

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 20, 2005**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday September 20, 2005 at the Conference Room East at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Fauci called the meeting to order. In attendance were committee members, Ms. Fauci, Mr. Gudmunson, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Lyle, Mr. Rosemier, and Ms. Turner. Also in attendance were Mr. Hannan, Forest Preserve Superintendent, Mr. Gary Hanson, DeKalb County Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Greg Millburg, Mr. Michael Haines, and Ms. Donna Prain.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci asked for any corrections or additions to the August minutes. There were no corrections voiced. **It was moved by Mr. Lyle, seconded by Mr. Rosemier to approve the minutes. All members were in favor, and the motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Fauci made the following changes to the meeting agenda. The presentation by Michael Haines will be moved from general discussion to immediately following approval of the agenda. The proposal of a film policy for the Forest Preserve District will be added to the general discussion item. **Moved by Ms. Turner, seconded by Mr. Rosemier, it was carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda for the meeting.**

CITIZENS FOR OPEN SPACE SURVEY REPORT

Mr. Michael Haines gave the results of a referendum survey to the committee. The survey of 400 registered voters from DeKalb County was completed by American Viewpoint from Washington DC. The results of the survey indicated a strong positive response to the question of a referendum for the purpose of raising funds for the purchase of open space land. Mr. Rosemier asked if the information from the survey could be shared with the committee. Mr. Haines said that part of the information can be shared with the committee, and he will make arrangements to e-mail the data to Mr. Hannan and Mr. Gudmunson. Mr. Hannan suggested to the committee that rather than a bond referendum, a better alternative would be to raise the Forest Preserve corporate tax rate to .0600. This would be an additional tax of \$15.00 per year on a \$175,000.00 home, and 5.6 cents per year on an acre of agricultural land. Ms. Fauci asked Mr. Haines if the tax rate amounts were given as part of the poll. Mr. Haines responded that the tax rates were not given as part of the poll. Mr. Anderson clarified that this proposal is a permanent tax increase rather than a bond. Mr. Haines interjected that the tax increase can be made for a definite length of time, i.e., a 20 year cutoff can be part of the referendum. Mr. Anderson asked how much this increase would generate for the Forest Preserve District. Mr. Haines said that an additional \$500,000.00 per year will be available for the purchase of land. Ms. Fauci added that one of the benefits of the tax increase is the avoidance of the high interest

payback rates on a bond. Mr. Haines further added that a benefit of the bond is the immediate availability of funds for the purchase of land. Mr. Haines reminded the committee that the Forest Preserve does have willing sellers of land right now, and DeKalb County has less forest preserve land than the counties to the north and east of DeKalb County. Mr. Haines told the committee that it is possible to purchase the land and continue to collect taxes. Mr. Anderson asked how this could be accomplished. Mr. Haines explained that if the farmland is rented out for farming, taxes would still be collected on the acreage. Ms. Donna Prain shared with the committee a greenways and trails map from Winnebago and Boone county. Mr. Hannan suggested to the committee that there is a need for expertise to take the Forest Preserve District through the referendum process. Mr. Hannan provided the name of a legal advisor who is available to guide the district through the process of preparation and follow-through of the referendum. The cost of the advisor is less than \$1,000.00 and the fee is collected only if the referendum passes. Ms. Fauci added that the Batavia school district recently passed a referendum, which is now being challenged in the court, which is an indication of the need for an advisor with expertise in this type of matter. Mr. Hannan wanted the committee to be aware that the \$4,000.00 that was paid for the survey came from a private donation, and was not paid from tax funds. Ms. Fauci asked for any other questions by the committee. Mr. Hanson addressed the committee and said that it would be in the best interest of the committee to pay the \$1,000.00 and have the correct wording on the referendum. Mr. Anderson stated that he is uncomfortable with the money for this advisor coming from this committee and wondered if there was any non-tax money available to pay the advisor. Mr. Haines asked Mr. Hanson how much was paid to the advisor on another recent county referendum. Mr. Hanson responded that legal and financial consulting has been paid by the county. Mr. Haines then added that there is a precedent set for paying consultants by the County. Mr. Anderson was concerned about the description given to him by Mr. Hannan of this individual. The terms legal advisor and financial advisor have both been used. Mr. Anderson further responded that the committee needs additional information about the advisor prior to the October committee meeting. Mr. Hannan told the committee that an informational fact sheet and bio will be given to the committee. Ms. Fauci stressed that this is the reason that a legal advisor is so important, to prevent errors in the referendum wording and process. Mr. Gudmunson asked Mr. Hannan if Forest Preserve land can be resold. Mr. Hannan said that the land can be traded or exchanged, but cannot be sold. Mr. Hanson suggested that all questions by the committee be submitted by a certain date to allow for the information to be obtained by the October meeting. Ms. Fauci suggested that the cutoff for questions be October 4th, and that any questions from the committee be sent to Mr. Hannan or Mr. Hanson. Ms. Fauci added that there will be a vote on the referendum and a vote on the advisor at the October committee meeting.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS BID OPENING

Mr. Hannan requested bids for capital improvements consisting of burial of electrical service at Chief Shabbona Forest Preserve and the construction of a metal

maintenance storage building at Afton Forest Preserve. Mr. Hannan sent out 8 bid proposal packets to area electricians and received only 1 bid from David Turner Electrical of Shabbona Illinois in the amount of \$10,080.00. Mr. Hannan said that this rate is in line with the cost of recent work of this same nature done at other preserves. Mr. Hannan sent out 6 bid packets for a 30' x 36' x10' metal maintenance storage building and received 2 bids. Mr. Hannan added that the specifications for the building were reviewed by Mr. Toby Petrie, of the DeKalb County Planning and Zoning Department. The bidders were B & M Construction of Waterman Illinois with a bid of \$15,247.24, and Zenz Building of DeKalb Illinois with a bid of \$16,400.00. The bids were read and reviewed by the committee. There were several questions about the specifications submitted by the bidders and Mr. Hannan is going to contact the bidders for clarification of items such as the siding, the color of the roof, the size of the overhead door. The committee gave its consensus to accept the bid from Zenz Building upon clarification and acceptance of the information received by Mr. Hannan. The committee gave its consensus to accept the bid from David Turner Electric. **Mr. Gudmunson made a motion to accept the bids by David Turner Electric and Zenz Building upon approval of specifications by Mr. Hannan. Ms. Turner seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.**

FISCAL YEAR 2006 BUDGET

Mr. Hannan gave the committee some updated information for their budget packets. The total FY 06 budget is \$450,200.00. \$100,000.00 from the wetland mitigation bank will be paid toward the Potawatomi Woods acquisition loan. The remaining balance on the loan would then be \$223,750.00. The estimated balance of the wetland mitigation bank by the end of FY05 will be \$430,074.00. The estimated expenditures for wetland maintenance for the remainder of the FY is \$32,000.00, leaving a final balance of \$298,074.00 including the loan payment. If the remaining balance on the loan is paid off early, there will be approximately \$60,000.00 in the wetland mitigation bank, and the Potawatomi Woods loan will be retired early. There is no interest on the loan until 11-30-2006, and then the interest rate is 4% per year. Mr. Anderson asked Mr. Hannan the number of full time Forest Preserve employees. Mr. Hannan answered 3. Mr. Anderson questioned why the budget shows 4. Mr. Hannan explained that the cumulative part time Forest Preserve employees make up the 4th full time position. Mr. Anderson questioned the request for insurance coverage for 4 employees. Mr. Hanson responded to Mr. Anderson that employees working at a minimum of 75% are eligible for insurance coverage. Mr. Anderson asked how many hours per week Mr. Steve Wades works. Mr. Hannan responded that Mr. Wade works 30 hours per week, 8+ hours per week are with Forest Preserve staff at other forest preserves, the remaining time, including weekends, at Sannauk Forest Preserve. Mr. Anderson asked the age of Mr. Wade, and Ms. Fauci questioned the relevance of that to the budget. Mr. Anderson responded that labor costs are up 8.8% in this budget. Mr. Rosemier added that it is normal for most county departments to increase labor line items by 8.8%. Mr. Hanson clarified for the committee that the employee don't get the entire 8.8% increase, the figure includes

increases in insurance costs as well. Ms. Fauci asked if grant money is ever used to cover employee salaries. Mr. Hannan responded no. Mr. Hanson addressed the committee and suggested that they consider publishing the higher tax levy so that the Forest Preserve District does not forever lose the option for this tax income from new construction. Mr. Hannan reminded the committee that the budget will come before them again in October for discussion. Mr. Hannan added that the district does have approximately \$45,000.00 as a fund balance. This could be used for emergencies, a trail resurfacing fund, special patrols of the parks, or other items. Mr. Rosemier asked for confirmation that the higher tax rate (6.5% to 7.9%) would provide an additional \$6,000 for the Forest Preserve District for the entire year. Mr. Hannan responded affirmatively. Ms. Fauci suggested that the committee should consider the higher tax levy rate. Mr. Hannan reported that at the October committee meeting the truth in taxation resolution, budget and levy resolution, transfers and appropriations resolution, and referendum resolution will be brought before the committee. Mr. Anderson asked Mr. Hannan if the Forest Preserve District purchases their fuel from the County Highway Department. Mr. Hannan said that they purchase most of their fuel from the Highway Department, and also from Hintzsche Oil for the fuel tanks at the Afton Maintenance Building.

MONTHLY REPORT

Mr. Hannan passed along information to the committee about a star gazing party to be held at Afton Forest Preserve on October 1st. Mr. Hannan also spoke of a fund raiser to be held by Blumen Gardens of Sycamore for the Potawatomi Woods development. The money raised will be eligible for matching grant money.

FOREST PRESERVE FILM POLICY

Mr. Hannan has been approached by Tower productions to use Sannauk Forest Preserve for filming. This production company used Sannauk in the past for filming. It was suggested that the Forest Preserve committee adopt a film policy, and Mr. Hannan provided the committee with a copy of a policy similar to the one used by the County for filming at the Court House. Ms. Fauci suggested that the committee allow this request and create a policy that can be forwarded to the full board. Mr. Lyle asked about security at the preserve. Mr. Hannan said that the production company provides their own security, and the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office does extra patrol if needed. There was discussion about the rate charged to for the use of the preserves, and what language should be added to the policy for add-ons including provisions for electrical power. These items will be discussed further.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

There were no additional comments by the committee.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Rosemier made a motion to go into executive session. Mr. Anderson seconded. A roll call vote was taken and all members voted aye.

EXEMPT EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

It was moved by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Rosemier to move out of executive session. Everyone voted yes to the motion.

When out of executive session it was stated that Terry Hannan had completed his work objectives and that he had given the county a great year as superintendent. The committee decided to wait and see what was decided in the executive committee regarding merit pay of exempt employees and follow that decision.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Lyle, it was carried unanimously by voice vote to adjourn the meeting.

Attached are monthly reports and Forest Preserve activities.

Chairwoman
Julia Fauci