

## FOREST PRESERVE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 12, 2016

**PRESENT:** Committee members - S. Ballard, M. Burns, S. Doye, K. Maranda, R. Simmer, D. Cremeens, E. Langdon.

**ABSENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:** Larry Burns, District five Commissioner; Lee Jackson, Zoo Director; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; Ben Mills, Loud Thunder Ranger; Jay Verstraete, Golf Course Superintendent; Todd Collins, Club House Manager; April Palmer, County Auditor; Louisa Ewert, County Treasurer; Carrie Kerr, Treasurer's Office; Jerry Clyde, Human Resources Director, Amy Behning, MindFire; Scott Lohman.

President Ballard called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Committee to order at 3:00 PM on Wednesday, October 12, 2016, in the County Board Office on the second floor of the County Building, Rock Island, Illinois.

Roll was called:

S. Ballard, R. Simmer, S. Doye, M. Burns, K. Maranda, D. Cremeens, E. Langdon.

**Total Present        7**

**Total Absent        0**

President Ballard recognized Mr. Jerry Clyde, the Human Resources Director.

Mr. Clyde stated that last year the sexual harassment and bully training was done for all employees. For most employees that training does not need to be done annually. However, management and leadership positions do need to do the training annually. A PowerPoint presentation will be sent out along with a certificate of completion to all those in the specified positions. There will be three questions on the certificate that can only be answered if you have viewed the training material. Those will be emailed out, and the commissioners will have copies in their mailboxes.

President Ballard called for a motion approving the September Committee meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to approve the September Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Doye seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called for a motion to approve the September Public Hearing meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burns moved to approve the September Public Hearing meeting minutes. Mr. Langdon seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called for a motion to approve the claims for the Forest Preserve Fund in the amount of \$49,923.73, Niabi Zoo Fund claims in the amount of \$56,041.83, Bike Path Fund claims in the amount of \$376.64, Marvin Martin Fund claims in the amount of \$1,146.81, and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$56,565.35.

**MOTION:** Mr. Maranda moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called for a motion to approve the Transfers of Appropriation in the Forest Preserve General Fund for fiscal year 2017.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to approve the 2017 fiscal year Transfers of Appropriation in the Forest Preserve General Fund. Mr. Doye seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called for a motion to approve the Annual Levy Ordinances for the General Fund of the District, Niabi Zoological Fund, IMRF Fund, Liability Fund, FISSA Fund and the Development of Forests & Construction of Improvement Fund.

**MOTION:** Mr. Langdon moved to approve the Annual Levy Ordinances for the General Fund of the District, Niabi Zoological Fund, IMRF Fund, Liability Fund, FISSA Fund and the Development of Forests & Construction of Improvement Fund. Mr. Doye seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called for a motion on the bid for the Train Tunnel Foundation Repair at the zoo.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to approve the low bid. Mr. Cremeens seconded the motion.

Mr. Craver stated that General Constructors Inc. of the Quad Cities was the low bid at \$67,300.00. The age of the tunnel supports are not known, but they may be the original supports from when the tunnel was built. It is recommended that they be replaced. That area is also a water basin. A lot of water runs through that area, and that is part of the reason for the higher than anticipated costs of repair. The repair is not budgeted, but there are funds available. If the Committee does want to accept General Constructors' bid, then I would strongly recommend a construction and observation agreement with someone to oversee the project. This will ensure that General Constructors follows the plan and does the job appropriately.

Dr. Simmer asked if that was something that the inspectors could do.

Mr. Craver stated that that wasn't really within the realm of the inspector's duties.

Dr. Simmer expressed concern that the low bid was so much lower than the others.

Mr. Craver briefly explained the two different ways that the project could be done, and that that was likely the reason for the difference in cost.

Mr. Maranda asked if rebuilding the tunnel in a different area had been considered.

Mr. Craver stated that that option was not what was specified in the bid, and that the area the tunnel occupies now is a good location.

Mr. Cremeens asked if the work would be guaranteed.

Mr. Craver stated that the District could ask that a guarantee be put in the agreement, but that doing the work correctly would ensure that the work would last.

Mr. Langdon asked if there had been repairs to the tunnel in the past.

Mr. Craver stated that there had.

**MOTION AMENDMENT:** Dr. Simmer moved to amend the motion to accept the low bid and allow Mr. Craver to seek out construction observation services. Mr. Cremeens seconded.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called on Mr. Craver to discuss the Fair Labor Standards Act Salary Exemptions and how they would affect the District.

Mr. Craver stated that there are two positions at the zoo that, come December 1<sup>st</sup>, will be below the new standard threshold for a salaried employee under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The District tried to do a salary survey for those positions, but with no real success. This is probably due to the fact that many of the public and private sector comparable positions are going through the same process as the District. Those two positions are the Guest Services Manager, and the Curator of Education and Conservation. Those positions should be raised, but I don't think it necessary to raise them to the level of the threshold. If after some time it is determined that those positions would be better as salaried positions, then that change can be made. The recommendation for the Guest Services Manager is \$40,000.00. The recommendation for the Curator of Education and Conservation position is to offer the salary range of \$42,000.00 to \$45,000.00. There are three other positions being recommended for increase. Those are the Assistant Zoo Director, the Golf Course Superintendent and the Administrative Assistant. The Golf Course Superintendent is about to be surpassed in salary by the Assistant Superintendent. The Administrative Assistant position is comparable to the Field Office Manager at the zoo; a \$43,000.00 salary is recommended for the Administrative Assistant position. It is recommended to offer the position of Assistant Zoo Director a salary range of \$55,000.00 to \$65,000.00. That way

the District can attract some applicants with more experience. The budget that was passed in August would not increase, instead it reworks the zoo salaries. These increases have all been discussed in prior meetings. Mr. Cremeens asked for job descriptions, and those were provided.

Mr. Clyde reminded the Committee that any salary that was below the threshold would have to be paid overtime.

Mr. Craver stated that management at the zoo is already used to clocking in and out, so that would not be an adjustment those positions would have to make. Looking at those positions' time over the past year, it doesn't look like they will be going over the threshold. Yes, there will be some weeks where they will get overtime, but it won't add up to the threshold of \$48,000.00.

President Ballard called for a motion to accept Mr. Craver's recommendations.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to approve Mr. Craver's recommendations. Mr. Burns seconded the motion.

Motion carried; Mr. Cremeens voted no.

President Ballard called for a motion to remove from display and approve the changes to the District's Purchasing Policy.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to remove from display and approve the changes to the District's Purchasing Policy. Mr. Doye seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called on Ms. Amy Behning of MindFire for the presentation.

Ms. Behning thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak with them, and stated that what has been discussed so far is that there are so many great reasons for parks and recreation in a community. Those reasons range from job creation to economic development, but most importantly, overall quality of life. What MindFire helps with is to tell the District's story through the channels that are out there. The Executive Summary lists a few ways that can be accomplished, and they are very similar to what MindFire has done at the zoo. The first thing MindFire would do would be to create a "message map" - Find out what it is that people like about the parks. With good communication, continuity is king. In today's technology age, people absorb information better through pictures and graphs. Mr. Craver has shared a really good pile of data about what matters to communities. A website update is warranted, and would run in tandem with the District's social strategies. Some of the preserves have strong social presence and some don't. Those that do have a strong presence don't necessarily correlate to the overall message. What MindFire would do is streamline that message, update photos, and make sure everyone is represented appropriately. That and the continuity will be a huge help. That leads to social media, which is both a bane and a great two way dialogue. MindFire can help the District manage those pages, organize them and

integrate them into the website. Lastly, there are media relations. In going through and looking at some of the park's pages there was an event that I just recently saw a flyer on it. We need to make sure that that type of event is in community calendars, and provided to entertainment editors so that we can share all the programming that goes on in a way that gets noticed, and gets recognized for the good work being done. That is, in a nutshell, how we've approached Niabi, and it is very similar to what we would do at individual locations. It's not about MindFire's voice; it about helping the District's make its voice louder.

Mr. Langdon asked where exactly it would start.

Ms. Behning stated that it would start with less invasive things, like Facebook. There are some preserves with a Facebook page, but managing those and making sure that messages about events, updates and programming is, frankly, a full time job. There are many options for reaching those who aren't on the internet. One of those is Press Relations. Sending out press releases that the media pick up verbatim, and then other venues will pick them up and there are opportunities for staff to talk about those programs. A good example of something that MindFire did early on is the tax insert. There was a lot of information on the District's website of what services were offered at each of the parks, but it was spread out and it was just written out. MindFire put all that into an infographic, which is much more readable.

President Ballard called for a motion to enter into an agreement with MindFire.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to enter into an agreement with MindFire not to exceed \$20,000.00. Mr. Maranda seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called on Ms. Palmer for the Auditor's reports.

Ms. Palmer stated that budgets are looking good. The Fund Balances reports are still estimated. Audited numbers will hopefully be on next month's report. In regards to the cash balances, please note that the Liability Fund does have an outstanding loan from the General Fund, but otherwise looks good.

President Ballard called for a motion to approve Ms. Palmer's reports.

**MOTION:** Mr. Maranda moved to approve Ms. Palmer's reports. Mr. Langdon seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called on Mr. Verstraete and Mr. Collins for the Indian Bluff reports.

Mr. Verstraete reported that the weather is cooling off. Aerification is complete, and staff has been putting down some fall fertilizer. There are some septic issues at the

pavilion in the back, but am confident that staff can handle repairs. Have started a couple of tee projects.

Mr. Collins reported that because of the cool weather play has slowed. This is typical for this time of year. There is one more outing left in the season, and that is the Chili Open.

President Ballard called for a motion to approve Mr. Verstraete's and Mr. Collins's reports.

**MOTION:** Mr. Maranda moved to approve Mr. Verstraete's and Mr. Collins's reports. Mr. Langdon seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called on Mr. Mills for the Loud Thunder report.

Mr. Mills reported that camping has slowed down, and maintenance projects are beginning. Eco Camp went very well, as did the color run fundraiser. Mowing is still necessary as is trash pickup. Every year the gates that lead to the boat ramps are closed once the weather gets too dangerous to allow traffic down the steep hills. There has been much frustration in park goers and staff partially because there is no set day every year that the gates will close, and this results in people making the trip and then being unable to take those roads down to the water's edge. I would like the Committee's permission to post signs that will state a firm date each year that the ramps will be closing. The state parks do this, and their date is the same every year. I'd like to post that the gates will close the second week of November, which is very close to the time that the state parks close.

President Ballard called for a motion to allow Mr. Mills to post signs stating that the gates to the docks will close the second week of November every year.

**MOTION:** Mr. Burns moved to allow Mr. Mills to post signs stating that the gates to the docks will close the second week of November every year. Mr. Doye seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called for a motion approving Mr. Mills's report.

**MOTION:** Mr. Langdon moved to approve Mr. Mills's report. Mr. Cremeens seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called on Mr. Petersen for the Illiniwek report.

Mr. Petersen reported that camping had been great in the month of September. Sports programs that use Dorrance are underway. Equipment maintenance has begun. The trail creation at Dorrance continues to go well, and is still on target for phase one completion. Camp Ground Management software was purchased, and will be in use at the beginning of the season next year.

President Ballard called for a motion to approve Mr. Petersen's report.

**MOTION:** Mr. Maranda moved to approve Mr. Petersen's report. Mr. Cremeens seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called on Mr. Jackson for the Niabi Zoo report.

Mr. Jackson reported that there were four keeper positions that were open, and offers have gone out to fill those positions. There will be one more open at the end of the month, and there is a very good pool of candidates to choose from for that position as well. Applications for those keeper positions came in from all over the country. The Assistant Zoo Director position was recently posted nationally. At the Commission meeting on Tuesday I will present my 90 day assessment.

President Ballard called for a motion to approve Mr. Jackson's report.

**MOTION:** Mr. Maranda moved to approve Mr. Jackson's report. Mr. Doye seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Ballard called on Mr. Craver for the director's report.

Mr. Craver stated that activity at the parks are wrapping up. The Bow Hunt at Loud Thunder will begin at the end of the month. It's been a great season.

President Ballard called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Maranda moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Langdon seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Adjourned the meeting at 4:18 PM.

Submitted by:  
Cassie Sullivan  
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant