

*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 Operations Committee Minutes  
August 27, 2019**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Operations Committee met on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at Sycamore Forest Preserve's Lions Shelter located at 955 E. State Street, Sycamore, Illinois. Chairman Stoddard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those Members present were Mr. Tim Hughes, Ms. Terri Mann-Lamb, Mr. Chris Porterfield, Mr. Craig Roman, Mr. Jeff Whelan, and Chairman Paul Stoddard. Ms. Maureen Little was absent. A quorum was established with six Members present and one absent.

Others present included Forest Preserve District Superintendent Terry Hannan and County Board Member Tim Hughes.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**It was moved by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Roman and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the July 23, 2019 Meeting.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Superintendent Terry Hannan provided the Committee with a brief history of the Sycamore Forest Preserve. The sixty-acre preserve opened October 16, 2017. The land was formally known as the Evergreen Village Mobile Home Park and was subject to flooding almost every year, often more than once. A federal FEMA grant helped acquire the property, relocate residents, remove some roads, all the mobile homes and other structures and remove a sewage treatment plant. Floodplain prairie habitat was planted in the back 30 acres, and the front 30 acres will feature two open-air shelters, new asphalt roads parking and bike trail, picnic areas, hiking/cross-country ski trails and a fishing pond. The Great Western Trail was extended another half mile west into this new preserve and is now the new trailhead area. The East Branch Kishwaukee River flows along the preserve's western flank. The Sycamore Forest Preserve also has: Shelter Houses, Picnic Areas, Wheelchair Accessibility, Hiking, Cross-country ski trails, Fishing, Biking (Great Western Trail western trailhead), Birding, 30 acre prairie area, and near downtown Sycamore businesses and Sycamore Park District Golf Course.

**MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES**

Mr. Hannan reviewed the [July/August Monthly Forest Preserve Report](#). The report showed recent photos of Afton's wetland water lilies and Sycamore Forest Preserve Floodplain Prairie, shelters, and Pollinators. Mr. Hannan also shared that Lucas McKay, Life Scout from Troop

2810 of Sycamore, completed his Eagle Scout Project at Merritt Prairie clearing brush as part of a prairie restoration and building and installing bluebird nesting boxes.

Forest Preserve Staff installed information kiosks at the Somonauk Trail. The Village of Somonauk and the Somonauk Library will also post their events on the three-sided kiosk.

Mr. Hannan also reviewed some photos of Russell Woods Summer Camps. He added that Ms. Peggy Doty from the Natural Resource Center will be attending their meeting next month to update the Committee on the Center.

The Committee also reviewed photos of different projects that have been completed throughout the County's various preserves. There have been bridge repairs and improvements at Afton, benches and flags installed at Merritt Prairie from Scout Troops, Master Gardeners planting native wetland plants at DeKalb County Government's Sycamore Campus, the installation of a canoe and kayak access on the Kishwaukee River at Knute Olson Forest Preserve, and the restoration of the 1930 Pierce Town Hall that was relocated at Merritt Prairie many years ago.

There were also bonus photos of tours, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation annual bike ride, and a recent wedding that occurred at MacQueen Forest Preserve.

Mr. Hannan also announced the following upcoming events:

- N.I.U. Outdoor Adventures is sponsoring a Full Moon Hike at Sycamore Forest Preserve on Friday September 7<sup>th</sup>.
- The Northwest Suburban Astronomers (NSA), in cooperation with the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, will be hosting a public star party on Saturday, September 21st, at Afton Woods Forest Preserve, located at 13600 Crego Road, south of DeKalb, Illinois.

The Committee also reviewed the [Summer 2019 Natural Resource Management and South Maintenance Activities Report](#). The report consists of lots of great updates as well as beautiful photos of the various preserves.

Mr. Hannan lastly provided the Committee with an update on the former Oak Club Property in Genoa, Illinois. This is property that has been in talks for awhile and the District is working with the property owner on the acquisition of about 90 acres east of the Kishwaukee River that would join up to Knute Olson Forest Preserve. The property owner has very generously donated funds to the District to help with the acquisition of the property. Mr. Hannan also wrote a grant to cover remaining costs. He explained that the original plan was to acquire this property by the end of 2019 but Mr. Woods is still working with adjacent property owners and they are still in the surveying-stage of this project. Mr. Hannan wanted the Committee to be aware that the acquisition may not happen by the end of the year now but he is still very much in touch with the property owner and he has become a great friend and partner to the Forest Preserve District. As updates come in, he will share them with the Committee.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Hughes shared that after having a discussion with Board Chairman Pietrowski and Vice Chairman Frieders, they all would like to request that the Full Board of Commissioners further discuss the Forest Preserve District's Property Tax Levy and the possibility of putting out an

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advisory referendum in 2020 asking the DeKalb County Voters whether they would like to levy to continue or not.

Chairman Stoddard confirmed that the discussion item would be on the Commissioner's Agenda for the September 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

New Committee Member Ms. Mann-Lamb commented that she was very impressed with the Forest Preserve District and appreciated all of the work that goes into maintaining the preserves.

Mr. Roman commented on what a jewel the Great Western Trail is to have in DeKalb County and how well maintained it is.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Mr. Hughes and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Chairman Paul Stoddard

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Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary