

SPOKANE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
4422 E 8th Ave, Spokane Valley, WA 99212
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Attendees

Supervisors: Chair Jerry Scheele, Tom Miller, Wendy Knopp, Jaki Shrauger

Absent: Randy James

Associate Supervisors:

SCD Staff: Vicki Carter, Cori Turntine, Barry Tee, Hilary Sepulveda, Jeannie Jesseph, Garth Davis, Rich Sgarra, Ben Peterson, Walt Edelen

Guests: Brock Peterson, SCD Intern

Opening of Meeting

The meeting was a hybrid of on-site and remote attendees using the Microsoft Teams app to connect the participants.

Chair Scheele called the meeting to order at 4:03 and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes/Treasurer's Report

Acceptance of Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda was previously distributed. The Board accepted the Consent Agenda items consisting of:

- October 12, 2021 Board Agenda
- September 14, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- September 2021 Treasurer's Report
- October 2021 Payables Report

Motion Shrauger/Miller to accept the Consent Agenda including the minutes from the October 4 Special Meeting, including the October Payables Report in the amount of \$605,055.73. Motion carried.

Chair Scheele added approval for the October 4 Special Meeting minutes.

Shrauger verified the financial accounts balanced with the statements.

New Business/Linkage to Community

Introductions

Brock Peterson, a new SCD intern, joined the meeting. He is a senior at Whitworth University with an interest in conservation.

Forestry Report

Davis gave an in-depth presentation of the latest Forestry Department activities. The Forestry Department is made up of three employees, Davis, Peterson and Rich Sgarra.

Sgarra works as a seasonal employee of the Forestry Department and is primarily involved with maintaining and developing the property. He has recently become a Certified Arborist.

Peterson is planning for the upcoming 2022 Tree Sale. There was a lot of surplus trees from the 2020 sale that have been planted in the onsite nursery. The huckleberries sold out in record time last year so he will order many more for the next sale.

Davis also mentioned we have an onsite milling project that puts urban wood that would normally be wasted to good use.

The Farm and Food Symposium will feature a tree education track that will offer CEU's to Certified Arborists.

Peterson provides Firewise home site evaluations and is working with Quail Ridge to become a Firewise community.

Peterson oversees the Home Ignition Zone project that provides cost share contracts to improve at-risk fire zones within five feet from the home. He also does home site assessments through the Hazard Mitigation grant.

Davis provides onsite technical assistance to owners of forest and urban properties.

Davis does work for the DNR in Eastern Washington and the Idaho Department of Lands to aid people in each state. He has a wide variety of duties including tree management plans, education, Tree City USA administration and assisting with the Town of Malden fire restoration.

SCD has begun a new tree program called the Spokane County Canopy Project. This project targets areas that have little urban forest and are low income. Davis will take his team to a park in Airway Heights to install 50 trees for the first project.

Davis hopes to grow the Tree Sale into an event where partners and local vendors set up booths. He would like to see a post-fire program to help restore damaged areas.

Governance Culture

WSCC Update

Mike Baden from the WSCC was not able to attend the board meeting.

On behalf of the WSCC, SCD hosted the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) conference on October 4. Around 70 participants from all around the nation were taken on a tour of our projects around the county before coming back to see our new office. Carter enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with Mike Brown, NASCA Executive Director, about how she had been inspired by his presentation five years ago at a WACD conference. In the context of conservation districts celebrating their 75th anniversary, he had asked whether they would see their 100th anniversary. This thought has impacted how Carter leads and plans for the future of SCD ever since. Mike Baden, Shana Joy (WSCC) and Hilary Sepulveda (SCD) did an outstanding job putting the tour together.

Financial Update

Turntine reviewed the budget position with no substantial changes from the previous month. The budget position is still showing a deficit; however, voucher payments and the November Rates and Charges deposit will turn that around.

The first draft of the 2022 budget was presented. Turntine began with the 8th property fund. She updated capital expenses. Interest plus principal payments for the new office will begin in February 2022. Previously interest only payments have been being made. The payroll and benefits budget have been increased by six percent according to the latest COLA information. She included income from the existing and upcoming Intrinium lease and income from the lease of part of the Havana building. A comparison was shown between the current budget and the 2022 proposed budget, explaining why changes were made. Many of the changes reflect tracking expenses from the 8th property. Previously they were kept separate from operational expenses at the Havana building, but since we are in the new office now, they will be tracked together. A revised draft of the 2022 budget will be presented each month through December when it will be submitted for approval.

Resolutions

Each year resolutions from CDs are brought forward at the NE Area meeting. Two resolutions will be discussed at the upcoming meeting. Thurston County CD is bringing forward a resolution to establish a funding committee through the WACD. They believe WACD needs to establish and support a sustainable funding committee to review and develop identified and new opportunities for consistent and stable funding for CDs statewide. The other resolution is from the Lincoln County CD regarding the establishment of area rental rates. The current federal Farm Service Agency (FSA) rates are out of date for rental rates for equipment being used today. It is costly and time consuming to get three quotes (if possible) to determine the rate to use on the cost share contract. They are proposing that rates be established according to local WACD areas.

Carter recommends that SCD Supervisors support both resolutions at the meeting.

The Annual WACD Conference is being held November 2nd to November 20th. After receiving feedback from last year's conference that sitting in front of a computer for long hours was difficult and uncomfortable, the schedule was modified for this year. The virtual conference will be presented in eight sessions with each session lasting up to two and a half hours. SCD Vets on the Farm (VOTF) program will be featured as a success story.

The WACD Annual Business Meeting will be held on November 30th in Tacoma.

Director's Report

Ferry County CD is hosting the NE Area meeting this year. The meeting will be held virtually on October 20. Carter's report will highlight SCD board and staff. Supervisors are invited to attend the meeting.

The organization, Four Roots, is made up of four women that will be packing, distributing, and marketing food boxes with locally grown produce. Two of the women are associated with VOTF and the other two are associated with the Inland NW Farmers Market Association. Some of the food will be grown at VOTF. They are looking for a place where they have access to a cooler and have space to assemble the boxes. SCD will allow them to access a portion of the Havana building through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Two of the women are Veterans and employed with VOTF. Four Roots will reimburse for usage of the packing and cooler space. Carter will continue to work with the County if they decide to buy SCD out of the lease sooner than October 2022.

SCD has a longstanding partnership with the Master Gardeners Foundation. They have received a grant for \$45,000.00 to put up a greenhouse on our property. The greenhouse will be part of the SCD demonstration area. Because of the size of the building, it will need to be permitted as a permanent structure. The location has yet to be determined. A land lease agreement will be set up with the Foundation for a nominal cost.

The City of Spokane Valley wants an easement to the storm retention pond located in the northeast corner of the property. Carter has met with the COSV attorney to discuss the purchase an easement to the corner of the property. This area is hard piped for storm runoff from two neighborhood developments. Carter will give an update on this next month.

SCD held a Special Meeting on October fourth regarding the Intrinium lease. Carter would like a motion to move forward with signing the lease as it was discussed at the October fourth meeting.

Motion Shrauger/Miller to give Director Carter authority and approval to move forward with the Intrinium lease building and their lease terms as presented. Motion carried.

Staff Reports

Sepulveda reminded everyone that the Farm and Food Symposium will begin in less than a month. Keynote speaker, Ray Archuleta, has given permission to record his presentations which means symposium attendees will now be able to have virtual access. He is the next guest on the Rocks to Roots podcast and will be promoting the conference.

The Conservation Celebration and SCD 80th Birthday Party on September 25 was a hit! Staff Education Coordinator, Stacey Selcho, did a fantastic job organizing kid's activities and projects. VOTF held a seed saving class and set up a farm stand to sell their produce. People were taken on tours around the property. A woodworking display was set up. There was even a dance troop present to add to the festivities. Community members expressed their gratitude at having a place like the SCD on this property where they are welcome to come and enjoy the natural surroundings. Some said they follow our activities online and look forward to seeing how the property will continue to be developed.

Closing of the Meeting

Correspondence & Announcements

October 20 -- NE Area Meeting

November 9 – November SCD Board Meeting

November 2 through 20 – WACD Annual Conference

November 5 & 6 -- Farm and Food Conference

November 30 – WACD Annual Business Meeting

Reading of the Motions

Jesseph read the motions.

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Motion Shrauger/Miller to give Director Carter authority and approval to move forward with the Intrinium lease building and their lease terms as presented. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jeannie Jesseph

Gerald A Scheele, Chair

Jaki Shrauger, Member