

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 20, 2007

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday, March 20, 2007 at the Conference Room East of the County Administration Building at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were committee members, Ms. Fauci, Mr. Anderson, Ms. Turner, Mr. Gudmunson, Ms. DeFauw and Superintendent Hannan. Mr. Rosemier and Mr. Lyle were absent. Guests included Mr. Dan Lobbes, land acquisition consultant, Ms. Nancy Sherman of Cortland, Ms. Peggy Doty and Mr. Mitch Doty.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci began by asking if there were any changes to the February 20, 2007 minutes. Hearing none, Ms. DeFauw moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Gudmunson and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Fauci welcomed the evening's guests and Ms. Sherman noted that she was attending tonight to advocate for more consideration of land acquisition in the rapidly-developing Cortland area.

FOREST PRESERVE MONTHLY REPORTS.

Mr. Hannan commented that the preserves had stayed open during the recent bouts of severe weather and noted that during the recent blizzard preserve volunteers had held a "seed stomp" at the Prain's home to assist in processing prairie and wetland seeds gathered during the year and being readied for use in the preserves in the Spring. He noted that there was quite a volume of native species of seed represented that had been gathered by volunteers through the year.

Mr. Hannan also noted that there would be Earth Day tree planting events and commented that the Sandhill Cranes are migrating through the area. In light of that, he further noted that local ornithologist Pete Olson would be holding bird walks again through the preserves. A listing of volunteer opportunities was also noted as available to the public through the website or by contacting the Forest Preserve Office.

Mr. Hannan then introduced Ms. Doty from the Natural Resources Education Center and noted that she would be presenting a video record of the Center's recent Maple Syrup Days at Russell Woods.

Ms. Doty began by noting that Mr. Curtis Clegg of the Daily Chronicle had spent the day at the Center and later created the audio visual presentation. She commented that he had

spent quite a long time with the staff and visitors and that he had really captured the day's activities quite vividly and well. Ms. Doty then played the presentation for the committee. Following the viewing, Mr. Hannan commented that one woman who attended from Wisconsin remembered performing similar activities as a child.

Mr. Hannan then read from a letter sent to the District from the Riley School expressing their sincere thanks for the efforts of District staff member Bill Prain during their recent outing. The School noted that the event was a success largely due to his efforts and willingness to "go the extra mile" for them.

Mr. Hannan noted that he was pursuing a grant opportunity in partnership with the DeKalb County Community Foundation. The desire is to use this opportunity as a way to build an endowment fund to assist with handicapped accessibility access to parks and Preserves throughout the County.

Mr. Hannan then commented that he had been contacted by tonight's guest, Ms. Sherman, asking to address the committee regarding land purchase opportunities in the Cortland area.

Ms. Sherman then asked if she could read a statement that would also be read into the minutes of the next Cortland Trustee's meeting. The statement essentially was a plea to local land owners in the area to contact Mr. Hannan and ask that their properties be considered for Forest Preserve purchase.

She noted that she was taking this step to try to encourage some land preservation before larger areas of the Township were developed. She commented that 38 acres of land will be lost by the Township to new home development by next year and that, at this point, the entire western edge of the township has been fully developed. She closed by noting that this development proved the urgency for land acquisition in the area, a criteria set by the State of Illinois in identifying land to be pursued for public use.

Ms. Turner expressed a concern that the statement might be leaning a bit heavily on only one criteria identified by the State as essential to identifying land that should be pursued for District purchase, the criteria of urgency. She noted that other criteria such as size and proximity to existing preserves had weight and value as well.

Mr. Hannan noted that the state weighted various criteria when determining eligibility for grant funds and utilized a point system to quantify the process. He noted that the more heavily weighted items would be adjacency to existing preserves, water-based properties, connectivity to trails and greenways or corridors to schools, towns or other preserves. Other criteria focused on the natural resource quality, price and whether the land could be obtained by bargain sale or donation.

Ms. Fauci noted that size of the acquisition was also important as a small patch might not be very cost-effective for the District.

Ms. Sherman closed by offering the committee advice on how to best approach potential sellers in the area.

Ms. Fauci commented that there had been recent improvements in the tax benefits available to individuals willing to enter into conservation easement agreements and that might be an incentive for them to consider sale to the District as well.

Mr. Hannan then reported that he and the staff had begun their annual woodland burn process to deter the spread of invasive species. This early season burn period would primarily be used to hold back the growth of garlic mustard in the wooded areas. Prairie and wetland burns would be done a bit later in the season.

Mr. Gudmunson asked if the burns helped with the multiflora rose issue. Mr. Hannan responded that it did significantly improve the woodland quality. He commented that this is accomplished despite the small number of staff that can be devoted to the activities. He also closed by noting that the District often leaves some small area untouched to demonstrate how the burn activities can improve the health and diversity of the lands.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci noted that on her recent trip to Washington for the NACO legislative conference, she had brought back several handouts for other Board members as well as insights into important issues facing cities and counties.

One issue discussed was the development of Water Advocacy coalitions. A move was on to change the descriptions of waterways to move them under Federal oversight. In the past the Federal government only dealt with navigated waterways. Now the government wants to bring all waterways under their venue. This brings great concerns to local governments.

She also noted that the A Global Warming Directive had been discussed and there had been very good examples provided of Counties who are devoting greenways and blueways across the Country.

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 activities, seconded by Mr. Gudmunson, and a roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 5 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 Ms. Turner and a roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 5 Committee members voting in the affirmative and none in the negative.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee

JF:kjr