

Spring Creek Coalition Board Meeting June 9, 2022, Minutes

The meeting was held virtually by Zoom as announced ahead-of-time by President Beth Rooney. The meeting was called to order by Rooney at 6:02 pm on Thursday, June 9, 2022. Present were Board Members Mike Appel, Chris Beckwith, Angela Brazeal, Jennifer Donnelly, Travis Fite, Karen Harris, David Martinez, Beth Rooney. Sandy Whitekiller joined after the meeting started. Bill Chambers was absent.

1. David Page lawsuit filing: Beth Rooney briefly discussed David Page's filing of 4 lawsuits against Simmons Foods, Tyson Foods, and poultry growers for those companies, in Adair County Court. Beth had distributed information on these. The approach of Page's lawsuits reflects one of his favored strategies and the SCC legal team had encouraged Page to pursue that strategy independently when we changed legal counsel. Beth had emailed Page to congratulate him on the filing and the general reaction of SCC leaders was favorable. The integrators in Page's suits are wealthy companies and likely will defend themselves aggressively in court.

2. SCC Lawsuit Update: It was moved/seconded (Martinez/?) that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss the lawsuit. Approved unanimously at 6:07 pm. The Board concluded Executive Session at 6:16 pm.

3. Tramel/Gann petition: Beth Rooney reported that the petitioners were successful, obtaining more than the minimum number of signatures needed by the required deadline. Beth had sent a mailing about the petition to the SCC membership, as supported by the Board in May. Beth noted that because the petition does not reject the dedicated tax district, but only puts the question on the county ballot, the incentive for the battery production plant may still be approved.

4. May Minutes: It was move/seconded (Fite/Donnelly) to approve the May minutes, as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report: Beth Rooney reviewed the report as distributed and summarized in the agenda. The Board accepted the Treasurer's Report for filing, showing a balance of \$53,190.40 as of 5-31-2022.

6. Goal #1 – Improve Community Relations: Member bylaws requests: Mike Appel, Chair of the Community Relations Outreach/Bylaws Review Committee, said he would have time to review the recommendations for bylaws changes starting in August with completion by the October Board meeting.

7. Goal #7 – Water Quality:

a&b. Monitoring. Beth Rooney gave the report for Bill Chambers. The monitoring team would like to do additional sampling to identify the sources of bacteria being found in the water quality sampling. The Cherokee Nation is a possible partner in such sampling, and Beth was able to make contact with environmental staff of the Nation (Pat Gwin and Wayne Isaacs) at a Sustainable Tulsa meeting on June 2 to explore this possibility. Beth followed up with Gwin but has not heard back. Mike Appel reported on a sample taken after a recent flood event and the impression it left him of the randomness of our sampling, even with standard methodology. An active discussion followed among Angela, Mike, Travis, Beth, David, and others about the purpose of the monthly sampling and the possible utility of additional sampling. Jennifer Donnelly asked about sewage treatment plants located on the creek upstream of where the bacteria were detected. Mike talked about two communities, Kansas and Oaks, that have sewage treatment facilities upstream and the fact that Oaks is known to have had a breach of its facility last June. Angela asked about what statistical flood sewage treatment plants are required to withstand, but no one at the meeting knew the answer.

c. PFAS testing. Sandy Whitekiller reported on limited testing for PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) that is available at no cost from the Waterkeeper Alliance. Sandy explained that PFAS are a

group of persistent contaminants that have been linked to various adverse effects on human health and the environment. They have become widely used in modern manufacturing and likewise have become widespread in the environment, including in ground and surface waters. Waterkeepers has sent the SCC free kits that will allow us to test for PFAS in two locations and the monitoring team is considering what would be priority sites within the Spring Creek watershed. If PFAS are detected, Waterkeepers also may be able to provide recommendations for remediation of the contamination. Sandy recommended two documentaries on the subject of PFAS: "Dark Waters" and "The Devil We Know." This effort is part of Waterkeeper Alliance's project to collect two data points on PFAS from each of their Keepers and Affiliates.

8. Goal #10 – Board Member Education on Scenic Rivers: David Martinez reported that the committee had compiled the main documents describing legal and regulatory consequences of designating streams as "Scenic Rivers" under Oklahoma's Scenic Rivers Act. He had not yet obtained Jennifer Owen's document reported to analyze specific concerns of designation. The committee wants to meet with additional parties connected to the topic, including Ed Fite, other personnel at GRDA, and the Cherokee Nation. Sandy Whitekiller asked if the objective was to seek scenic river designation for Spring Creek. Travis Fite explained that the committee was only examining the pros and cons and feasibility of potential designation and the SCC Board at this point did not have a position either in favor or against it. Beth Rooney added that there could be opportunity to educate the Board and membership about the consequences of potential designation and eventually to adopt a formal position on the issue. Sandy asked what type of action would be needed to achieve designation and the answer was action by the Oklahoma State Legislature to amend Oklahoma State Statutes.

9. Other: Plan Board Meeting in the Watershed: This item was postponed due to Bill Chamber's absence.

10. Goal #5 – Create master list of major impacts to Spring Creek watershed: Beth Rooney led a brainstorming session to which all Board members contributed. The session resulted in a first-draft document of impacts and potential causes.

Some of the items listed included clearing lands for pasture, riparian clearing, livestock production, flooding, bank destabilization, nutrient enrichment, algal blooms, gravel erosion, plastic trash, changes in the fish community (fewer stonerollers and bass), *E. coli* proliferation, feral pig proliferation, and creek widening. Production of the list deviated at a couple of points into background discussions of the feral pig problem and landowner clearing of riparian areas.

11. Goal #1c – Community outings: Three possibilities were discussed briefly: (i) the Cherokee Nation's Saline Courthouse (Pat Gwin offered to lead a botanical outing there), (ii) Restoration Farms in Peggs, and (iii) Three Springs Farm.

12. Other: Travis Fite mentioned an Oaks resident who is a sustainable marijuana grower and could become a potential new SCC member. Angela Brazeal mentioned a contact whose family owns 1.5 miles of land on either side of Spring Creek. One family member was upset that he could not start a trout farm on Spring Creek because of SCC's opposition. Beth Rooney offered to talk with the man.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm. The next meeting will be virtual by Zoom on July 14 at 6pm.

Minutes prepared by SCC Vice-Secretary David Martinez