



Johnson County Resource Enhancement Committee

MINUTES

Johnson County Resource Enhancement (REAP) Committee Wednesday, August 5, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Johnson County Administration Building
Second Floor Boardroom
913 South Dubuque Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52240
. Via ZOOM .

Present: Timothy Brown, Solon Community School District Board of Directors
Mike Carberry, Sierra Club
Terry Dahms, REAP Vice Chair
Ilsa DeWald, Board of Supervisors Staff
Terry Donahue, City of North Liberty, Mayor
Peg Fraser, REAP Chair
Brad Freidhof, JC Conservation
Louise From, City of University Heights, Mayor
Larry Gullett, Johnson County Conservation
Pat Heiden, Johnson County Board of Supervisors
Tim Kemp, City of Hills, Mayor
Juli Seydell Johnson, City of Iowa City, Parks and Recreation
Sherri Proud, City of Coralville, Parks and Recreation
Kelley Schlitz, City of Hills, Staff
Jennifer Price, Johnson County Historic Preservation Commission
Linda Schreiber, Project GREEN
Jill Wenger, Board of Supervisors Staff

1. Call to order: 5:00 p.m.
2. Approve July 31, 2019 Johnson County REAP Committee meeting minutes – Motion by Brad, 2nd by Juli. Approved.
3. Presentation, review, and comments regarding REAP grant applications:
 - a. City of Coralville application for West Land Use Park Land and Fen Preservation Buffer, Part 2 for \$125,000
 - b. City of Hills application for a Splash Pad and Nature Park Expansion Project for \$50,000
 - c. City of Iowa City application for Whispering Meadows Wetlands Park Ecological Renovations for \$100,000
 - d. Johnson County Conservation Department application for Acquisition of the Malinda V. Reif Reilly Fen and Prairie for \$400,000
4. Review the Johnson County REAP Plan update and brainstorm projects for 2020-2024. Municipalities and organizations should submit projects that they foresee being part of their five-year plan for REAP grants. This is simply a list of project possibilities that may come up as opportunities in the next five years.

Sherri Proud, Brad Freidhof, Juli Seydell-Johnson met to work on this plan. We reviewed other county REAP plans, they had more along the lines of a five-year plans rather than very broad statements as our last draft. We have identified five focus areas. Protect, preserve and manage. Enhance and develop. Educate and provide stewardship. Recreational opportunities. Protect historical areas. We want to remain inclusive to all. Sherri would like input on the five areas and any projects that the Committee has in the hopper. We need to add that each of our orgs might have a REAP plan and we need to accept or adopt all of those within this plan. Get your comments to Sherri Proud by September 23, 2020.

Brad Freidhof: REAP did get extended into 2023, please make sure to contact your legislators so that this remains funded.

5. Next meeting date and time: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. ***(8/3/21 NOTE: This has been rescheduled to Thursday, August 19 at 5:00 p.m.)***
6. Adjourned at 6:12 p.m.



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2020 Review of REAP Grant Applications Wednesday, August 5, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.

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Project: West Land Use Park Land and Fen Preservation Buffer, Part 2

Presented by: Sherri Proud, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Coralville

Amount of request: \$125,000

Project description: The City of Coralville seeks to purchase 7.6 acres of land that will be part of a larger project that is approximately 75 acres in total. The land purchase is for a new park in the Coralville's west land use area. The proposed 7.6 acre purchase will provide a buffer to a fen, a diverse wetland environment that is somewhat unique in the State of Iowa. The fen was part of a REAP grant purchase award in 2018 and in 2019, another 7.6 acre land purchase was made to provide a buffer on the southern border. This 2020 REAP application to purchase 7.6 acres would provide a buffer on the eastern border of the fen. When developed, the park will celebrate the native landscapes of fens, woodlands, and prairie areas while bringing people up close with these features through interpretive trails, exploration nodes, and a nature center.

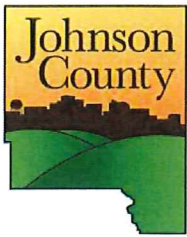
Review and comments:

Juli Seydell-Johnson: Supports in that it continues with the protection of this land and important ecological area in Coralville.

Terry Dahms: Coralville has been successful in 2018 in obtaining a REAP grant for this area, as well as last year. Part of an impressive master plan, so no question on how it will develop. The area is very unique. This third fen is very unusual natural area and this would protect. I endorse.

Signature: 
Peg Fraser, Resource Enhancement Committee Chair

Date: August 5, 2020



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Project: Splash Pad and Nature Park Expansion Project

Presented by: Mayor Tim Kemp, City of Hills

Amount of request: \$50,000

Project description: The Hills Splash Pad and Nature Park Expansion Project includes the following park improvements: Aspen Lane extension; visitor parking; family restrooms; community pollinator garden; native prairie grass garden; park benches; and shade trees. These additions will greatly enhance the park and become amenities for everyone in the community to enjoy.

Review and comments:

Mike Carberry: Great location south of Iowa City. Will attract a lot of county residents. The pollinator garden, butterfly plants, splash pad are good attractions. Johnson County doesn't have things like this in the southern part of the county.

Tim Brown: I like this, its strength is that this is an educational place to learn, not just a park expansion.

Tim Kemp: Another plus is that it is walkable from the elementary school.

Terry Dahms: It's pretty clear that this is an amenity for the community. I am bothered by where it is, it is a new development. Who is this for? This is a splash pad, that is the primary attraction. I think Sherri hit on something when she noted that the title "splash pad" is not eligible for a REAP grant, it's a valid point. This really doesn't fall under what REAP is supposed to do. It does not protect a natural resource like other applications. This is a new development. I am not in favor of this application.

Tim Kemp: I think people are focusing too much on the splash pad. That is just an arbitrary name that we gave the project since the splash pad is already there. The development has been going on for ten years at least. We are looking to restore and bring back native grasses to use as educational tool for community and rural areas around Hills.

Kelley Schlitz: In the community of Hills, we have 3 small parks, there isn't a lot of space for us to expand. I think part of the priorities outlined in REAP also include improving facilities and creating recreational opportunities as part of stewardship of the environment. It's small; we are a small community.

Sherri Proud: I appreciate that you are trying to bring some natural aspects into a natural setting to teach people. There is a void in Hills, it's mostly flat lawns, very few pollinators, very few trees, so I like that you are trying to add natural areas. To get restrooms and parking, that is often hard to fund those things that attract users. I support this project.

Brad Freidhof: I think there are some really good components that you need to tweak in the grant to give them more focus. Remove "splash pad" and focus on the education, the pollinator species, the grass species, those are the components. I'd suggest rearranging, creating different focal points to give them more emphasis to give your application more priority to the REAP Committee.

Linda Schreiber: I agree with Sherri and Brad. The grant is an asset for a rural community in southern Johnson County. The location near the elementary school and identifying plant materials is also a benefit.

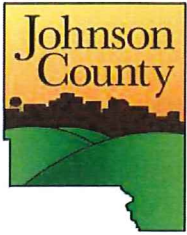
Brad: Linda, that school needs access to these types of resources.

Terry Donahue: I agree with Brad. Tweak it, modify it to emphasize the most important aspects.

Tim Brown: Include the grass/prairie by the railroad, that might help your application.

Signature:  _____
Peg Fraser, Resource Enhancement Committee Chair

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Project: Whispering Meadows Wetlands Park Ecological Renovations

Presented by: Juli Seydell Johnson, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Iowa City

Amount of request: \$100,000

Project description: Whispering Meadows Wetland Park, a neighborhood park, was established in 1991. It consists of a constructed, restored wetland, originally planted with native species, and surrounding uplands, also restored to prairie and savanna. Intermittent ecological maintenance has resulted in a wetland and uplands dominated by invasive non-natives. This project proposes to control invasive species and restore diverse native vegetation to the park and install interpretive signage to enhance visitor experience and wildlife habitat.

Review and Comment:

Brad: I have been proud of the past REAP grants Iowa City has had. Opening up spaces to the public is specifically what REAP grants are for.

Mike Carberry: Really like the focus of this park because it is in a low income area, we really need this for all incomes and socioeconomic areas.

Terry Donahue: I would like to see some kind of in-kind or matching funding.

Julie: This is part of our overall plan, we have funding set aside city-wide, but this REAP grant is just for this ongoing funding for continuing this work throughout the entire system. Overall the City is committed to funding this and other natural areas (in conjunction with Climate Committee).

Terry Dahms: The application does not indicate the cost of the project, there are discrepancies.

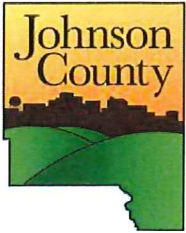
Juli: Last night City Council approved \$100,000, we have \$90,500 on the grant. I will make sure the numbers are consistent.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peg Fraser". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Signature:

Peg Fraser, Resource Enhancement Committee Chair

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Project: Acquisition of the Malinda V. Reif Reilly Fen and Prairie

Presented by: Larry Gullett, Director of Johnson County Conservation Department

Amount of request: \$400,000

Project description: This project includes the acquisition of 100.42 acres, inclusive of a native prairie and fen situated on a paha ridge within the Iowa Erosion Surface landform region. The native prairie, wetland and fen account for 55.2 acres of the property and include several listed species. Preservation of the property, within the watershed of Lake MacBride, has been a dream of ecologists and botanists for decades. Cost: \$950,000 total with REAP request of \$400,000

Review and comment:

Terry Dahms: Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation is involved in this project, they do not purchase properties unless there is value in a property. We should endorse this project heartily.

Tim Brown: In favor of this. Valuable property and well thought-out plan.

Signature: 
Peg Fraser, Resource Enhancement Committee Chair

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