

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 20, 2009**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday, January 20, 2009 at the East Conference Room of the County Administration Building at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were committee members, Ms. Fauci, Ms. Turner, Mr. Newport, Mr. Augsburger, Mr. Gudmunson, Mr. Stuckert, Mr. Walt, Ms. DeFauw and Superintendent Hannan. Mr. Anderson arrived shortly after the roll call. Guest was Peggy Doty.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci began by asking if there were any changes to the December 16, 2008 minutes. Mr. Augsburger moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Stuckert and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

WELCOME TO GUESTS

Ms. Fauci noted that at the December meeting, she had invited the new and returning Board members to do a brief introduction and discuss their reasons for wanting to be a part of the Forest Preserve Committee. She then opened the floor for those members who were not able to attend in December (Mr. Gudmunson, Mr. Walt, Mr. Stuckert and Ms. DeFauw) spoke.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci noted that this was a very historic day and expressed her hope that the new administration in Washington would be open to finally supporting and expanding carbon cap and trade policies that could prove very beneficial to our County and others.

Mr. Anderson commented that he believed cap and trade policies could have serious disadvantages and hoped that any efforts in that direction would keep in mind that all pollution expansion has damaging and far reaching impact that may not be equally offset by such programs. Ms. Fauci noted that the principle was actually very similar to the principles of the Wetland Bank program, a program Mr. Anderson was quite a vocal supporter of. Mr. Hannan noted that there was a wetland bank discussion later in the evening and perhaps that question could be taken up at that time.

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT 2008 BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Mr. Hannan passed the FY2008 Budget Amendments to the Committee members and noted for the new Committee members that this is an annual bookkeeping requirement to balance the budget and close the books on the prior fiscal year. He commented that the items will go to the full Board for final approval in February. Mr. Hannan then drew the Committee's attention to some of the larger items.

1. PHO Payouts. This was the first year that Forest Preserve staff received payouts of their unused PHO's and required that the reserve fund for these payments must be used.

2. Storm Damage Costs from the 2008 Floods. Mr. Hannan noted that storm damage occurred in the Shabbona and Potawatomi Woods and Afton preserves and there was hope that some of the costs could be recovered through FEMA reimbursement. However, the County overall was short \$150,000.00 in damage, and therefore no FEMA funding would be provided. Therefore the District will not be able to receive the hoped for 75% reimbursement of damages that occurred.

Mr. Hannan also called the Committee's attention to the fact that there will be some changes to the Reserve Funds following the return of the land acquisition loan collateral from 2007. He then gave the Committee an overview of that fund before and after future purchases.

Mr. Hannan commented that our Risk Management/Insurance carrier, PDRMA, had also recommended that several of the District playground areas needed safety improvements and there are some other risk management work costs. Tort Reserve funds will be used to pay for the updated (and more safety conscious) play equipment as well as funding the burial of electrical lines still remaining above ground at the Russell Woods sled hill.

Mr. Anderson asked who had handled the electrical work in the past and Mr. Hannan responded that it was done primarily by Commonwealth Edison with some extraneous work handled by a local Shabbona electrician.

Mr. Hannan then noted that there is also a line for budgets for the Natural Education Resource Center revenue. The U of I Extension's funding instability resulted in no summer camps being held last year and a shortfall in revenue. However, there is a reserve fund to cover the lost revenue.

Mr. Hannan commented that there were also expenses in 2009 in association with the relocation of the Ellwood Cabin to a new area near the NREC. This is covered with 2008 donations and grants. There is a historian identified who will take charge of the actual relocation process and there has been a very healthy volunteer interest in the project as well.

Mr. Stuckert asked who is responsible for the upkeep and security of the cabin. Ms. Hannan responded that Ellwood House volunteers and the NREC staff will be using the cabin and handling the upkeep.

Mt. Anderson moved to approve the FY2008 Year End Budget Transfers and Amendments, seconded by Mr. Augsburger and the motion passed unanimously.

FOREST PRESERVE MONTHLY REPORTS AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Hannan again reminded the Committee that their monthly reports were included in their County Board packet.

Mr. Hannan commented that for the past four years the Committee has allowed the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) sharpshooters to perform herd reduction activities on the Preserve lands at MacQueen and Potawatomi Woods. The purpose of the reduction is to assist in the eradication of Chronic Wasting Disease. The IDNR has been working to achieve a herd population goal of 25 deer per square mile of land to manage infection. The Kishwaukee River area has, at times, seen populations as

high as 100 deer per square mile. Following the deer reductions, the IDNR conducts tests to track the movement of the disease. While the County has predominantly seen good results, there was one case of a positive test occurring near the Afton Preserve. Therefore, IDNR has asked to expand the scope of their operation to Afton this year along with the Potawatomi and MacQueen locations focused on in past years.

Mr. Augsburger asked if the IDNR has a target number of deer for culling. Mr. Hannan responded that he was only aware of their overall population goal of 25 deer per square mile. He noted that he has had very good communication with Roy Ostling, the IDNR staff biologist in charge of the program.

Ms. Fauci noted that the Committee in past years has approved this activity via an informal consensus approach rather than a formal vote. She then asked the Committee if they would, by consensus, approve the 2009 hunt. Mr. Augsburger responded that he felt this was a necessary action given the problems that overpopulation and the spread of this disease has caused. He commented further that Winnebago County and the Rock River area seem to have the worst of this and any action that keeps DeKalb County safe should be taken.

Ms. Fauci noted that it appeared the Committee had reached consensus and asked Mr. Hannan to give the approval to the IDNR.

Mr. Hannan then called the Committee's attention to the staff reports and photos and commented that the District had received their annual campground license approval from the State. He noted that the District has always passed their State inspections excellent maintenance work.

Mr. Hannan noted that the MS society has requested to use MacQueen Preserve parking area as a rest stop for an upcoming MS 150 annual bike ride fund raiser they will be holding. NIU has also asked to use Preserve areas for class work in the spring.

Mr. Hannan reported that the recent and heavy snowfalls have brought a lot of activity to the Preserves, and especially at the sledding area. He noted that there was, unfortunately, an incident with a dog off-leash knocking a small girl unconscious. New warnings have been posted and call out a fine for those who disregard the leash requirements. Mr. Hannan also noted that the sled areas have posting that call out the assumption of risk.

Ms. Fauci asked how long it had been since a claim had been filed against the District. Mr. Hannan responded that it is coming up on 34 years without a claim. Mr. Hannan closed by noting that the Risk Managers have repeatedly expressed their satisfaction with the postings and precautions utilized by the District.

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, seconded by Mr. Augsburger. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 9 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative. Following the Executive Session, Ms. Turner moved to return the Committee to public session, seconded by Mr. Anderson. A roll call vote was

held and the motion passed with 9 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative.

Following the return from Executive Session, Ms. Peggy Doty reported that the Winterfest was held this past Saturday at the NREC and the turnout was very good despite the frigid temperatures. There was an especially good turnout of families eager to learn about alternative winter activities beyond sledding and skiing. Approximately 150 individuals were in attendance and the activities were very well received.

She noted that Maple Syrup Day was scheduled for 3-7-09 and commented that this is the latest date the event had been held in quite awhile and there are flooding concerns. Ms. Doty noted that she and the staff are booked solid but for four days between now and the end of February. She noted that despite the U of I's continued funding issues, she has identified some individuals who might be good future candidates for hire at the facility.

Ms. Doty commented that she is continually seeking supporters for the NREC from private fund sources. This has proven a successful strategy in the past and noted that one private donor gave the NREC a \$9,000.00 grant.

Ms. Fauci commented that a future Committee meeting will be held at the Center as soon as the weather permits and she asked the Committee to use that opportunity to view for themselves the work that Ms. Doty has accomplished despite continuing uncertainty regarding the stability of funding and matching funds from the U of I Extension.

Ms. Doty closed by noting that she would also be partnering with PDRMA to act as a trainer for an upcoming Summer Camp Safety Training program. She was asked to take this on as she and her staff consistently demonstrates how seriously they take the responsibility of providing safe educational environments for the students and summer campers.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee
JF:kjr