

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
August 17, 2010**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday, August 17, 2010 at the Administration Building, Conference Room C at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were committee members, Ms. Fauci, Ms. DeFauw, Mr. Walt, Mr. Newport, Ms. Turner, Mr. Augsburger, Mr. Gudmunson, Mr. Anderson and Superintendent Hannan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Following a call to order, Ms. Fauci asked if there were any changes to the July 20, 2010 minutes. Ms. Turner moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Walt, and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Fauci asked for an approval of the evening's agenda. Ms. DeFauw moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Augsburger and the motion passed unanimously.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Fauci welcomed Mr. Tim Murray, local filmmaker, who would be presenting a film he had created on prairie, woodland and wetland management. Following some discussion regarding the film's current length and the other items on the agenda, it was decided that the committee would view ½ the film this evening and ½ at the next meeting. Mr. Hannan noted that the film would be used as an employee training film as well as an educational film for the local groups and the NREC (Natural Resources Education Center).

He noted that Mr. Murray had undertaken the film as a voluntary effort for the benefit of the district and had created the film's musical score as well. He commented further that the burns are a crucial prairie management practice to eliminate invasive and non native aggressive weeds as well as encourage growth of the native plant species.

Mr. Hannan then noted that the general public often misunderstands the purpose and value of the burns and this film could be very helpful in helping those misperceptions. Mr. Murray commented that he enjoyed how natural this process was and that he hoped the film was a true reflection of the process and intent. He noted that he had over 400 hours of film time in the project and had enjoyed every moment. Ms. Fauci commented that the Committee was very grateful for his efforts and looked forward to seeing the film in its entirety.

Ms. Fauci then noted that additional guests for the evening included Donna Prain as well as Daily Chronicle reporter Caitlin Mullen.

FOREST PRESERVE MONTHLY REPORTS AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Hannan began by noting that the District had a Summer Evening on the Prairie event with naturalist Al Roloff. Unfortunately the weather was not as good as they would have liked, but there was attendance of 20+ people.

He noted that local girl scouts had recently used the Afton Preserve for their annual week long summer camp out and that they had been very helpful in the planting of butternut trees in the wetland area and painting murals for Afton.

He commented that there is a list of upcoming volunteer activities included in the monthly packet as well as photos of preserve visitors canoeing and camping. Additionally, on October 9th the next Jeff's Trees event will be held. This group annually donates \$1000+ for trees and a memorial benches to the District.

A recently concluded mussel survey is also included in the packet as a well as a very positive report from PDRMA regarding risk management activities for the preserves. He closed by noting that one of these activities involved the burn training that staffers must attend before they are able to participate in the burns.

HOPPE LAND/NRCS

Mr. Hannan noted that there was a recent meeting with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to go over the plan for the Hoppe property. Paul Searl and other NRCS representatives met to discuss the WRP program on the site.

Dave Hiatt, NRCS State Coordinator informed them that the State level is behind and that, unfortunately, at this time all of the 2010 funds had been expended. However, the NRCS was extremely complimentary of the work done on the local level and expressed their regrets that the State had fallen behind in their assistance. Mr. Hannan spoke to the Hoppe sisters shortly after and while they were understandably disappointed they did agree to meet again next year. The original plan was to purchase the 5 acre farmstead in 2010 and the 55+ acres in 2011, but with some possible tax advantages both parcels were decided to be purchased in 2010. Now it looks like we are back to the original plan. The Hoppe sisters were also very complimentary of the clean up work done on the farmstead property so far and said they will meet in January to discuss going forward with the project in 2011.

Mr. Hannan noted that their attorney did agree that we could amend the agreement to postpone the project until next year.

Mr. Anderson asked what were the real chances of the funding becoming available in 2011. Mr. Hannan responded that the NRCS has told him that this project ranks high on their list of priorities under consideration for the WRP program. The dollars involved are USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) federally funded dollars allocated to the State.

Mr. Gudmunson asked if anyone knew if capital gains would be going up next year and if that might have any impact on this project. Mr. Newport responded that the rates may be kept favorable.

Mr. Hannan noted that he will be meeting with the Hoppe sisters attorney Becker in October to continue the discussions and then to amend the agreement to 2011.

He noted that there will also be an access easement with NRCS to inspect the land and confirm that the terms of the agreement are being met.

Mr. Hannan further commented that the Planning and Zoning will allow the rezoning of the 5 acre parcel to Conservation and on September 20th to 24th, Tim Kilby log cabin restoration expert will be back to work with FP staff and volunteers on the cabin reconstruction.

Mr. Hannan then provided the Committee a handout of the upcoming FY 2011 budget proposal to be discussed more fully in September and October. He called the Committee's attention to levy options that might be considered. Additionally, he noted that part of the proposed levy could be placed in the Risk Management fund to pay for PDRMA requested safety and risk management improvements. He noted that there could also be budget changes made that could allow for the continuation of Peggy Doty and her assistant's work with natural resource education if the University of Illinois Extension partnership program changes.

He closed by calling the Committee's attention to the reserve funds, fund balance and revenues.

Ms. Fauci asked if acquisition of the future willed property is included in that reserve. Mr. Hannan responded that it was.

Mr. Anderson asked for additional explanation of the 10% of the fund that is to be used for maintenance and upkeep. He noted that he felt these monies should be re-allocated prior to looking at any tax increases. 10% of the land acquisition revenues are used for land acquisition improvements, natural resource management and maintenance.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci noted that she had recently noticed some potential upcoming grants for parks and recreation mentioned in State Representative Bob Pritchard's recent newsletter and encouraged the Committee to keep an eye out for such opportunities.

She also commented on a recent set of news stories on a local family, the Sanderson's, and the work they have done in land restoration. She commented that the Committee might want to invite them to speak at an upcoming meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Fauci noted that the Committee would now be going into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue involving a recent land purchase. She called for a motion to move into Executive Session.

Mr. Anderson requested that the beginning of the session include only the Committee members and that Mr. Hannan be excluded until called back by the Committee. The Committee agreed and Mr. Anderson moved to take the Committee into Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Walt. A roll call vote was held with 8 votes in the affirmative and none in the negative.

Following the conclusion of the Executive session, Ms. Fauci noted that she would be reading a prepared statement and that following the public reading the statement would be given to the press. The subject of the statement was an alleged omission that occurred during the purchase of the Hoppe Farm.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Fauci Noted that perhaps this would be a good time for the Committee to revisit a series of proposed procedural changes the Committee could consider when undertaking future purchases. Mr. Anderson then stated that he believes that anyone handling future purchases have strong familiarity with farmland purchases as well as conservation purchases and grant acquisition.

Ms. Fauci noted that she believed a critical factor would be the hiring of a land acquisition professional to complete the process rather than relying on in-house staff. She noted that existing staff could certainly open the discussions but should then be turned over to a professional to complete the process.

Following further discussion of possible wording and form for the document, it was decided that it be tabled until the October meeting. Move to table by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Newport and the motion to table passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Anderson moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Augsburger and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee
JF:kjr