

**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 16, 2012**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday October 17, 2012 at 6:00 pm at the Administration Bldg, Conference East. In attendance were committee members: Ms. Fauci, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Augsburger, Mr. Deverell, Ms. Turner, Ms. DeFauw and Mr. Newport. Ms. Fullerton arrived after the meeting was adjourned. Superintendent Hannan was also absent due to illness.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2012 meeting. Mr. Augsburger moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Mr. Newport and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Fauci began by noting that it appears no Executive Session will actually be needed tonight, so the Agenda will be amended to reflect that. She then asked for an approval of the evening's amended agenda. Mr. Anderson moved to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Ms. Turner and the motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET LEVY AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCES

Ms. Fauci began by noting that the budget includes money from the property tax levy, but also from farmland rentals and other sources of income.

She then asked if there were any Committee comments. The Committee has reviewed the documents and noted that the recently reduced EAV (Equalized Assesses Value) has resulted in reduced revenue and the budget as presented illustrates that the District has spent accordingly recognizing those reductions. Ms. Fauci noted that this budget, if moved, will be sent to the Full Board of Commissioners in November.

Mr. Deverell asked what the amount of the decrease was. A reference to the prior minutes noted that the decrease seen this year is 8.6% in the general fund.

Mr. Newport moved to forward the budget to the full Board of Commissioners, seconded by Ms. DeFauw. The motion passed unanimously.

The Committee next reviewed the Appropriation Ordinances. She noted that this document contains the farm rental and other sources of income. She commented that that the Potawatomi Woods farm area will be transitioned to prairie when budget and staffing allow. Grant income is not shown in these documents as they are not predictable sources from year to year.

Ms. Fauci noted that equipment purchases are also included and noted that the new equipment purchased this year was of great assistance in all preserves and in getting the new Prairie Oaks preserve ready for its fall opening.

Ms. DeFauw noted that the new equipment also has improved safety for the staff. This is especially true of the equipment that provided improved water availability and access during the annual burn management.

Mr. Anderson asked if there was anything specifically earmarked in the reserves. Ms. Fauci responded that nothing is finalized.

Mr. Augsburger moved to forward the Appropriation Ordinances to the full Board of Commissioners, seconded by Mr. Deverell. The motion passed unanimously.

The Committee then briefly discussed the upcoming Candidate Forums that will be held in the County.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Mr. Hannan had sent information to the Committee regarding the recent opening of the Prairie Oaks preserve. It was noted that there was wonderful turnout, with representatives from the grantor, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and The Conservation Foundation, NIU, Michael and Lana Haines and others in attendance. District Naturalist, Al Roloff presented an extremely thorough overview of the land restoration work needed to open the preserve and comply with the grant intent. He also spoke at length about the wide variety of plant and animal species on the land. Ms. Fauci presented photos of some of the more majestic oak trees on the property. Ms. Fauci then noted that the structures that were on the property have been removed to reduce risk.

Ms. Fauci then also shared photos from the recent annual “Jeff’s Trees” event. This year oak trees were planted at Merritt Prairie.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci noted that when she was in New York City recently she discovered the “High Line”, a former railroad path through the meat packing district on the industrial area of the west side. She noted that the conversion of this to a park area has made it an extremely attractive area for residential apartment developments. She noted that she had brought back some information on the area if anyone wanted to see it.

Mr. Augsburger asked how the pond on the Prairie Oaks property ever managed to retain water during this summer’s drought. Ms. Fauci responded that she believed there was some sort of underground water supply. Ms. Turner commented that she recalled that there was a seep or spring somewhere in the property. Ms. Fauci closed by noting that forest preserve staff is planting oaks on site.

Mr. Augsburger asked if the preserve was being locked up at night. Ms. Fauci responded that she believed it was, but she was not sure who exactly was responsible for doing it. She noted that she would follow up on that.

Ms. Fauci noted that the District is still waiting for information from the south County area and that if none is received, there may not be a need for a November meeting. She

commented that if that is true, this could be the final meeting for some of the Committee members, especially Mr. Augsburg and Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Deverell asked if it was the Committee's intention to continue to pursue land acquisitions or if those activities would be pulled back.

Ms. Fauci responded that all properties considered must meet the established criteria that the Committee has successfully used to measure the value of prior purchases. Because of the stringency of the guidelines, there could be a lull in activities. However, the Committee is always willing to discuss options.

Mr. Deverell asked if the Committee should focus more on adjoining parcels to existing preserves or looking for new locations. Mr. Newport reiterated that the existing criteria allows for consideration of both. He further noted that following the criteria has assisted the District in being successful in obtaining grants and other financial assistance.

Ms. Turner noted that the criteria are very helpful in allowing Mr. Hannan to do good preliminary reviews of the attractiveness of properties that might be offered.

Ms. Fauci commented that the identification of rare mussels in an area of the Kishwaukee River has made the area attractive for study and also speaks highly of the water quality in that area.

Mr. Anderson asked if anyone knew what the water situation was in the western areas of the County following the drought. No one knew of any areas with much remaining visible water.

The Committee then discussed other drought occurrences in other areas of the County and how severe this year had been. Ms. Turner noted that while we have considered our conditions bad, other states like Kansas had far more extreme conditions.

Ms. Fauci noted that we are lucky that our prairies and preserves have great resilience and that, combined with the dedicated efforts of the District, will survive this.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee
JF:kjr