

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 19, 2006**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Committee met Tuesday, September 19, 2006 at the Nehring Forest Preserve at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were committee members Ms. Fauci, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Lyle, Ms. Turner, Mr. Rosemier and Superintendent Terry Hannan. Guests included Greg Milburg and Gary Hanson (County Finance Director). Mr. Gudmunson arrived after the call to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of August 15, 2006. Hearing none, Mr. Rosemier moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Lyle and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Fauci asked if there were any additions or alterations to the agenda. Hearing none, Ms. Turner moved to approve the agenda as submitted, seconded by Mr. Rosemier and the motion passed unanimously.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Fauci then welcomed the guests, Greg Milburg of the Farm Bureau and Gary Hanson, County Finance Director. She noted that Mr. Hanson was attending to assist the committee with any procedural questions related to the budget discussions later in the agenda.

Mr. Hannan then provided the committee with a brief history of the Nehring Preserve area. Highlights included its 25 acre size and the fact that it contains open fields, a loop trail, meadow and proximity to the Kishwaukee River. He closed by noting that the preserve is currently undergoing an Oak Savannah restoration in conjunction with the District's Stewardship program.

TRACTOR/LOADER BID OPENINGS

Ms. Fauci began by noting that this was a bid to replace a 31 year old John Deere tractor that has reached the end of its useful life. She then asked Mr. Rosemier to open the bids submitted and Mr. Anderson and Mr. Gudmunson to lead the review of the bids submitted. 4 bids were received with one bid each from DeKalb Implement, Payline West Elgin and 2 bids from J.D. Buck Brothers of Hampshire.

Following an extensive comparison of the bids and discussion of the qualifications submitted it was determined that the bid from Buck Bros. was the lowest.

Mr. Anderson then moved to accept the lowest bid which fulfilled the specifications as advertised. Mr. Turner seconded and the committee held additional discussions regarding the necessity of loaded tires and ballast. This discussion ensued due to the fact that the

loaded tires and ballast would result in a slightly higher cost than the base tractor/loader but would greatly improve its usefulness.

Following additional discussion, Mr. Anderson amended his motion to include loaded tires and ballast raising the final total for the tractor /loader to \$16,595.60. Ms. Turner seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Hannan was to compare bids also and contact Buck Bros. for order and delivery.

FY2007 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ms. Fauci began by asking Mr. Hanson to please clarify for the committee the principle of tax levies, as there had been some questions during the previous meeting.

Mr. Hanson then spoke on the difficulties that occur if a taxing body does not levy to its maximum level in its initial years. Due to the tax cap provisions that apply thereafter, such bodies may never find themselves able to tax to their allowable levels in future years. Therefore, he noted that the budget document was prepared with the presumption that the District will levy to the full .06% allowable by the referendum.

Mr. Anderson clarified that his question was not about the application of the levy, but rather why the anticipated dollars from the referendum had increased between the time of the vote and this budget document. Mr. Hannan and Mr. Hanson explained that at the time of the referendum, the 2005 Equalized Assessed Value for the county had not been fully finalized and it was an estimate. The budget document has been prepared using the finalized EAV numbers which had come in higher than had been anticipated. Mr. Hanson also pointed out that there was no specified amount of revenue to be collected in the ballot language. The ballot question had been to raise the rate to .06%. He further noted that the amount of increase per home had stayed exactly as it had been at the time of the referendum.

Mr. Anderson then asked if any portion of this year's anticipated income from the referendum was being placed into a maintenance account. Mr. Hannan replied that it was not as there was no maintenance for new acquisitions established at this time but in future years there would be with new acquisition sites to manage and maintain. He noted that it is allowable within the referendum guidelines to defer dedicating maintenance dollars until they are actually needed within the first years. Mr. Hanson then again noted that there was no requirement in the referendum that 10% of the dollars be put aside every year of the levy. Mr. Anderson noted that he just wanted to clarify that as there had been discussions prior to the referendum that 10% of the levy would be set aside for maintenance.

Ms. Fauci noted that she was quite pleased that the revenues were anticipated to be higher as this would help the District to deal with escalating land costs. Mr. Hanson closed by noting that the revenue will actually result in slightly higher than a .03% increase as the District had not been levying at their fully allowable .03% previously.

Mr. Rosemier then asked for a clarification of what exactly fell under the Commodities line of the budget. Mr. Hansen responded that there was a very broad range of items that could fall under that line item.

Mr. Hannan closed his portion by noting that he will bring a resolution for the levy and an appropriation ordinance to the Committee for approval in October and for the Commissioners in November.

HIRING LAND ACQUISITION SPECIALIST

Ms. Fauci began by noting for the Committee additional recommendations that had been received for Mr. Dan Lobbes, the specialist being considered for hire by the District.

Mr. Hannan noted that in all the recommendations, it was pointed out that Mr. Lobbes' value to the hiring bodies far exceeded his costs. Mr. Hannan went on to note that this would especially be true if the District found itself in several simultaneous negotiations involving conservation easements, bargain sales, charitable contributions, estates, 1031 exchanges etc. . He noted that it would be the clear expectation of the District that Mr. Lobbes would work very closely with both himself and with the Committee and would not be responsible in any way for finalizing monetary commitments. Such agreements would be the sole province of the Committee and the Board. Mr. Anderson reiterated that it was critical that Mr. Lobbes be authorized to solely handle the negotiations, but that any final determinations would fall to the Committee.

Mr. Anderson then asked for a clarification of whether Mr. Lobbes fees were exclusive of any add-ons such as meals, travel etc. Mr. Hannan noted that the fee was an hourly fee and mileage would be addition, but that the hourly fee covered all other expenses. He went on to note that the current proposal is to hire Mr. Lobbes for a maximum of \$8,700 worth of services (paid from wetland bank funds) and that it would be reviewed at the time the fee pool was exhausted. This amount of time should show quite clearly what was and was not included or needed by Mr. Lobbes.

Ms. Fauci noted that they were not just getting Mr. Lobbes for this fee, but also the resources and reputation of the Conservation Foundation. She further noted that this could be critical if the District needed an entity to acquire land in its name prior to the receipt of grant assistance. She commented that what had impressed her most was his extremely compassionate approach to negotiations and his clear recognition of the delicacy needed in discussing these matters with donors and their families. She closed by noting that the acquisition of an outside negotiator would also provide the Committee the necessary distance from the specifics to resist any inappropriate impressions or implications if the Board members were the sole negotiators.

Mr. Hannan commented that the coming year appeared to be a very good year for grants from the State IDNR with the OSLAD program showing 31 million potentially available statewide. These grants are highly competitive and there are always more requests than funds available, so again the District will have to propose a good grant application when needed.

Mr. Anderson commented that he just wanted to be sure that anything approved tonight regarding the hire had a very specific costs cap attached.

Mr. Gudmunson moved to hire Mr. Dan Lobbes of the Land Conservation Foundation to be an outside negotiator for the District with an initial fee limit of \$8,700, seconded by Ms. Turner and the motion passed unanimously.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Hannan noted that the monthly reports included with the next minutes will include detail on several volunteer days as well as Forest Preserve staff maintenance and projects as usual. He further noted that there was a great deal of usage of the District preserves this spring and summer.

He closed by noting that a final Greenways and Trails Plan is currently scheduled for review by the County Planning and Zoning Committee.

Mr. Rosemier noted that there would be a meeting on September 20th at 11:00 a.m. with a group that assists non-profit organizations in locating and acquiring grants. He noted that he first encountered this group, ECIUIS, at the NAACO meetings. The hope is that this group could assist the County in finding grants and assistance such as grant writers. He invited any committee members who wished to join the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Turner moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Anderson and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee

JF:kr