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DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve District Committee Minutes  
August 13, 2013**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday August 13, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room C of the Administration Building. In attendance were committee members: Mr. Brown, Mr. Cribben, Ms. DeFauw, Mr. Gudmunson, Ms. Haji-Sheikh, Mr. Jones, Ms. Fauci and Superintendent Hannan.. Guests included County Board members Anthony Cvek and Frank O'Barski.

**FY2014 BUDGET**

Mr. Hannan began by passing out the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the FY2014 budget documents. He then reviewed the contents of the book and highlighted that there is a 0% increase from FY2013. He also pointed out the specific budget forms and line item details.

Mr. Hannan then reviewed the Wetland Bank fund balance and noted that while no additional wetland credit sales have been made this year, there have been several inquiries.

He then moved on the IMRF (Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund) detail that shows the IMRF will be fully funded by 2015 per the recommendations of the Auditor and County Finance Department. Ms. Haji-Sheikh asked who was involved in the IMRF program. Mr. Hannan responded that it is any Forest Preserve employee who works over 1000 hours annually.

Mr. Hannan reminded the Committee that this is the beginning of the budget review process and that discussions will continue in the September and October meetings and voted on in November.

Mr. Cvek noted that the discussions regarding IMRF funding levels have been occurring in other committees with a focus on how the funding is calculated.

**RUSSELL WOODS TO GENOA TRAIL PROJECT**

Mr. Hannan then reported on a Russell Woods to Genoa trail partnership. He began by noting that the discussions of a trail to connect Genoa to Kingston have been occurring for several years now. Recently, Genoa Public Works Director Rich Gentile applied for a grant to the Commonwealth Edison Green Program for a gravel and limestone based trail from the City of Genoa to the Natural Education Resource Center (NREC) at Russell Woods. Mr. Hannan was recently contacted by the Openlands group that works with ComEd and requested his assistance with reviewing the grant proposals they have received.

Mr. Hannan then passed out a draft map of the proposed trail. He noted that there are paved sections from Carroll Park in Genoa across the Kishwaukee River and then a planned gravel/limestone trail to the NREC. The next phase would then be a trail from Russell Woods west to the Hoppe Farmstead forest preserve property. Mr. Hannan then provided additional photos of the paved areas, bridge across the Kishwaukee River to the adjoining subdivision and to Russell Woods.

Mr. Hannan noted that there is a \$5,000.00 reserve fund for trails that he feels could be used as a contribution in this trail project. Additional reserves for future trail partnerships are also reserved (Somonauk to Sannauk Forest Preserve Trail and Shabbona to Chief Shabbona Forest Preserve and to Shabbona lake State Park Trail), those trail plans are in progress. Mr. Hannan concluded by asking the Committee for an approval to proceed with cooperative efforts with the City of Genoa on this project.

Ms. Fauci asked how much grading would need to be done and what the costs for that might be. Mr. Hannan noted that the Genoa Public Works department would actually be doing that work. He commented that Mr. Gentile had stated that the trail would be wide enough to be actively patrolled by the Genoa and County police.

Mr. Jones asked if there was a completed plan that would show the full trail from Genoa to Kingston. Mr. Hannan noted that there were still several options regarding the trail route. Mr. Jones then asked if we would simply be a partner in the project or would have a larger role. Mr. Hannan responded that there were actually several organizations that will be involved in the project.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh asked that the benefit would be to the Forest Preserve if this support was given. Mr. Hannan noted that the trail provides supplemental educational value, additional opportunities for hiking and biking, and also complies with the Greenways and Trails plan.

Ms. Fauci highlighted the importance of projects like these to meeting the vision of the Greenways and Trails plan adopted by the County several years ago. She also reminded the Committee that projects like these also speak to the Forest Preserve mission overall.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh then moved to allow Mr. Hannan to make the \$5,000.00 funding contribution as well as continuing to provide assistance and partnership to the project, seconded by Ms. DeFauw.

Mr. Gudmunson asked if Genoa would be providing staff to assist with all of this. Mr. Hannan responded that Mr. Gentile has indicated that it will, so the \$5,000.00 will be primarily used for trail materials. Mr. Gudmunson then requested additional detail regarding the how the earthwork would be done. He also asked if he \$5,000.00 would be paid up front or held until the completion of the project. Ms. Fauci asked if holding the funds would be done to assure that the project was completed appropriately. Mr. Gudmunson said that he was not aware of the staffing capabilities or equipment in Genoa and was concerned about what might happen if they got in over their heads.

Mr. Cribben asked if there was a timeline for the project. Mr. Hannan responded that they want to complete it this year if at all possible – but would verify that with Mr. Gentile.

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Mr. Brown asked who the current owner of the land was. Mr. Hannan responded that the City of Genoa owns the land as well as a floodplain prairie restoration area along the Kishwaukee River that connects to Russell Woods.

Mr. Brown then asked about access and safety on the trail. Mr. Hannan noted that it had many access points and, as noted before, will be patrolled by the Genoa and County police.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh then noted that she sees potentially four points of main access for entry to the trail, which is very beneficial. Mr. Hannan commented that the rough undeveloped trail is even being used currently.

Mr. Jones asked how much police activity actually occurs in the Preserves. Mr. Hannan responded that Sherriff Scott and patrol officers patrol forest preserves every shift and do forest preserve weekend police patrols.

Mr. Brown commented that this could be very beneficial to opening up additional access and program visibility to the NREC and its activities.

Mr. Jones then called the question on the motion still on the floor.

Ms. Fauci reminded the Committee that Ms. Haji-Sheikh moved to allow Mr. Hannan to provide the \$5,000.00 funding support as well as partnership assistance to the project, seconded by Ms. DeFauw. The motion then passed unanimously.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Mr. Hannan noted to the Committee that the monthly reports, minutes etc. were all included in the packet for their review.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Ms. Haji-Sheikh reported to the Committee that DeKalb Administrator Rudy Esperantu recently entered the City of DeKalb into a completion sponsored by an organization known as “America in Bloom”. Modeled after similar successful programs in Europe and Canada, this independent organization promotes community beautification programs through the use of flowers, plants and trees with an eye to helping towns harness untapped energy, talent, and resources to champion greening, enhance environmental awareness, promote economic development, and improve quality of life.

The AIB review Committee recently visited the DeKalb Mayor’s Garden which is used to provide support to local food pantries. Ms. Haji-Sheikh then spoke at length regarding the experiences of the judges during the visit and noted that she came away with a strong feeling that DeKalb has a very great chance of success in the competition. After the visit, she heard a local radio interview with one of the judges and noted that the person was very emotionally regarding what they saw and experienced and what DeKalb had accomplished. She concluded by saying that success in this could provide a strong boost to tourism activities in the City and County.

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Ms. Haji-Sheikh then asked whether it was true the Nehring Preserve was currently closed. Mr. Hannan responded that it is temporarily closed because the road and trail project occurring in front of the Preserve was using the Preserve for equipment and materials storage.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh then also asked about the progress on the County Farm Woods restoration. Mr. Hannan noted that there has been significant removal of invasive species and there are volunteer groups (Sunrise Rotary, local neighbors) assisting with the project.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Fauci then asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Mr. Jones moved the Committee into executive session for the purpose of discussing potential District land acquisitions, seconded by Mr. Gudmunson. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 7 Committee members voting in the affirmative and none in the negative.

Following the Executive Session, Ms. DeFauw moved to return the Committee to public session, seconded by Mr. Gudmunson. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 7 Committee members voting in the affirmative and none in the negative.

Following the return to open session, Mr. Brown moved to proceed with a phase one environmental study on the "Pink" property, seconded by Mr. Jones and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Jones then moved to approve mitigation of the wetland property on Five Points road for the County Highway Department, seconded by Mr. Cribben and the motion passed unanimously.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jones moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. DeFauw. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson  
Forest Preserve District Committee  
JF:kjr

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