

HILLSBOROUGH SOIL AND
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board of Supervisors District Regular Meeting

Wednesday, June 2, 2021 5:00 PM

Meeting called to order at 5 PM

Supervisors in attendance:

Kathy Eckdahl- Chair
Andrew Brooks, Vice Chair
Sonja Brookins – Treasurer
Karen Cox Jaroch, Supervisor

Others in attendance

Betty Jo Tompkins, HSWCD, Executive Director
Linda Chion, HSWCD, Computer Graphics Designer
Stephanie Collins HSWCD – Community Outreach
Leslie Diaz- Alvarez, NRCS District Conservationist
Eric Challenger - nominee

INTRODUCE MEMBER(S) OF THE PUBLIC

Chair Kathy Eckdahl requested members and guests introduce themselves and offer public comment.

MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

Supervisor Jaroch moved for approval. Supervisor Brooks 2nd. Minutes approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Supervisor Brookins gave the Treasurer's report. Only April's report is included as the bank is in the process of a name change, delaying the statements.

Executive Director Tompkins gave financial details. In May \$100 was transferred into the Envirothon account to keep it active. FDACS Mini-Farm accounting reviewed. HSWCD receives annual advance. As completed, approved projects are submitted, HSWCD pays agricultural operator and writes 5% check to HSWCD for managing program. Canceled checks are then provided to FDACS for reimbursement.

Executive Director Tompkins signed a contract for \$150,000 a year for 3 years for cost share with FDACS.

Supervisor Jaroch moved to approve the report. Supervisor Brooks 2nd. Treasurer's report approved.

NRCS Report

NRCS Area Report given by Leslie Diaz- Alvarez, District Conservationist. NRCS received 11 applications which developed into 8 active contracts. Three other contracts under review.

Large contract for Lonesome G Ranch is being reviewed. The ranch is mostly in Hillsborough County with some acreage in Polk. Approximately 28,000 acres involved.

NRCS application for 2022 funds has a September 1st deadline to apply. After that date applications will be taken for 2023 year.

Letters were sent to clients regarding the Hillsborough County Local Working Group meeting. The Local Working Group covered funding available and other information. Her target is to get to know people and let them know what conservation practices are available for assistance.

FDACS Report

No report as Matt Warren with FDACS was not in attendance.

SWFWMD Report

No report as Ken Grimer with SWFWMD was not in attendance

Non-Agenda Items

Supervisor Brooks took note of public correspondence in the back of their books. One was letter from a reader of the Hillsborough 100 Tabloid. The reader had recycling concerns regarding what is recycled.

Director Tompkins reported lady reached out as she has been planting acorns in pots. She now has about 20 trees which are 6 foot tall and is donating for planting. Tompkins thinks this might be good project for schools to plant. She plans to continue the conversation with the "tree" lady.

Business Part of Meeting – Election of Supervisor to fill the vacant position.

Three candidates submitted applications

Matthew Gozdor from Riverview

Eric Challenger Sr from Apollo Beach

Mark Proctor from Brandon

Supervisor Jaroch requested Tompkins review the process for election to fill open seat.

Director Tompkins gave details. First the Department sent out a request to the public. Time was given for engagement and numerous calls received. The three candidates' applications were received within the allotted time frame. No late applications were received. Appropriate time will be given for any of the four Supervisors to make a nomination. The nominee needs to receive a 2nd approval. Following nominations an open vote is taken. If there is a tie, the voting continues until the tie is broken.

Supervisor Jaroch nominated Mark Proctor -Supervisor Brooks seconded

Supervisor Brookins nominated Eric Challenger. Supervisor Brooks seconded.

Chair Eckdahl asked if there were any other nominees.

Director Tompkins explained they each received background information on the candidates. Discussion time made available.

Chair Eckdahl followed procedure of calling out names and a hand vote by Supervisors was taken.

Votes Cast:

3 for Mark Proctor

1 for Eric Challenger

Mark Proctor was selected. Director Tompkins will inform him as he was not present. Tompkins asked Eric Challenger, who was in attendance, to please continue engagement with HSWCD.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Director Tompkins reported as follows:

2021 poster contest had about 300 completed posters. These are the largest numbers she knows of in the State compared to other Districts. Each participant received a personalized certificate, which was delivered to schools. Cash award youth have received their checks. Each 1st place poster in each category will go to the Area Meeting being held in Lake County later this month. All posters will be exhibited at the Hills. County Fair and receive a free ticket to the County Fair.

Summer poster contest will run from June thru August. Focus will be parks and rec centers, day cares and schools with summer programs.

New theme for 2022 - Healthy Soil, Healthy Life

Director Tompkins then reviewed many dates and events in the books.

Area meeting in June was discussed as to details of event, who needed hotel rooms as well as other details.

Supervisor Brooks proposed an amendment be made at the Area meeting. If approved, it will move on to the State meeting. He moved that State officers be allowed to run for one additional term as. COVID hampered some of projects they were working on. The extension would be only for this term and limited to the current officers. It would be a beneficial decision. Supervisor Brooks moved. Chair Eckdahl 2nd. Motion approved.

Tompkins asked who would be attending the upcoming annual meeting in Daytona Beach this fall. All Supervisors said they would be in attendance.

Discussion held regarding the State Fair and National Convention being the same week and the State Fair booth plans. The 2022 Fair has provided HSWCD a 30' x 60" area in the center of the Ag Hall of Fame for an exhibit. The theme is "Conservation Is Everybody's Business".

Lipman Garden Challenge is coming up in the fall. Tompkins anticipates this to be the largest group yet. Estimated 50 schools to participate.

This year's Hillsborough 100 tabloid was the largest to date with 28 pages. Positive responses were received.

Miracles Landscape Project - Supervisor Brookins and her daughter Star attended. The event was in Thonotosassa. Several groups including Cub Scouts, Girls Scouts, 4-H members and others assisted in planting flowers, bushes, and trees to beautify the location. Club leader Nicole Humphreys secured several participants.

Blueberry U-Pick was a success with \$1,300 raised thanks to Dugal and Sons Farm. Tompkins suggested monies raised be used to sponsor a Rain Barrel Competition at the Hillsborough County Fair. The first 15 groups will get a free barrel to decorate. Buyers of barrels at the auction will be asked if they can be displayed at the State Fair. Estimated \$600 needed for project.

In addition, for a wildflower project, \$200 could be used to help a community garden fund sterilizing the soil. The third project would be \$200 worth of planter boxes for low-income schools. These will be lighted planter boxes used indoors that can be utilized for the Lipman Garden challenge in the fall. Any leftover dollars will be used for other projects.

June 12th tree planting of 20,000 longleaf pine trees will be held at Lower Green Swamp Preserve. Anticipating 200 volunteers, t shirts with logos and gift bags as well as refreshments will be provided.

Supervisor Andrew requested a way to help people secure the tree planting application form. Supervisors reviewed the online process so they could share with others.

Hillsborough County Forestry and Land Management will be there to assist. Planting procedure is that dibbles will be provided to pierce the ground. Three people per team will do the planting. There will be a registration table and 5 different tree pickup stations.

Recent Local Working Group meeting included ag leaders who gave updates on their programs. Supervisors and attendees reviewed the questionnaire and went thru the results in detail. Grazing, cropland, as well as brush and invasive plants, were some of the concerns. Results have been submitted to NRCS.

Diaz said recommendations are reviewed for the next year and money is set aside for farmers. She plans next year to send letters further in advance of meeting.

Director Tompkins reported the following:

1. FDACS contract of \$150,000 annually for three years commencing July 1, 2021, was signed.
2. Hillsborough County Fair – Sept 23rd thru 26th and Sept 30th thru Oct 3, 2021, will include HSWCD booth, 500 plus posters to be displayed, sponsorship of Youth Plant Show and 5th Annual HSWCD Plant Auction.

3. Multiple articles produced for *In the Field* and other publications.
4. Interviewed by Spectrum Media in Tampa and Orlando on Conservation Districts.
5. Continued ag operator visits.
6. Note: for Complete programs, projects and activities see Agenda for June 2, 2021, meeting.

Next meeting August 4, 2021.

Meeting adjourned, followed by dinner.