

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
November 28, 2017**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Committee met on Tuesday, November 28, 2017 at 6:00 p.m., at the Russell Woods Natural Resource Center in Genoa, Illinois. Chairman Brown called the meeting to order. Those Members present were Mrs. Haji-Sheikh, Mr. Hughes, Ms. Little, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Roman, and Chairman Brown. Mr. Bagby was absent. A quorum was established with six Members present and one absent.

Others present were Terry Hannan and Al Roloff.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Ms. Little and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the October 24, 2017 meeting.

It was moved by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mr. Porterfield and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting that was held November 8, 2017.

It was moved by Mr. Roman, seconded by Mrs. Haji-Sheikh and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the addition Special meeting that was held on November 15, 2017.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mrs. Haji-Sheikh, seconded by Ms. Little, and it was carried unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Forest Preserve District Superintendent Terry Hannan shared a brief history of the Russell Wood's Natural Resource Center with the Committee. Mr. Hannan shared that the Resource Center has been there since the 1960's and the building was used by 5-6 School Districts. There was a full-time teacher and other staff that were employed to the Center. Many surrounding area School Districts came to visit the center but one by one the schools dropped out due to funding issues. The Forest Preserve District owns the land and the DeKalb School District built the building with their funds and paid a \$1 per year rent. After the building had sat vacant for a year or two, Mr. Hannan went to the DeKalb School District Superintendent at the time and offered to buy the building for \$1. So now the Forest Preserve District own the building and for a number of years there were volunteers who helped educate until the District partnered with the University of Illinois Extension. Now with U of I Extension funds and Forest Preserve District Funds they have hired a full-time educator, Peggy Doty. Today, the Natural Resource Center

serves about 5,000 school kids a year. Northern Illinois University and Kishwaukee College also utilizes the facility for classes.

The group additionally took a few minutes to learn some interesting facts about muscels from Al Roloff.

Mr. Hannan continued on with the monthly report which showed a picture of the Committee at their last meeting where they braved a chilly night at the Sycamore Forest Preserve. The grand opening of the Sycamore Forest Preserve was held Saturday, November 18th and despite the weather, Mr. Hannan reported that it was a very well attended event. In addition to the grand opening, a large group went over and did a formal dedication ceremony for the bench in honor of previous Board Member and Forest Preserve Committee Member Frank O'Barski.

Mr. Hannan shared that with Sycamore Forest Preserve now open, the west end of the Great Western Trail at Old State Road parking area now closed and the trailhead and parking area is now 1.4 mile west at the Sycamore Forest Preserve. The Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts Trail Safety Tips have been posted as well. Mr. Hannan lastly reviewed that within the monthly report there are staff project lists and the monthly site report.

Mr. Roloff spoke a little more in depth about the Bottle Gentian that grows at Potawatomi Woods and the Blue Cohosh, which is a very uncommon plant, but grows at Russell Woods. The remainder of his Natural Resources Management Activities Report was also distributed to the Committee Members.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Haji-Sheikh noted that when you total the monthly site report it comes out to be 10,450 visitors. It was clarified that this total is an estimate of all visitors who visited all of the County's Forest Preserve within the past month. Mrs. Haji-Sheikh also noted that she is on the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau Board and she recently talked to the Executive Director of the DCCVB Debbie Armstrong about potentially putting together a DeKalb County Forest Preserve Brochure. She noted this may help get some added exposure and help highlight some of the features of the area Forest Preserves.

Mr. Hughes reminded that he would like to continue to discuss and have as future agenda items what to do with the increased levy funds.

Mr. Porterfield added that he wanted to keep on the radar that in a few years they need to bring back up the \$75,000 in Landfill Host Fee funds the Forest Preserve District gave to the County's General Fund to help balance their budget.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Haji-Sheikh moved to enter into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. per 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) – Land Acquisition. Mr. Porterfield seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously by roll call vote.

The Committee reconvened in Open Session at 7:12 p.m.

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Mr. Roman made a motion to direct Mr. Hannan to proceed forward with the land acquisition in Kirkland with the caveat that there is 30 acre land donation but if a counteroffer is made, to settle for a 25 acre land donation. Ms. Little seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mrs. Haji-Sheikh, seconded by Mr. Porterfield and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,


Chairman Bob Brown


Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary