



**ST. JOSEPH COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD MINUTES
FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2011**

Tom Springer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:12 PM on January 11, 2011.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Springer Carol Higgins, Eddie Mackay, and Stephen Mock

MEMBERS ABSENT: Henry Miller

OTHERS PRESENT: Amy DeShon, John Graham, and Josh Crandall

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA: Amy requested that we discuss a resolution to open a new checking account at Citizens Bank, to be referred to as "Employee Compensation Account". She also asked that we discuss the St. Joseph County Conservation Days event.

GUESTS/PUBLIC FORUM: No guests present.

REPORTS: Staff reports were provided in advance of the meeting. Discussion of John's report ensued. Noteworthy was that while at the MACD Conference, John attended an Interactive Mapping/Social Media workshop. We will be able to use the skills learned to map our River Cleanup progress and use this information to promote next year's fundraising goals. John can take pictures of our work and link them to maps illustrating our progress across the county.

Josh Crandall reported NRCS has not posted the job for the Branch County DC, yet. This will mean that he will be functioning in both counties longer than he had anticipated – probably another 5 months. Josh said that he works 3 days/week in St. Joe and 2 day/week in Coldwater. The EQIP and CSP deadlines are the end of January.

Josh also reported that he is doing a lot of wetland violation investigations in Branch County right now. Unlike St. Joseph County that has well-drained soils, Branch suffers from a lot of poorly-drained soils so they just get more violations as landowners try to improve their land this time of year and end up disturbing wetlands.

MillFARM: Carol Higgins presented to the Board for their consideration an idea to use the MillFARM property as a mushroom growing facility. She said that she had contacted the Product Development Center at MSU. They can help us define a business plan and help us analyze our market. Much discussion ensued. While all board members agreed that the idea to use the MillFARM property for some purpose, if we can't sell, is a good idea, we need to shy away from directly competing against businesses due to our government status. If we could develop some idea where the facility could be rented to someone else for some purpose, such as for a mushroom growing facility, or if we had technical proficiency that we could use to train others in developing such a business, then this is more in line with our mission/purpose. At the present time, the board wishes to continue to hold out for a buyer but if a good idea presents itself; we should discuss such idea's merits.

UPCYCLE CONSIGNMENT AGREEMENT: Tabled for further information.

EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION ACCOUNT "ECA": Carol Higgins motioned and Eddie Mackay seconded to sign the Citizens Bank Resolution opening the new ECA account. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSERVATION DAYS EVENT: Kathy Worst emailed Amy to say that Mike Censke will not be able to teach during the Conservation Days event. Carol Higgins has volunteered to teach instead. Amy is to contact Eva Beeker about the switch.

MINUTES: Stephen Mock motioned to approve the minutes of the December Board meeting. Eddie Mackay seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVED: Thomas M. Spring DATE: 2/8/11

TREASURER'S REPORT: Stephen Mock motioned to approve the treasurer's report as presented, sans the Adjusted 2010-2011 Budget. Carol Higgins seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REVIEW: Carol Higgins motioned and Stephen Mock seconded at 6:18 PM to go into closed session, at Amy DeShon's request, in order to discuss her annual review. Motion carried unanimously.

The regular session of the St. Joe County Conservation District Board of Directors adjourned at 6:18 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy DeShon, MPA
Executive Director
1/12/11