

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 19, 2007

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday, June 19, 2007 at Merritt Prairie Forest Preserve at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were committee members, Ms. Fauci, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Gudmunson, Ms. DeFauw, Ms. Turner, Mr. Rosemier, Mr. Lyle and Superintendent Hannan. Guests included Mr. Mark Biernacki, DeKalb City Manager and Mr. Rudy Espiritu, DeKalb Asst. City Manager and Roger Steimel, County Board Member.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci began by asking if there were any changes to the May 15, 2007 minutes. Hearing none, Mr. Lyle moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Anderson and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Fauci asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda. Mr. Gudmunson moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Anderson and the motion passed unanimously.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Fauci welcomed the visitors and turned the meeting over to Mr. Biernacki to discuss the TIF district changes proposed. Mr. Biernacki reviewed the plans for the TIF district boundary and duration changes and answered questions from the Committee members. Mr. Rosemier noted that he had concerns that the changes and developments would be mostly by private developers who might not have the greater good of the County in mind. Ms. Fauci noted that this was much better than having development occur in the farmland areas. Mr. Rosemier added that he had heard of efforts by Counties east of DeKalb where the cities had purchased property from private interests and made it available for development.

Mr. Biernacki commented that the city had recently purchased some private property at strategic locations with an eye to offering the areas for targeted development. He went on to note that these sorts of opportunities often arrived unexpectedly and the TIF dollars must be flexible to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves. Ms. Fauci noted that the developers involved so far were nationally respected and that this seemed to bode well for long-term investment options that may well attract larger developers than simply the current local players.

Mr. Anderson asked again about the redirection of truck traffic would be addressed in this process. Mr. Biernacki commented that the re-development could spur sufficient interest and activity that it could mean that truck traffic becomes incongruous to the main activities of the area.

Ms. Fauci noted that this plan had solid planning and the redevelopment stood a chance to be good for any area facing population movement and the need for true urban renewal with a positive focus.

Mr. Rosemier moved to craft and forward a letter of support to the City for the proposed TIF district changes, seconded by Mr. Lyle and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Fauci thanked Mr. Biernacki and Mr. Esposito for their time and attention to addressing the committee's questions and concerns.

CHANGE OF THE FISCAL YEAR

Mr. Hannan reminded the Committee that they had addressed the request by Mr. Hanson to move the fiscal year up one month to correspond with a traditional calendar year. He also reminded the Committee that Forest Preserve statutes did not prevent this small change.

Ms. Anderson moved to approve the change of the fiscal year as proposed by Mr. Hanson, seconded by Sally DeFauw and the motion passed unanimously. Ms. Fauci noted that this resolution would be on the County Board agenda the following evening.

FOREST PRESERVE MONTHLY REPORTS.

Mr. Hannan noted that there was a wetland planting at Afton on June 9th and they had a very good turnout. Many plants are still being planted. He noted that he had also just come from the phase two wetland and that water is filling the new wetlands. Work has also begun on the water control structure at the location as well. Mr. Rosemier asked if FP staff were doing the excavation in the area and Mr. Hannan responded that this activity had been contracted out with FP staff supervision. FP staff is handling the placement of erosion control mats and the seeding of the berms, water control structure work (weir gates) and planting about 11,000 wetland plants (volunteer assistance also). There were also a Eagle Scout project underway to assist in the planting efforts.

Mr. Hannan went on to note that there had been quite a large turnout of cicadas at the local preserves and that a public "star party" had been held at Afton the prior week and the clear nights made for some very good astronomical viewing.

He went on to note that the also annual Northern Illinois Retired Teachers picnic at the Russell Resource Center and that was always a very positive occasion. He also noted that the Northern Illinois Antique Car Club held a rally and breakfast at Afton and then took off in a caravan from the location. He also noted that the summer prairies at Forest Preserve are very beautiful now in their full summer bloom. Shelter rentals and recreational use at all preserves is good.

He closed by reminding the Committee that the Forest Preserve they were currently meeting on was donated by Jim and Helen Merritt and that the area was connected directly to the Fox River watershed. This area was one of the first wetland areas

developed through the wetland mitigation program that allowed for the purchase of the 16 acre addition of the area beyond what the Merritt's donated.

Mr. Hannan also noted that the recent Access to Recreation Grant that the County had been pursuing with the DeKalb County Community Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation was moving forward and if the grant is successful, there will be an expansion of the accessible trail through Afton in 2009. The DeKalb Park District will enhance accessibility in Hopkins Park near the band shell. He noted that they should hear about whether the grant was successful within the next few months and that they have received many letters of support from local groups with handicap accessibility concerns.

Mr. Rosemier asked about the trail located behind the current County Nursing Home. Ms. Fauci noted that this was actually part of the old nursing home trail and the trail between Rt. 23 and First Street was acquired and developed through a grant by Mr. Hannan, but the property is now owned by the DeKalb Park District.

Mr. Hannan then closed by noting that mowing, painting and bridge and wetland restoration activities were in full swing by Forest Preserve District staff. He also noted that he had recently received a \$200 donation check for the District presented by Blumen Gardens when he filled in for a speaker on birding that had to cancel at the last minute. The money will be used for prairie seed.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci noted that she was a current member of the Conservation Foundation and was excited to get a card noting the accomplishment by the DeKalb Forest Preserve District in completing it's recent land acquisition.

She also noted that she had recently had a discussion with a local individual, Steven Wolf, who was very interested in getting a bike path from Somonauk to Sannauk Preserve and beyond. Mr. Fauci noted that she would try to have him speak at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Hannan noted that Charlie Marshall and that areas Lion's Club were also interested in that project and perhaps they should get together. He will pass contact information to Ms. Fauci.

LAND ACQUISITION UPDATE

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

Mr. Anderson moved to make an adjustment to the wetland bank monetary structure, seconded by Ms. Turner and the motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee
JF:kjr