

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 17, 2007**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday, July 17, 2007 at Sannauk Forest Preserve at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were committee members, Ms. Fauci, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Gudmunson, Ms. DeFauw, Mr. Rosemier, Mr. Lyle and Superintendent Hannan. Ms. Turner arrived later in the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci began by asking if there were any changes to the June 19, 2007 minutes. Hearing none, Ms. DeFauw 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 corrections to the agenda. Mr. Anderson moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Gudmunson and the motion passed unanimously.

FOREST PRESERVE MONTHLY REPORTS

Mr. Hannan began by noting that the Sannauk Preserve was one of the earliest of the District's acquisitions, dating back to 1940. The land had originally been a golf course that went out of business in the 1930's and he commented that in some places, it is still possible to see the rough outlines of the tees, traps and greens. He went on to note that the Preserve was also once the proposed Illinois/Wisconsin boundary. Somonauk Creek runs through Sannauk and the preserve is approximately 73 acres of upland and floodplain forest, hiking trails, fishing, sledding, picnic areas and shelter houses.

Mr. Hannan then reported that in May, there was quite a bit of activity by the land stewards for the District with local Scouts assisting in various Garlic Mustard eradication projects around the Sannauk shelters. He noted that there had been some attempts at a burn through in the area, but the conditions had not been right this year. He then read a letter from Scout Master Doug Cullen from Troop 45 in Aurora thanking the District for the Sannauk project opportunity and volunteering his troop for any upcoming controlled burn activities if certain liability issues than be resolved, and also volunteering for any other vegetation management projects the District may identify.

Mr. Hannan went on to note that he would be meeting the next week with the DeKalb/Sycamore Sunrise Rotary organization. He reminded the Committee that that this was the group who sponsor the annual 8K run held at Potawatomi Woods. The group is currently discussing assisting the District with paving the half-mile gravel road at the entrance of the Preserve. The current cost estimate for such a project would be approximately \$50,000 per mile based on the recent accessible trail done in the area. Ms. Fauci asked if there were any potential grants available to assist with this. Mr. Hannan responded that he was not aware of any road grant opportunities. Mr. Anderson commented a local construction company was eager for new business and might give a very competitive bid.

Mr. Hannan also noted that the budget process has begun and he is currently preparing the first draft for review by the Committee next month and subsequent submission to the County. He then passed a pie chart to the Committee noting that as a proportion of the overall taxes paid by County residents, the Forest Preserve represented quite a good bargain for the investment of 2/3 of 1% of the total tax bill.

He went on to report that Phase two of the Afton wetland bank project was nearing completion and noted that he had just completed a sizable wetland bank sale that he would report on in greater detail during the upcoming Executive Session.

As to other monthly activities, he noted there had been a recent Astronomy night at Afton and an antique car rally at Afton. Mr. Hannan also read an email from resident and local birder Darryl Shambaugh, who was quite excited by the new wetlands at Afton and the vast array of birds he observed there, including a very rare shore bird, an avocet. Mr. Shambaugh has recorded 167 different bird species at Afton. Mr. Hannan further commented that he had met a couple from the LaSalle/Peru area who had come to the Afton Preserve in response to word in the birding community that an avocet was spotted there.

He closed by noting that all the camps at Russell Woods are full and going very well this summer.

COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS

Mr. Anderson began by reporting that the Bill the District had recently supported regarding limiting expanded taxation of wooded lots of five acres and larger, had successfully passed the Illinois House. Ms. Fauci commented that the Bill was very beneficial for individuals interested in preserving natural environments. Mr. Hannan noted that he had received an email from the head of the DuPage Forest Preserve, who had taken the lead on this legislation, noting that the version of the Bill that has passed is very positive.

Mr. Anderson reported that there had been recent discussions at the local Farm Bureau regarding spraying ash trees to prevent spread of the Emerald Ash Borer. This is a new

technology being tried to save the trees from destruction if an infestation has not occurred in the area. However he noted that there were questions regarding the right of the state to seize and destroy trees even if the owners had elected to spray. He noted that the cost would be approximately \$30 per tree per year for the preventative. He asked Mr. Hannan if it were true that the State had a right to take trees in private property if the owners had taken the preventative measures. Mr. Hannan replied that he was not immediately aware of such a right, but would look in to it and report back. Mr. Anderson noted that the spraying might be more cost effective for owners of particularly large ash trees, but if the State could destroy the trees anyway, it might be a wasted effort. Ms. Fauci asked if the District had any very large ash trees. Mr. Hannan responded that there are large ash trees in the preserves.

Ms. Fauci noted that Ms. Turner had arrived to the meeting.

Mr. Rosemier asked if the District had heard anything about a push for a Statewide consortium for environmental education. Mr. Hannan replied that he had not heard about anything in particular, but would check with Ms. Peggy Doty of the Natural Resource Center.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci noted that in a recent edition of Chicago Wilderness magazine, there was a very good article about the lack of outdoor opportunities and exposure for children in this generation as opposed to past generations. Mr. Hannan commented that they had dubbed it "nature deficit disorder". Ms. Fauci commented that it pointed out the need for exposure to nature and to unstructured activities and the benefits that can have for children.

Mr. Fauci then read portions of a letter from a local resident with MS expressing her gratitude to the District for the accessible trails at Afton. Another letter was read from a resident whose husband was disabled, and who made similar observations about the benefits of the accessible trails and opportunities for County residents.

LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE

Prior to the beginning of the discussion, Ms. Fauci asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Mr. Anderson moved the Committee into executive session for the purpose of discussing current information on District land acquisition and other activities, seconded by Ms. Turner. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 7 Committee members voting in the affirmative and none in the negative. Following the Executive Session, Ms. DeFauw moved to return the Committee to public session, seconded by Mr. Rosemier. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 7 Committee members voting in the affirmative and none in the negative.

Ms. Fauci reported that he had been contacted by a local farmer who thought that his land might have been adversely affected by nearby wetland bank activities. Mr. Hannan commented that he had looked into the farmer's concerns and did not find any problems at this time. However he noted that he would continue to check and if future problems were discovered, the District would certainly reimburse the individual for any damages discovered.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee

JF:kjr