

## Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Alger Conservation District Board

Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 5:00 pm

MSU Research and Extension Center, Chatham, MI

The regular meeting of ACD was held on the above date. The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm by Chairman Highlen. Board members present at roll call: John Highlen, Rowan Bunce, James DeDecker. Hilary Ludecke and Hans Eriksen. Associate board members Charlie Todd and Barb Isom present. Staff present: Matt Watkeys, Alex Kolton, Sara Kelso, Kelly Sippl. Staff absent: Christy Foye (excused), Misa Cady, Landen Tetil, Holly Wendrick-Moss.

Guests: None

Public comment: None

Correspondence: Watkeys passed around correspondence.

Approve agenda: Watkeys asked to add agenda item (f) under Old Business: Wildflower Sale Wrap up. Motion to approve agenda as amended by Bunce, seconded by Ludecke; All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to approve minutes of the May 9th, 2023, regular meeting by Bunce, seconded by Eriksen; All in favor, motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS: Written reports reviewed by board and highlighted by staff.

- a. NRCS DC: Report received.
- b. NRCS SC: Report received.
- c. FAP FORESTER: Report received. Kelso reported great interest and engagement among Alger Co. landowners in the Forestry Assistance Program. She also noted that some tree sale trees have been stressed by recent heat and drought, as observed during site visits.
- d. PRODUCE SAFETY: Report received.
- e. L2L CISMA: Report received.
- f. DM: Report received.
- g. CONSERVATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Report received.
- h. ACD AmeriCorps VISTA: Report received.
- i. MDARD: Report received.
- j. MAEAP: No report received.

MEETING REPORTS: Watkeys reported that he attended the Onota Township meeting where ACD work was discussed in a positive light, particularly our partnership with AuTrain-Onota School on the AuTrain Lake fish habitat project, which resulted in a robotics partnership award for the school. Watkeys also reported that he met with the Alger Co. Sheriff's Dept to discuss the use of their boat and diver from Superior Watershed Partnership to assess trash in Munising Bay for eventual removal.

### Old Business:

- a. OTHER GRANTS & FUNDING UPDATE:
  - DHIPI: Watkeys shared that 800 additional stems were planted for the project and planning is underway for other conservation cover plantings.
  - MISG JAPANESE KNOTWEED: Watkeys reported that JK herbicide applications are underway, with 8 additional landowner sites scheduled for assessment and treatment.
  - MISG HIMALAYAN BALSAM: Watkeys reported that this project is on hold for now, waiting on information from other partners.
  - MISG SURVEY&TREATMENT: Watkeys reported that work has been focused on the Grand Marais site with garlic mustard treatment underway at multiple locations.
  - CLEAN BOATS CLEAN WATERS, CHATHAM COMMUNITY GARDEN: Watkeys reported that he has received some materials, signs and tools for the Grand Marais and AuTrain sites. Bunce offered wooden 4x4 posts for the project. Kolton reported that the first raised garden bed has been constructed at the Chatham garden. 20+ people have joined the garden friends group on Facebook and planning is underway for a workshop onsite teaching how to construct raised beds from pallets. Watkeys reported

that most of the 2022 pollinator plantings at the garden site have survived. Bunce encouraged Kolton to attend the next township meeting on June 20 to promote the garden project.

- b. AGRIPALOOZA DISCUSSION: Watkeys reported that MCCC is on board with hosting the event Sept 30, 2023 at MSU-UPREC. Due to scheduling overlap, SAF will offer continuing Ed credits to any SAF members that present at Agripalooza.
- c. 5-YEAR PLAN ADDITIONS: Watkeys presented recent edits to the five-year plan resulting from a subcommittee meeting just prior to this regular meeting. The board discussed strategies for revisiting, updating and operationalizing the ACD 1 yr and 5 yr strategic plans annually, possibly at budget time, to make them useful, living documents. Kelso also suggested developing a summary of the 5 yr plan for public consumption and comment. Another subcommittee meeting will be scheduled to finalize the 5 yr plan prior to the July 7 submission deadline. Motion to approve the 5 yr plan as amended was made by Bunce, seconded by Ludecke; All in favor, motion carried.
- d. MDARD OPERATIONS REVIEWS: Kolton has created a Google Drive folder to house files related to the operations review. Watkeys will be meeting with MDARD to begin the review process and will share draft documents with the Board.
- e. APPROVE HIGH TUNNEL LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR NRCS: The letter of support was finalized by Cady with Board feedback via email. A final draft was presented to the Board. A motion to approve the letter of support was made by DeDecker, seconded by Eriksen; All in favor, motion carried. The Board signed the approved letter at the conclusion of the meeting.
- f. WILDFLOWER SALE WRAP-UP: Watkeys reported that the wildflower sale was a success, generating \$5,884 in total sales, which was \$1,000 more than in 2022. There were 38 total orders. DeDecker suggested developing a system for tracking volunteer numbers, participation and recognition for all ACD programs.

#### **New Business:**

- a. NRCS CONSERVATION PLAN APPROVALS: Sippl presented 11 conservation plans for Board approval, which were previously shared via email. The plans consisted of primarily new forest management plans and high tunnel proposals. All 11 plans were approved by the Board and signed by Chairman Highlen. All Alger Co applications were approved this cycle, less one that was withdrawn by the landowner. Eriksen suggested noting the new high tunnel approvals in ACD's letter of support for a NRCS high tunnel initiative.
- b. DISCUSS AMERICORPS VISTA INTERNET PAY SHARE: Watkeys proposed paying ½ the cost (\$45/month) for internet service at the Kolton residence because Alex is working from home somewhat regularly. Eriksen suggested making this a one-time arrangement specific to Kolton as an undercompensated AmeriCorps VISTA employee. DeDecker suggested alternatively developing a formal internet / mobile data cost share policy for all staff. A motion was made by Eriksen to cost share \$45/month for internet at the Kolton residence, seconded by Bunce; All in favor, motion carried.
- c. ACD ASSETS STORAGE OPTIONS (KAYAKS CANOE, WEED EATER, ETC): Watkeys shared that ACD assets are currently stored in the county building basement or at his residence. However, certain items can no longer be stored in the county building (gas motors). Additional storage is needed and options discussed included the MSU-UPREC farm, a shed, or a covered trailer. The Board agreed that MSU-UPREC is a preferred short term solution, while purchase of a covered trailer is investigated. Watkeys will look into liquidating the boats, which the Board agreed are unnecessary. DeDecker will follow-up with Watkeys on short-term storage of items at UPREC.
- d. UTILITY TRAILER PURCHASE: Watkeys investigated purchase of a flatbed utility trailer, but is now leaning toward an enclosed trailer based on the discussion above.
- e. ADVERTISEMENT IN NEW ALGER CO. PLAT BOOK: ACD received a request from Alger Co 4H to advertise in the new plat book at a rate of \$225 for four years. The Board agreed to the expenses being budgeted under advertising, printing or publishing. No motion was required.

ACCEPT TREASURY REPORT/PAY BILLS: Watkeys presented financial reports for the month and year-to-date. The Board discussed line item #805 showing a negative percentage of budget spent due to reorganization of the Contractual Expenses line based on feedback from our recent financial audit. DeDecker highlighted the need to clarify accounting of fuel expenses, which Watkeys stated he is working on with support from accountants. Motion to accept treasury report and pay bills made by Bunce, seconded by DeDecker; All in favor, motion carried.

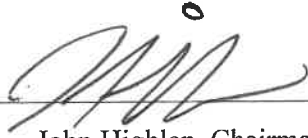
PUBLIC COMMENT: Bunce reported that the recent scrap tire collection event was successful, despite some dumping of tires and trash on-site following conclusion of the event.

Motion made by DeDecker; seconded by Eriksen to adjourn at 6:45pm; All in favor, motion carried.

*Submitted by James DeDecker, Secretary*

*These Minutes are subject to approval until signed below.*

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_



John Highlen, Chairman

OR

James Dedecker, Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

7/11/23