

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
September 20, 2011**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Wednesday September 20, 2011 at 6:00 pm at the County Administration Building. In attendance were committee members: Ms. Fauci, Mr. Anderson, Ms. DeFauw, Ms. Turner and Mr. Augsburger, Mr. Deverell, Mr. Newport, Ms. Fullerton and Superintendent Hannan.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Fauci asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2011 meeting. Mr. Augsburger moved approval, seconded by Ms. Turner and the motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Fauci noted that she wanted to request a change to the agenda, adding item 6.A.1, a discussion regarding dog walking procedures in the Forest Preserves. She then asked for an approval of the evening's amended agenda. Ms. DeFauw moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Deverell and the motion passed unanimously.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION AND FILM PRESENTATION**

Mr. Hannan noted that the film that would be seen this evening was done by local filmmaker Tim Murray on the Summer Camps and other Environmental Education classes run by Peggy Doty and staff at the Natural Resources Education Center at Russell Woods.

Following the film, Mr. Hannan noted that the usual monthly reports and information was included in the packets and that there was a very good turnout for the public stargazing event held at Afton Preserve. He noted there was also information regarding many volunteer events and NIU, Kishwaukee College biology classes coming up over the next month. Mr. Hannan also noted that the Jeff's Trees project generally donates about \$1,000.00 annually for trees and Jeff's Trees Volunteers plant trees and donate benches at Forest Preserves. The Illinois Smallmouth Bass Alliance has donated \$2,000.00 to the District for stream bank improvements at Potawatomi Woods. He then read notes from shelter house users on how they enjoy and value using forest preserve shelter houses for picnics, family reunions, and nature outings.

**DOG WALKING PROCEDURES AT THE FOREST PRESERVES**

Mr. Pat Hermann wished to address the Committee regarding leash and off leash requirements. He noted that he feels that the Afton Preserve is underutilized and given that the majority of the dog walkers who use the Preserve are very responsible regarding watching for large group events or school activities, he asked the Committee to consider allowing the entire Preserve area be designated off-leash for a trial period from 7am to 9am. He noted that the current off leash area was not adequate for their needs due to the lack of a convenient rest room and the intersection is dangerous and that is a danger to the off leash dogs and their walkers. He also notes that the condition of the trails in the off leash area are far inferior to the remainder of the park. He noted that he has made several efforts to assure his dogs are trained and safe to be around. He noted that he believes the park is not sufficiently utilized to justify keeping the off-leash area separate

from the remainder of the Preserve and asks that this limited allowance be expanded to the entire park.

Mr. Jack of DeKalb spoke next, and indicated that he felt the District might not be as supportive as he would like of the needs of dog owners and the needs of a dog to run and play freely.

Mr. Hannan then noted that he is not anti-dog, nor anti-dog owners but that the main mission of Forest Preserve District's is to preserve, protect and restore natural resource land provide environmental education and passive recreation. Mr. Hannan stated that dogs are allowed in all of the Preserves on-leash and in 3 off-leash areas ( 76 acres at Afton, about 25 acres at Merritt Prairie and about 30 acres after the corn is picked at Potawatomi Woods). He noted that other Forest Preserve elected to have no off-leash areas due to safety and resource protection issues. He then noted several examples of complaints received from the public regarding off-leash dogs bothering them as well as uncontrolled dogs he and forest preserve staff had to deal with in the Preserves. Ms. DeFauw noted that she too had witnessed dogs disturbing wildlife. Ms. Doty noted when she takes outdoor education classes to Afton, she has to be quite careful of loose animals and dog excrement on the trails. Mr. Hermann indicated that he felt the walkers could be self-policing to assure that the animals and visitors are safe. Mr. Hannan again noted that some Forest Preserve Districts do not have off-leash areas for dogs due to safety concerns and other Forest Preserve Districts' that allow some off leash areas have more stringent regulations, require permits ( some at a cost to dog owners ),owners have to show that dogs are vaccinated, dog owners must clean up dog excrement, owners must have voice command and control of their dog or dogs and limit the number of dogs per owner. These Districts' also have their own "park police " to enforce the regulations and we do not. DeKalb County Animal control agrees with the leash regulation and has given many verbal warnings to owners and some tickets to repeat off leash violations. Forest Preserve staff has for years asked people to keep dogs leashed in leashed areas with little success. Regarding the dangerous intersection mentioned, Mr. Augsberger commented that you leash your dog before it gets out of the vehicle, look both ways at the intersection with your dog on leash, proceed to the off leash area and then unleash your dog.

Following a great deal of discussion between the dog owners and the Committee, it was decided to maintain the status quo regarding off-leash areas at this time and more information and discussion to follow in future meetings.

### **FY 2010 BUDGET Discussion**

Mr. Hannan reminded the Committee that when the budget draft was handed out last month, it was stated that the District can levy up to a 2.3% increase. He had discussed this with the Finance Department as well as Ms. Fauci. He noted that following these discussions, he recommended to the Committee for a no increase in FY 2012 tax dollars.

Ms. Fauci noted that there were some FY 2012 budget items regarding equipment and trail resurfacing projects that Mr. Hannan addressed. Mr. Hannan discussed the project details and the Committee moved the budget forward. Ms. Fauci noted that there appeared to be a consensus regarding the budget and the budget was forwarded unanimously by the Committee to be placed on file for public inspection.

### **CHAIR COMMENTS**

Ms. Fauci noted that she had been hiking at the Afton Preserve the evening before and had been impressed by the number of people who were quite happy with the Preserve.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Ms. Fauci then asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Mrs. Turner moved the Committee enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing potential District land acquisitions, seconded by Mr. Anderson. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 8 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative.

Following the Executive Session, the Committee returned to public session. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 8 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative to enter into an acquisition agreement with the landowner to acquire approximately 3 acres of land at \$15,000.00 an acre for a 20ft wide trail corridor connecting the Village of Somonauk to Sannauk Forest Preserve. The landowner will pay for the survey and the Village of Somonauk will be a fundraising partner to assist in trail development and maintenance and assist in patrolling of the future trail.

Mr. Augsburger noted that he has Sandhill cranes that are now new neighbors to his farm.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Newport moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Augsburger. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson  
Forest Preserve District Committee  
JF:kjr