

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
JUNE 12, 2018**

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

ABSENT: K. Swanson.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Craver, District Director; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; Lee Jackson, Zoo Director; Amanda Van Daele, Chief Deputy Auditor; William Nelson, CAB Chairman; Rick Biddle, Schultz & Williams; Jon Stefanson, CLR Designs; Jennifer Finely, CLR Designs; Amy Behning, MindFire Communications.

Dr. Simmer called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 3:31 PM on Tuesday, June 12, 2018, in the Pavilion at Illiniwek Forest Preserve in Hampton, Illinois.

Dr. Simmer called for a motion approving the May Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Maranda moved to approve the May Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

No request for public comment was submitted.

Mr. Jon Stefanson of CLR Designs introduced himself, and passed around a few six page handouts. There are three key steps in putting together the master plan for Niabi. One, the planning process that started in February; two, deciding which were priority projects; three, identifying the next steps. CLR Designs has been handling the master plan aspect, but we encourage facilities to also do a business plan to go hand in hand with the master plan to ensure that the master plan is a feasible one. The business plan aspect is being handled by Schultz & Williams. The Master Plan is put together for ten years, with an eye to take a pause at the five-year point and assess where the facility is in the plan. You wouldn't redo it at that point, but it's good to take a look and evaluate how things are going. There are currently forty-seven acres of developed area at Niabi. Right now the concentration is being put in those existing areas, but there are a few things that are low budget that could be done to utilize the out skirts of the currently developed area. Trails are an example of this, and those could be used for educational programming, and be enjoyed by guests as well. It's important to note that normally two thirds of the time spent at a zoo is not looking at the animals, but enjoying the other things that can be done at the zoo. The plan is looking to improve and rework the existing exhibits, and add a new exhibit. The front area where people first come in is a high priority. Right now there is a lot of dead-zone between the ticket booths and where you see the first animals. Increasing revenue has been a major component of prioritizing the projects. Some of the projects in the plan so far are: expanding the

outdoor area of the Discovery Center, adding a restaurant with an attached Lion Exhibit, expanding the gift shop, turning the old elephant building into a small primates exhibit, adding in Otters and Prairie Dogs to the back area near the cat house, and putting flamingoes in the front pond area. We're also looking at being able to offer a zoo experience in the cooler months of the year when Niabi is normally closed.

Mr. Biddle of Schultz & Williams stated that the business plan works side by side with the master plan. These exhibits and projects need to be sustainable. The business plan puts things in sequence with strategies incorporated to ensure that Niabi is able to fiscally take care of these new and existing exhibits while still taking care of other operating expenses. As you've heard me say before, you need a great story to go out and fundraise and get the community support to fund these projects. It's important to talk about the future, not the past, if you're going to be successful. Showing progress and regaining the AZA accreditation will also be very important to the future success of Niabi. Identifying 10 – 20 key stakeholders in the community will also be paramount in the success. There hasn't been a culture of philanthropy, and that needs to change. There are good things happening at Niabi, and that gives a good platform to blast off from. A successful zoo will have experiences where people want to come back two or three times in a year to see, and right now Niabi doesn't have that. Diversifying will help build audience interest to keep people coming back.

Ms. Sowards asked if the restaurant was envisioned as a seasonal or a year round facility.

Mr. Biddle stated that it would be available all year for events, and it would be open when Niabi was open for general eating. If it's something that would benefit Niabi by being fully open all year, then that would be great.

Mr. Stefanson stated that the possibility of being open all year was something being looked at for down the line.

Mr. Maranda asked if the restaurant was the first project listed in the priorities.

Mr. Biddle answered that the question was could those funds be raised that quickly for that project. It is a high priority project, but as always, it is dependent on fund raising in order to make the vision a reality.

Mr. Nelson stated that there is a lot of excitement from the Community Advisory Board for the plans so far. Last night was the CAB's monthly meeting, and originally it was anticipated to spend half an hour looking at the progress on the master plan, but that portion ended up being around two hours because of the interest and questions and discussions regarding the plans. This is still in the concept stage. It will need money to get the plans built.

Mr. Jackson stated that staff is working to finalize an animal collection plan that would accompany the Master Plan. Should be ready to turn in AZA application before

September first. It will be approximately six to eight weeks before the plan is finalized and ready to be brought to Committee for approval.

Dr. Simmer called for a motion to approve the claims for the Forest Preserve General Fund in the amount of \$57,698.42, Niabi Zoo Fund claims in the amount of \$115,059.37, Liability Fund claims in the amount of \$822.98, Loud Thunder Spillway & Camping Improvements Fund claims in the amount of \$10,000.00, Marvin Martin Fund claims in the amount of \$4,473.44, and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$142,586.91.

MOTION: Ms. O'Brien moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements. Mr. Cremeens seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Simmer called for a motion to approve the transfers of appropriation in the General Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund.

MOTION: Mr. Moreno moved to approve the transfers of appropriation in the General Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Simmer called for a motion to approve the Appropriation Amendment Resolution for the General Fund.

MOTION: Mr. Moreno moved to approve the Appropriation Amendment Resolution for the General Fund. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Simmer called for a motion to approve the Appropriation Amendment for the Niabi Zoo Fund.

MOTION: Ms. O'Brien moved to approve the Appropriation Amendment for the Niabi Zoo Fund. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Simmer called for a motion to approve the Prevailing Wage resolution.

MOTION: Mr. Moreno moved to approve the Prevailing Wage resolution. Mr. Maranda seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Simmer called for a motion to approve the low bid for the Model 2018 full size 4x4 truck with eight-foot bed for Illiniwek.

MOTION: Ms. Sowards moved to approve the low bid for the Model 2018 full size 4x4 truck with eight-foot bed for Illiniwek. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion.

Mr. Maranda stated that he would prefer to go with the Reynolds Ford bid because they are within the taxing district.

Mr. Craver stated that the bid included trading in an old truck, and it would be preferred to transfer that truck to Niabi. It still has some life in it, so staff would like approval for the amount without the trade-in.

Ms. O'Brien stated that if the trade-in was taken out of the bid totals, then the bids would be the same. Going with the in county bid [Reynolds Ford] would be preferable.

AMENDMENT: Ms. Sowards amended the motion to approve the Reynolds bid for up to \$27,546.36. Ms. O'Brien seconded.

Motion carried.

Dr. Simmer called for a motion to approve the Dorrance light project by Musco Inc.

Mr. Craver gave a brief explanation of the quote, and explained that the money was available, and had been planned, with the Development Fund. \$25,000.00 of the project would come from URICRA who has been fundraising for the project.

MOTION: Mr. Moreno moved to approve the Dorrance light Project by Musco Inc. Mr. Maranda seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Simmer called on Ms. Van Daele for the Auditor's reports.

Ms. Van Daele stated that all funds are within budget spending. There is one more month of the fiscal year left, and there will still be opportunity to back date things into this fiscal year for two months after. On the Fund Balances report General Fund is up \$40,000.00 from last year at this time, and the Liability Fund now has a positive fund balance.

Dr. Simmer asked Mr. Petersen if there was anything he'd like to bring attention to in his Illiniwek report.

Mr. Petersen stated that there were lots of field trips in May. An Eagle Scout project was recently finished; a Gaga Ball Pit, which is very similar to Dodge Ball. It seems to be popular with the kids. Another Eagle Scout project is coming soon. That one will be to

remove the steps to the scenic overlook. Several events are coming in June, including a concert in the pavilion.

Dr. Simmer asked Mr. Jackson if there was anything he'd like to bring attention to in his report.

Mr. Jackson stated that volunteer master gardeners planted a "pollinator pocket" garden outside of the entrance to the Australia area. There were 125 field trip groups in May. Five hundred milkweed plants were planted at Niabi with the help of Mr. Petersen. Mother's Day was a great turn out, and Father's day is this weekend. Year to date memberships are up from last year.

There was a brief discussion regarding the river docks at both Illiniwek and Loud Thunder, and the fact that the river levels have been consistently too high to have the docks in.

Dr. Simmer asked Mr. Craver if there was anything he'd like to bring attention to in his director's report.

Mr. Craver stated that he had been sending out weekly updates to Commissioners. Weather has had many ups and downs so far this season. The plans for the improvements at Loud Thunder are about fifty percent complete. The Dam repairs are still in the planning stages, and that project has priority over the improvements. There is an opportunity to expand the Marvin Martin Conservation Area, and that map is in the packet. Should be able to get that for a nominal fee.

MOTION: Ms. O'Brien moved to approve pursuing the acquisition of the land indicated on the map for the Marvin Martin Conservation Area. Mr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Ms. Behning stated that Illiniwek bike rentals will begin July first. Working on promoting Charity events at Indian Bluff. The event for Niabi's World Giraffe Day is sold out, and the enrichment videos that are on FaceBook have been extremely well received. Some have even gone viral. The Loud Thunder Trail Maps are completed.

Mr. Craver also pointed out the new brochures for the parks are completed and have been available.

Ms. Behning stated that the District website update has been completed and has helped in some of the frustrations staff has had to deal with. Work continues on updates to Niabi's website.

MOTION: Mr. Moreno moved to approve all routine reports of the District. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Adjourned the meeting at 4:48 PM.

Two members of the Committee went on a tour of the Illiniwek Forest Preserve where Mr. Petersen pointed out various projects that have recently been completed. As a majority of a quorum was not present, the meeting was adjourned before the tour.

Submitted by:
Cassie Sullivan
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant