

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2017**

PRESENT: Committee members - K. Swanson, K. Maranda, D. Cremeens, R. Simmer, C. O'Brien, L. Moreno, E. Langdon.

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Craver, District Director; Ben Mills, Loud Thunder Ranger; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; Todd Collins, Club House Manager; April Palmer, County Auditor; Louisa Ewert, County Treasurer; Carrie Kerr, Treasurer's Office; Scott Lohman.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 3:02 PM on Tuesday, September 12, 2017, in the County Board Office on the second floor of the County Building, Rock Island, Illinois.

President Swanson called for a motion approving August Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Maranda moved to approve August Committee meeting minutes. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion approving August Budget Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Cremeens moved to approve August Budget Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Maranda seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

There was no request for public comment.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2017 Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$56,898.56.

MOTION: Ms. O'Brien moved to approve the fiscal year 2017 Treasurer's Disbursements. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve fiscal year 2018 claims for the Forest Preserve General Fund in the amount of \$117,427.42, Niabi Zoo Fund in the amount of \$146,589.12, Bike Path Improvement Fund in the amount of \$769.93, Marvin Martin Trust Fund in the amount of \$1,963.83, and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$31,398.01.

MOTION: Mr. Maranda moved to approve the fiscal year 2018 claims and treasurer's disbursements. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve fiscal year 2017 and fiscal year 2018 transfers of appropriation in the Forest Preserve General Fund and the Niabi Zoo Fund.

MOTION: Ms. O'Brien moved to approve fiscal year 2017 and fiscal year 2018 transfers of appropriation in the Forest Preserve General Fund and the Niabi Zoo Fund. Mr. Maranda seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked the Committee if there were any of the four resolutions listed on the agenda that they would like to lift out and approve separately.

Mr. Cremeens asked what the Affirming Safe, Welcoming, and Diverse Community resolution was.

No one had any objections to motioning for the three remaining resolutions together.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the semi-annual review of closed session minutes resolution, the Forest Preserve General Fund Grant resolution, and the Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriations for fiscal year 2017 resolution.

MOTION: Dr. Simmer moved to approve the semi-annual review of closed session minutes resolution, the Forest Preserve General Fund Grant resolution, and the Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriations for fiscal year 2017 resolution. Mr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson explained that the Affirming resolution was submitted by the organization One Human Family Quad Cities. This is the same resolution that was passed in several townships and cities in the Quad Cities area. It simply states that the District would uphold the constitution of the State of Illinois and the Federal constitution in regards to offering safe, welcoming facilities without discrimination.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the Affirming a Safe, Welcoming, and Diverse Community resolution.

MOTION: Dr. Simmer moved to approve the Affirming a Safe, Welcoming, and Diverse Community resolution. Mr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried. Mr. Cremeens voted nay.

President Swanson called for a motion to remove from display and approve the Appropriations Ordinances for the fiscal year 2019 Budget.

MOTION: Dr. Simmer moved to remove from display and approve the Appropriations Ordinances for the fiscal year 2019 Budget. Mr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Mr. Craver stated that the estimated unencumbered fund balances had been updated, but that the budget portion of the ordinances were the same.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the ordinance authorizing the issuance of General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source) of the District in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$4,500,000 for the purpose of improving and maintaining Forest Preserve lands and facilities.

MOTION: Mr. Maranda moved to approve the ordinance authorizing the issuance of General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source) of the District in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$4,500,000 for the purpose of improving and maintaining Forest Preserve lands and facilities. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Mr. Craver stated that there have been no changes in the estimated impact of these bonds since they were presented. The bonds will not necessarily impact the aggregate levies of the District long term. That \$1.70 per year for a \$150,000.00 home owner, once other revenues start coming in, could be lowered.

Mr. Cremeens stated that he had heard from a few of his constituents, and they are not in favor of the bonds because of the levy increase. They understand the safety concerns with the spillway, but they feel that the rest of the improvements should be done with profits.

Several of the Committee members stated that they had heard similar sentiment from uninformed constituents, and after explaining some of the reasons and benefits of the improvements the constituents seemed much more receptive to the bonds and improvements. The Committee also encouraged Mr. Cremeens to use those opportunities to educate the public.

Motion carried. Mr. Cremeens voted nay.

President Swanson called for discussion of a wood chopper for the District.

Mr. Craver stated that the wood chipper was a non-budgeted item. However, it would be a valuable tool for the preserves to have. Each of the District's preserves would get a lot of use out of it. The use of a wood chipper would save time, and help prevent workers' compensation cases when the parks are removing hazard trees and invasive species. The money would be appropriated from multiple funds because each facility would be using the equipment. It would also save the District money on mulch purchases.

Mr. Maranda asked if there would be a wench on the wood chipper to feed heavy logs through the chipper so that there would be less chance of injury for District employees.

Mr. Craver stated that it was not included with the specs in the packet, but that could be added if the Committee would like.

Mr. Mills briefly explained the current process of pruning, removing hazard trees and invasive species, and the uses of the mulch that would come from the chipper.

Ms. O'Brien asked if there were sufficient safety features in the model of wood chipper being considered.

Mr. Craver stated that there were. Safety is extremely important to the District.

President Swanson called for a motion to allow moving forward with the bid of a wood chipper with wench.

MOTION: Mr. Moreno moved to allow moving forward with the bid of a wood chipper with wench. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion approving the Intergovernmental Agreement with Rock Island County for services.

MOTION: Dr. Simmer moved to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with Rock Island County for services. Mr. Maranda seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for discussion of the need for a new hay storage facility at Niabi Zoo.

Mr. Craver stated that this was another non-budgeted item. The current structure is inadequate for Niabi's needs, and is in need of a new roof. Mr. Jackson would like to replace it with a pole barn that will suit Niabi's needs much better. The cost is estimated at between \$35,000.00 and \$50,000.00. Staff is actively looking for partnerships in order to cut cost for the project.

President Swanson stated that the Pints for Preservation event brought in ten times the amount than in the previous year, so there is money that could be utilized.

MOTION: Mr. Maranda moved to proceed with the pole barn. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated that Dr. Ross had negotiated an EAV agreement with Exelon that will bring in a substantial amount in property tax revenue. This agreement affects the County, the District, a school District, and a few others. The final draft of that agreement should be out on Friday. I want to encourage everyone to approve the agreement on Tuesday night. The agreement needs to pass each taxing body that it affects in order to complete that negotiation progress.

Mr. Craver went into a brief explanation on how taxing power plants works.

President Swanson called on Ms. Palmer for the Auditor's Reports.

Ms. Palmer stated that on the trial balance report the Liability Fund looks like it's over spending, but that is because the IPARKS payment comes out in August, and that does make up the majority of the budgeted expenses for the Liability Fund. There is still the outstanding loan to the Liability Fund from the General Fund. September is a three pay check month, but the first pay date in September had the money moved at the end of August. That's why those might seem a little low for this time of year on the cash report. On Friday the outside auditor's will be in the office for their field work.

President Swanson asked Mr. Collins if there was anything he'd like to bring attention to from the Indian Bluff reports.

Mr. Collins reported that the month was busy. There were two of biggest Saturdays that I've seen in the past thirteen years.

President Swanson asked Mr. Petersen if there was anything he'd like to bring attention to from the Illiniwek report.

Mr. Petersen reported that August went very well. Camping was up, and Dorrance trails are being utilized.

President Swanson asked Mr. Mills if there was anything he'd like to bring attention to from the Loud Thunder report.

Mr. Mills reported that there were several groups that had events at the park in August. The trail project has gotten a lot of positive feedback. We'll be working with three classes from Augustana. That will be a great partnership for us. The students will be getting information on several things that we've never had information on before. One group is doing water quality surveys of the lake. There's another group that will be doing the stream mapping, so we'll find out how many gallons per acre our watershed is. Last Friday Mr. Craver, President Swanson, Dr. Simmer, and I met with students from Augustana doing a "capstone" project. Great to see all the participation. Eco-camp is next week, and there is a pollinator field trip also.

Mr. Craver asked Mr. Mills and Mr. Petersen to talk a little about their forest management plans.

Mr. Mills stated that next week staff will be treating a 15 ½ acre field in order to plant another prairie. It used to be an agricultural field. Fish and Wild is paying for the seed. There is also an 11 ½ acre fallow field in the timber along one of the trails that will also be restored to prairie.

Mr. Petersen stated that staff is doing the two to three acres per year as prescribed by the forest management plan at Dorrance. At Illiniwek we're doing about three acres a year. Out of the past three years, this is the only year that Living Lands and Waters hasn't helped us out in regards to our forest management activities because they were doing the I-80 project. This winter there is three acres of honeysuckle to remove, which staff will take care of after the camp ground closes down. If we include the ball diamonds, that will be about eight acres of prairie that will be planted this year. River Action will be helping out in removing the ball diamonds and restoring them into prairie and savannah.

Mr. Craver went into great detail in regards to there being no group that wants to utilize the ball diamonds in Illiniwek. Staff would like the Committee's approval to remove the ball diamonds at Illiniwek and plant prairie.

MOTION: Mr. Langdon moved to allow staff to remove the ball diamonds at Illiniwek and plant prairie. Mr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked Mr. Craver if there was anything else he wished to report.

Mr. Craver reported that the Pints for Preservation event brought in over \$30,000.00 this year. The free admission days for Niabi are almost here. Boo at the Zoo will be the last days for Niabi Zoo to be open for the 2017 season.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the routine reports of the District.

MOTION: Mr. Maranda moved to approve the routine reports of the District as presented. Mr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Adjourned the meeting at 4:16 PM.

Submitted by:
Cassie Sullivan
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant