

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Forest Preserve Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve Committee Minutes
August 28, 2018**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Committee met on Tuesday, August 28, 2018 at 6:00 p.m., in the Legislative Center's Gathertorium in Sycamore, Illinois. Chairman Brown called the meeting to order. Those Members present at roll call were Mr. Bagby, Mr. Hughes, Ms. Little, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Roman, and Chairman Brown. Mrs. Haji-Sheikh was absent. A quorum was established with six Members present and one absent.

Others present were Brad Hunold and Jim Hutcheson.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Ms. Little, and it was carried unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Ms. Little, seconded by Mr. Porterfield and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the July 24, 2018 Forest Preserve Committee Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

BID OPENING SOMONAUK TO SANNAUK TRAIL

DeKalb County Assistant Engineer Brad Hunold reported that earlier in the day the Highway Department held a bid opening for the construction of a multi-purpose trail from the Village of Somonauk to the Sannaук Trail. Mr. Hunold reported that Elliott & Wood, Inc. of DeKalb, Illinois submitted the lowest bid meeting specifications for the Somonauk to Sannaук Trail as – Option A – Gravel with hot mix only in those sections allowing sloped field waterways/drainage for the cost of \$447,929.21 (Engineer's Estimate - \$358,921.50). As well as for Option B – Hot-mix cover the entire length of the trail for the cost of \$532,235.75 (Engineer's Estimate - \$417,886.90).

The Committee and Mr. Hunold further discussed the bids that were received. Because each option came in about \$90,000+ higher than the engineer's estimates, The Committee decided to seek Mr. Hannan's evaluation, based on past trail construction costs and experience, of this bid before making a decision. In addition, the Committee thought it would be worthwhile for Mr. Hannan to explore possible ways to reduce the overall costs, such as: 1) any other design configurations that would shorten or simplify the construction of the trail, 2) placing only gravel on the entire length of the trail (and monitoring the degree of washout/destruction near field waterways, and 3) seeking a bid from the DeKalb County Highway Department. If all of this could be accomplished by September 19th, the Committee all agreed that they would be in favor of holding a Special Meeting just prior to the September County Board Meeting to approve Mr.

Hannan's recommended bid (perhaps revised lower) from Elliott & Wood or a lower-cost construction agreement with the Highway Department.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Brown announced that the Northwest Suburban Astronomers will be at Afton Forest Preserve on September 15th to host a Star Party to observe the stars and planets.

MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Chairman Brown announced that Superintendent Hannan has been out of the office due to unforeseen circumstances and that everyone will be receiving the usual packet in the weeks to come. He also noted that all of the forest preserve have been very active with visitors.

WIND TURBINE DISCUSSION

Chairman Brown shared that the Planning & Zoning Committee were actively working on the creation of a draft Wind Energy Ordinance for DeKalb County. The Committee discussed how possible future wind turbines would affect area forest preserve. The general consensus of the Committee was that they support a setback of at least the proposed 1.5 miles for any wind turbine constructed near a forest preserve. They did not feel a need to pass or send such a resolution to the P&Z Committee. However, they would like to kindly ask, that at the Public Hearings taking place on Monday, September 24th, Mr. Hannan speak in support of the setback of 1.5 miles or more and explain the importance of preserving the natural environments of DeKalb County Forest Preserve, waterways and open spaces, as well as maintaining related prairie and wetland ecosystems.

Chairman Brown shared that during an hour-long Good research project he did recently, he didn't find much about setbacks related to forest preserves other than: 1) a 3-mile setback along the shores of Lake Huron to protect nearby waterfowl and flyways for migrating birds, 2) the observance that no deer were seen in an area after the construction of wind turbines, and 3) the main concern regarding parks and forest preserves was the negative effect on the attractiveness and benefits of open spaces, natural areas, rural environments, sights and sounds and peace and tranquility of the outdoors.

Mr. Hughes expressed his concerns and questioned how they may be able to protect future lands that may one day become part of a forest preserve.

PLACE FY 2019 FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT BUDGET ON FILE

Chairman Brown shared that the Forest Preserve FY 2019 total budget tax dollar amount is proposed to increase modestly with a total tax dollar amount of \$1,592,000.00. The total FY 2018 Tax Rate = 0.07831 and is projecting a decreased Tax Rate collected in 2019 around 0.07627. A \$200,000 value home pays about \$48.00 per year (about \$4.00 per month in forest preserve property taxes).

Fiscal Year 2019 budget planning and implementation will financial all forest preserve projects and operating expenditures and continue with the second year of a three-year plan to fund enhanced security by Sheriff safety patrols in the forest preserves (resulting in a modest increase in property taxes). There are no bonds or other debt. As approved in 2016 budget discussions, a larger percentage of land acquisition funds may be used for land improvements, staff,

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maintenance and natural resource management. Non-tax Wetland Bank funds will pay for wetland bank operation, repairs, equipment, maintenance and management. The annual non-tax Landfill funds from Waste Management will be used for natural resource management and environmental education projects. In 2018-2020, 75% of these Landfill funds will be transferred to help the DeKalb County General Fund.

The Forest Preserve budget is balanced (\$1,787,000 in expenses - \$1,787,000 in revenues) and well managed. Forest preserves are funded by property tax revenues (less than 1% of property tax, 7/10 of 1% go to the Forest Preserve District) and from non-tax wetland bank and landfill fees, grants, and donations. Over the last 43 years, over 4 million dollars in grants have been awarded to the District for land acquisition, land development and natural resource management.

A couple questions were asked about specific line items, and Chairman Brown asked that such questions be directed to Mr. Hannan for further clarification.

It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Mr. Hughes and it was approved unanimously to forward a resolution placing the FY 2019 Budget on file for public inspection to the full Board of Commissioners.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Bagby moved to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Land Acquisition per 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) at 7:17 p.m. Mr. Porterfield seconded the motion and it carried by a 6-0-1 roll call vote. Those voting yea were Mr. Bagby, Mr. Hughes, Ms. Little, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Roman, and Chairman Brown. None were opposed and Mrs. Haji-Sheikh was absent.

The Committee entered back into their Open Meeting at 8:09 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Bagby, seconded by Mr. Porterfield and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Bob Brown

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary