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— M A Q U O K E T A —

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MSP archive photo

Multicultural Fair planned for Thursday evening

A Multicultural Fair will be held in the Maquoketa Community High School cafeteria Thursday, March 11, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. The public is invited to view and learn about different countries from around the world. High school students will host about 20 booths with information on a phase of culture and a concern facing each of the different French and Spanish speaking countries. There will also be booths featuring Haiti, Micronesia, and the Philippines. Our club hOpe will also have a booth and Student Senate will help with the decorations. Each booth will offer information and an activity pertaining to the country it represents. The event is free. Shown is a booth from the school's 2008 Multicultural Fair.

Compensation approved by supervisors

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

The Jackson County Board of Supervisors last week accepted the recommendation of a commission regarding compensation of land the county is acquiring for a road project.

The supervisors on March 2 unanimously agreed to pay \$33,332 to the Rosemary Kremer Revocable Trust for 4.76 acres of land about three miles southwest of St. Donatus.

The property is located along county road D-53, or Centerville Road, east of 235th Avenue.

The county is acquiring the land as part of a project to realign and pave D-53 between St. Donatus and its junction with 230th Avenue.

Plans call for the county to grade the east half of the project, between St. Donatus and 253rd Avenue this year and to pave it in 2013.

The west half, between 230th Avenue and 239th Avenue, will be graded in 2012.

The county has been given possession of the Kremer trust property under the eminent domain process. At issue was the amount of compensation to be paid the owner.

A six-member compensation commission arrived at the amount on Feb. 25 after visiting the site and meeting with Jackson County Attorney Chris Raker and engineers and reviewing the data provided to them.

The discussion included the price per acre of land, a cattle lot and the price of \$26,599 the supervisors had offered for the site, according to David Kendell of rural Bellevue, a member of the compensation commission.

The Kremer trust party has asked for approximately \$43,000, Raker said.

The main point of contention was the amount of compensation for 415 rods of fence on the parcel. The compensation commission set the value at \$30 per rod, twice the \$15 a rod amount the

county had offered.

In a review of the commission's findings on March 2, Raker suggested that the supervisors review their policy for fence compensation.

"I think what the condemnation board is telling us is that \$15 per rod is not enough, \$15 a rod may be a little old," Raker told the supervisors. "We may need to look at that."

Overall, Raker called the compensation commission's decision "a draw for both sides."

While the compensation commission doubled the supervisors' offer for the fence, the commission also cut the amount the Kremer trust was seeking in attorney fees from \$165 to \$80 per hour.

Raker noted that the owners also asked that the county construct a culvert on the property as part of the road construction. The compensation commission said county officials should work with the landowner on that project.

Mike Clausing, assistant county engineer, estimated the cost of a culvert at \$3,000 to \$5,000.

The supervisors took no action on the culvert issue. Raker suggested that if the landowners want a culvert, the supervisors should refer them to the county's policy, which is to split the cost evenly between the county and landowner.

"We should treat them no differently than any other party that we wish to furnish a culvert," Raker said.

Raker called the commission's findings "a very reasonable and acceptable solution."

He added, "I would say that it was in the ballpark of what we expected."

Based on the outcome of the compensation commissioners' decision, Raker told supervisors "We should not be afraid to go to condemnation in the future. We should not be afraid to stand behind our bids."

Compensation commission members, in addition to Kendell, were Dick Ostert of rural Maquoketa, Richard Skrivseth of Preston, Loyd Downey of rural Preston, Don Davison of Maquoketa and Chuck Schwager of rural Bellevue.

The compensation commission is selected by District Court Chief Judge Bobbi Alpers from a list of volunteers compiled by the Board of Supervisors.

On another land acquisition matter, the supervisors unanimously approved without discussion a \$67,000 contract payment to Jim and Janice Kremer for property also along Centerville Road east of the Rosemary Kremer Revocable Trust parcel.

That award included \$1,050 for a half-acre of land, \$790 for fencing and \$65,160 for a barn, machine shed and two grain bins.

In another matter, the supervisors learned that the Teamsters Local 120 union representing the secondary roads employees has agreed to re-open negotiations over the wages portion of their employment contract for the 2010-11 fiscal year, which begins July 1.

The supervisors sought to re-open negotiations in light of wages given to other county employee groups that are lower than the 5 percent raises previously negotiated for the secondary roads workers for next year.

In other business, the supervisors tabled a decision on the purchase of a used skid loader proposed by Marty Hudrlik, county maintenance supervisor.

The purchase price would be \$4,200 and the trade-in of an Allis-Chalmers compact utility tractor with a loader and a blade, valued at \$2,600.

Supervisor Jack Willey said he wanted to get additional budget information before making a decision.