

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION
JANUARY 21, 2020 – 6:57 PM
PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON PRESIDING

1. Karen Kinney, County Clerk, called the roll: (Record)

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, P. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, L. Sargent, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl, K. Swanson

TOTAL PRESENT 23

P. Moreno, S. Noyd

TOTAL ABSENT 2

2. President Swanson stated, "It appears with the crowd, Mr. Craver got out too."

Mr. Craver stated, "I'm here."

President Swanson added, "There we go. We moved quickly, Mr. Craver. We are already to the presentation. Uh, you know that we try to reserve a few minutes for Commissioner Development where we have a chance to take a strategic look at certain components of the work of the Commission and of the Forest Preserve District. Tonight, it happens to be our esteemed executive, Mr. Jeff Craver. I ask you to please give him your attention and then be ready to ask questions when he is done. Mr. Craver, the floor is yours."

Commissioner Maranda stated, "No, just move over a little so you are on the mic."

Mr. Craver stated, "I was just sort of saying, anyway...I don't have an opening joke. That works. Uh, how is everybody doing this evening? Is everybody getting their fill of winter, especially after this past weekend? There is a little silver lining...is that at least the days are getting slightly longer, so spring is inching here day by day. So, if you are one like me who looks outside and just trembles, it is what it is. But, moving on, um, yes, as President Swanson said, over the past couple of years we have brought up partners and staffing here to speak to all you folks and talk about those partnerships and objectives we are trying to reach throughout the District. Um, we will continue to do so throughout the year. Uh, this year, if there is any particular individual that has spoken in the past or somebody outside the realm of who we have been able to get up here, I am more than happy to try to reach out to those folks. I am trying to continue to bring new faces up here to show everyone and let them tell their story. Everybody that's been here, including the staff have been very appreciative of your time. Um, so, if there is anybody that I have missed or left out, let me know. I would be more than happy to get them scheduled here. Now those partnerships are obviously very significant to the

District. They help us out and expand our (inaudible) and expand our reach and our missions. I just want to highlight a few positive things that we will be doing in 2020 throughout the District. Recently, I believe it was last year; we passed our Comprehensive Master Plan. I know that you folks in the past have used that Master Plan to set staff goals. With staff goals, there are budget goals and it all falls in line. Um, so we are trying to tackle things in a timely and efficient manner. So, obviously there has been an emphasis on trying to compensate for revenues throughout the District. Uh, last year we reported that 2018 was the wettest season on record and 2019 was the sixth wettest season on record. Um, but luckily through some timing and the efforts of staff through special events, we have been able to keep user satisfaction high. If you look at your Budget Report this month, you can see revenues throughout the District on specific GL's are starting to climb. We are starting to get back to our averages. In 2019, May was a very difficult month for us. The past two seasons have been trying. I think I have been reporting in my reports that staff's efforts to put forth a seasonal or annual event and they put in all that time into the planning and preparation to see it rain from dusk 'til dawn is a little disheartening. Uh, but we'll continue with that. On the positive side of things, reported last month in the General Fund still remains significantly healthy with roughly seven months of reserves. Um, per District Policy is a minimum of 5 months. The Zoo, IMRF and Liability they have five or six months of reserves. All of those funds are needing that with exception of the Zoo; which has a three month reserve, uh or 90 days; which is still acceptable in terms of fiduciary management and best practices amongst most folks. So, like I said the positive thing is things are starting to climb. The lake at Lake George filled back up. There is a lot of excitement there about the lake and a lot of excitement about the camp grounds. Uh, the damage from the flooding at Illiniwek was not as bad as what we thought. Um, we are just hoping that we don't see it again. But unfortunately, some folks are predicting another severe flood this year. So, hopefully, the snow goes away and we get an early summer melt for everyone's sake in the community here. I have a long list of other things that I would like to try to address but our biggest priority this year is going to be implementation of our software, um, aligning all of the facilities into one software point of sale system. Um, I am hoping for the District, the benefit is we will be able to develop a user base and be able to reach people beyond what we are able to do. I know our regular customers that we do with our social/MindFire continues to assist the District with that. Um, it's been...we continue to grow out numbers. I have talked to other individuals in the community. They are very, very jealous of the numbers of people who follow Niabi Zoo. Um, we are hoping that we can get the rest of those facilities up there. Um, we are seeing lots of positive comments in regards to the lake. One of the notes that I had was that the biting was good and we are seeing a lot this year. Um, people are very excited about the docks. We really hope to capitalize on West Lake. Um, there has been some renovation. If you've been on I280; driven and seen the park off to the left you've seen the great big mud holes. And so, that construction over there will last a year. There are a lot of people that have hash-tagged we should go...or another place to go...mention

that etc... We hope to make those folks users and make them repeat users. If we can get them to be users and repeat users, we also hope to have them as supporters. Uh, the second big initiative that we need to get done this year is to capitalize on those supporters and working with the CAB and getting our foundation completed for the zoo and the rest of the forest preserves so we have a fundraising arm and an ability to accept gifts. As I said, if we can get people to become users and supporters of our mission, many of the folks out there are supporters who might not necessarily become users. This will be a way for us to capitalize on that by getting that foundation in place. Mr. Nelson has been wonderful to work with as well as the rest of the folks. We could use additional members, so if there are friends, community members, uh, those of you who know folks...please pass the names along. We would love to speak with them to get them involved to help with the Zoo and the rest of the Forest Preserve to continue to be an extreme asset to not only Rock Island but the community. Is there anything else that you would kind of like me to touch on? I tried to talk slow for you this time, Rod." (Laughter)

Commissioner Simmer stated, "Thanks, I appreciate it."

President Swanson stated, "One second for your mic."

Mr. Simmer stated, "Testing. I just want to say, Jeff, we talked about it during Committee but just that we are running a little bit behind so if anybody asked questions, we are on task but might be a little behind opening camps and places, we'll see how the weather treats us. We are in whether it's..."

President Swanson interrupted, "For the Loud Thunder agreement."

Mr. Craver stated, "The campgrounds at Loud Thunder, uh, we do have a contract with a substantial completion date of May. Um, if you were out there this fall, um, you saw some work began and then it became very, very intermittent. Um, we don't have a working day contract. There is a substantial completion date and I apologize, I don't know the exact date except May of 2020. But there is a substantial completion date with liquidated damages associated to that. Um, they have been working pretty significantly. There is an excavator and there are trucks constantly going up and down the lake. And so, they are taking and removing land fill. Equipment is being stationed. The plumbing...they first have to run the sewer and septic lines. Then, electricity will come in...err, then the water will come in and then the electricity will come in. Obviously, they are not going to be doing and concrete or asphalt work. Um, that's one of my big concerns come May, if we do have an extended winter/spring season, the delay for some of those asphalt production facilities opening up. Um, but we put in some protections for the District. Um, the project was left and they were able to start back in August. So, I don't know why they didn't take advantage of working days

when they presented themselves back in September and October, but we really don't have the authority to dictate how or when they work."

Commissioner Simmer was recognized.

Mr. Simmer stated, "Again, I just want to...just so you guys know what's on task and should get some relief, and so if anybody asks, you know, it will be done weather permitting...we fought it last year. So, just tell them to be patient and we'll try to get it done this year but just that that's my biggest point, just to bear with us."

Mr. Craver added, "Yeah."

Mr. Simmer added, "If anybody asks, it might go a little late."

Mr. Craver added, "I wish they would have taken more of an initiative to try to knock it out as quickly as possible, um, but they are the professionals and they know what they are doing. They have a plan in place. Work was slow but it seems to be really picking up. Um, the timing and weather might become an issue for them. There's ways to combat some of that stuff."

Mr. Simmer stated, "Thanks, Jeff."

Commissioner O'Brien was recognized.

Mr. O'Brien asked, "I am going to ask a question and the answer is probably fairly obvious, but you said the weather has been a factor over the last two...the wettest weather in the last two years. Would you say...obviously, it's affected revenue...and the County Board, we can't be held responsible for the weather, of course. We are responsible for everything else. But, how bad would you say the revenues have been affected? I mean, I know it's kind of a ball park. Is it pretty drastic? I've been out to Indian Bluff and it's been pouring down rain, plus the place was empty."

Mr. Craver stated, "That's a good example. Uh, the golf course this past fall, we had 10 out of 12 Sat...err, Sundays from like August to October which there was rain. Uh, luckily the rain came later in the day. So, if we had an outing scheduled or if there were morning tee times, those folks were able to get in and we were still able to capitalize on that. Um, our big three is, you know, where we see a lot of activity at the campgrounds is, obviously, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day, um, and another big day for activity we were lucky enough to have some decent weather in October for Boo at the Zoo. It's one of the larger attended days. Um, so, there are some extreme variables there, but when you get x amount of rain and the golf course is only open six days or whatever it was,

seven/eight days...in the month of May, it takes its toll. Um, I really don't have a specific answer for you."

President Swanson stated, "If you put it into context, some of you may remember that we had our report in the previous year; which is not as wet as 2019, they found that there was not a single zoo in Illinois or Iowa that made its revenue projections because the weather kept hitting on weekends. Remember that? Brookfield, Blank Park...nobody made their revenue projections because everybody across the region was nailed on weekends."

Mr. Craver stated, "I think I passed along one of the National golf articles that talked about the Midwest region where golf was severely impacted everywhere, um, in the past two years. But specifically, what month or what year it kind of fluctuates. We get lucky sometimes and sometimes we don't get lucky. But...with...and we have two different parks. RV campers are willing to come out and test the rain because they have the creature comforts of an RV, tent campers not so much."

President Swanson asked, "Any other questions?"

Mr. Simmer stated, "The one thing is, we are still doing fine and we have a five month reserve. Jeff has set us up in a good position where we aren't hurting; we are still holding our own just fine. But, of course, we would like to gain and not just tread water. We want to make it up the river, so we are doing fine. These setbacks have not set us back financially, they only slowed us down on our progression, I guess, so."

Mr. Craver answered, "Right...yeah. We haven't been able to reach our typical number of users. And, kudos to the staff for holding back on staff and using the supplies and the funds that we have prudently to save where we can. Obviously, if there's rain, we are not bringing people in. It was hard for people to cut the grass in May, so...there were labor saving costs and operating supply costs savings there. Um, so, we luckily I have a very conscientious staff that watches the budgets and I conscientiously remind them of their budgets throughout the month."

President Swanson added, "And just so everyone is aware what Dr. Simmer is saying is the reason a five month reserve is desirable for the Forest Preserve District is like accounting, you get cyclical revenues on tax but the Forest Preserve is doubly weather, err seasonal right? Because there is only a small window where you are going to get your primary revenues and that seems to keep getting messed with...with the weather. So, it's good that we have it, yeah. Are there any other questions of Mr. Craver? Alright, Mr. Craver, thank you for your leadership and thank you for talking tonight."

Mr. Craver stated, "I would like to say thank you to all of you, Louisa, April and Karen for your time and your support for entrusting me and the staff to allow us to do what we do. Most of us have been in this field since teenagers, uh, in one way or the other. Uh, for most of us it's been a life's passion whether it's the Zoo, the Golf course or working at the parks. So, uh, we all really love what we do and again, thank you for entrusting us to do what we do, alright."

(Group applause)

3. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the December 17, 2019, Forest Preserve Commission minutes, as presented. Commissioner Cremeens seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS: (None)**

5. **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "Just a couple of things... It's unfortunate everybody who is here gets a chance to hang out and doesn't get to hear any of the other good stuff. Uh, they would hear what's going on at Niabi. If you haven't seen the media coverage, we have a new colobus monkey baby, 'Kindoo' and his older brother 'Katabe' drew a lot of revenue and attendance and we are hoping that Kindoo follows in that. We have a new litter of fennec foxes. And they are the ones with the really big bat ears. So, it's going to be an exciting year at the Zoo, very much so. Uh, yeah...uh, the other reason that I regret folks aren't here, uh, is that sometimes, there was a gentleman that was here earlier this evening who wrote a letter to the editor published I think yesterday that I think had a factual error. Uh, you are not being asked to approve a \$3 million dollar bond issue. That is something that you've already done and should take proud credit for because it created the first major improvement at Loud Thunder Forest Preserve since Rod Simmer and I were in High School and we are not telling you how long ago that was. So, you should be proud of having that fore sight. And then, we couldn't share the good news that photographer Quinn Patrick has landed us in the Illinois Parks Association Calendar. (Applause) I've got some spare copies up here. So, we made November, so way to go Quinn."

6. Commissioner Vyncke moved to approve the Forest Preserve General Fund claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$322,001.40, as presented. Commissioners Normoyle and L. Moreno seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, P. O'Brien, R. Oelke, L. Sargent, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 20

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriation in the General Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund, as presented. Commissioners Deppe and Adams seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, P. O'Brien, R. Oelke, L. Sargent, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 20

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the Resolution regarding The Semi-Annual Review of Closed Session Minutes, as presented. Commissioners Simmer and Vyncke seconded.

(Note** The Resolution is in .pdf format and begins on the next page)

Resolution
Rock Island County Forest Preserve District
Re: Open Meetings Act Review of Minutes of a Meeting Lawfully Closed

WHEREAS, the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission strictly adheres to all provisions of the Open Meetings Act as defined in 5 ILCS 120; and

WHEREAS, 5 ILCS 120/2.06(c), calls for periodic review of minutes of meetings lawfully closed to determine if the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of these minutes or that the minutes or portions thereof no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection; and

WHEREAS, during regular committee meetings held during the month of January, 2020; Rock Island County Forest Preserve has reviewed minutes of closed meetings for all previously held closed sessions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following meeting minutes have been determined to contain matters where the need for confidentiality still exists:


<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Reason for Closed Session</u>
08-08-1986	Personnel
12-05-1986	Personnel
02-08-1991	Personnel & Potential Liability
07-10-1992	Personnel
02-05-1993	Investments contracts
05-07-1993	Personnel
08-15-1995	Personnel
08-05-2005	Litigation
09-30-2010	Personnel
10-08-2010	Personnel
12-03-2010	Personnel
03-04-2011	Personnel
04-05-2012	Personnel
06-05-2012	Personnel
06-07-2012	Personnel
06-08-2012	Personnel
06-27-2012	Personnel
06-28-2012	Personnel
10-15-2012	Litigation & Personnel
07-11-2013	Personnel
09-12-2013	Litigation
11-14-2013	Litigation & Personnel
12-12-2013	Litigation & Personnel
01-16-2014	Litigation & Personnel
11-13-2014	Litigation
02-11-2015	Personnel
04-16-2015	Personnel
10-14-2015	Personnel
11-10-2015	Personnel
02-16-2016	Potential Litigation
03-17-2016	Personnel
04-12-2016	Personnel

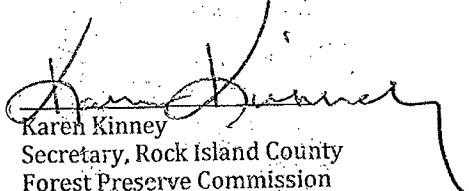
06-15-2016
01-10-2017
04-11-2017
01-09-2018
11-13-2018

Litigation
Litigation
Litigation
Personnel
Personnel & Land Acquisition

This *Resolution* to become effective immediately after passage. Minutes of those meetings determined to be made available for public inspection will be released as per the Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2.06(b).

DONE IN OPEN MEETING THIS 21st DAY OF JANUARY, 2020


Kai Swanson
President, Rock Island County
Forest Preserve Commission


Karen Kinney
Secretary, Rock Island County
Forest Preserve Commission

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loffin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, P. O'Brien, R. Oelke, L. Sargent, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 21

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the Sexual Harassment Policy Amendment, as presented. Commissioners Adams and Morthland seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loffin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, P. O'Brien, R. Oelke, L. Sargent, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 21

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve the amendment to the Regular Part-Time and Temporary Employee Pay Policy, as presented. Commissioner Langdon seconded.

President Swanson stated, "This is to bring us into compliance with the new state laws regarding compensation."

Commissioner Deppe was recognized.

Mr. Deppe asked, "Just for clarification, line 1 says Full-Time employees that works over 30 hours...line 2 says a Part Time is one who works less than 20 hours. What is an employee who works 20-30 hours because it is not talked about?"

President Swanson stated, "I assume they are Part-Time."

Commissioner Maranda stated, "Part Time is up to 29...the book says up to 29."

President Swanson added, "The only discrepancy here is if you are at 30 and above you are Full and anything below that you'd be...exactly."

Mr. Deppe added, "Right, but the second line says if you are a Part-Time employee, one who works less than 20 hours a week."

President Swanson asked, "Do we need to clean that up, Mr. Craver?"

Mr. Craver stated, "That's on an average throughout the calendar year."

Mr. Deppe replied, "Okay."

Commissioner Vyncke was recognized.

Mr. Craver interrupted, "I could put more definitive language, but that's based on a calendar year."

Ms. Kinney stated, "Vyncke is on."

Mr. Vyncke stated, "If you go out and read that, it says can't earn more than 1,000 hrs in a 12 month period. So, I think that's kind of a General Synopsis that is set."

President Swanson added, "And, I think you are just taking this language from the State Association?"

Mr. Craver answered, "No. I mean, that's...that's...there is language which defines Full Time employees in the bargaining agreement and that 1,000 cap is IMRF standard language and is pertinent to our contract."

President Swanson asked, "Does that address your question?"

Mr. Deppe answered, "Yes, it's just because at Full Time you get benefits and Part Time you don't. It needed to be clarified."

President Swanson stated, "Right. Mr. Moreno did you have a...?"

Mr. L. Moreno stated, "No. I was going to make that comment also."

President Swanson asked, "Are there any further questions or discussion?"

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loffin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, P. O'Brien, R. Oelke, L. Sargent, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 21

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

11. Comments from Commissioners: (None)

President Swanson stated, "I am always glad to hear what you have to say in case you don't catch me in open session."

12. Commissioner Simmer moved to approve all Routine Reports from the Director and Departments Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission. Commissioner O'Brien seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission is Tuesday, February 18, 2020, immediately following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board.

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting recessed.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



KAREN KINNEY
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

KK:rw