and Allen, Voting nay: None, Abstaining: Kreitman, Brandt, and Berggren, motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Brandt to go into Executive Session at 11:01 AM for the discussion of legal matters. Voting aye: Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Regular session was resumed at 11:31 AM.

Motion by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Hoggatt to leave executive session. Voting aye: Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Brandt to adjourn the meeting at 11:33 AM. Voting aye: Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

I hereby certify the foregoing is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at its meeting held January 22, 2020.


James N. Douglas, Director