

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Forest Preserve District 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 District Committee Minutes
October 15, 2013**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday October 15, 2013 at 6:00 pm in Conference Room C of the Administration Building. In attendance were committee members: Ms. Fauci, Mr. Cribben, Mr. Jones, Mr. Gudmunson, Mr. Brown, Ms. DeFauw, Ms. Haji-Sheikh and Superintendent Hannan. Guests were County Board member Frank O'Barski.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci called for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2013 meetings. Mr. Gudmunson moved approval, seconded by Mr. Cribben and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Fauci called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Brown moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Gudmunson and the motion passed unanimously.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Mr. Hannan began by noting that the Committee had agreed by consensus last month to place the FY 2014 budget on file. The Appropriation Ordinance and Levy will be attached. Once placed on file, it will be available on the website and various places in the County for review prior to the final vote at the November County Board meeting.

Mr. Gudmunson moved to formally place the budget on file, seconded by Mr. Jones and the motion passed unanimously.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Mr. Hannan noted to the Committee that the usual monthly reports, maintenance natural resource report and projects and use figures are in their packets including information on the Northwest Suburban Astronomer's November 2nd public star party at Afton.

Mr. Hannan then gave the Committee members copies of the criteria document used to evaluate land when land is offered to the District or on the market. He highlighted priorities such as a willing seller, selling price, grant potential, whether the land was adjacent to existing preserves, natural resource value, land along rivers and streams and if land has trail potential to connect people and places. He also commented on the Districts' partnership with The Conservation Foundation who has temporarily held land for the Forest Preserve District while grant timing and grant opportunities are pending.

He then reported that another successful Jeff's Trees event was held the prior Saturday at Afton Preserve. He reminded the Committee that Jeff Arnold was a good friend of Michael Haines and many DeKalb County friends and a "Friend of the Forest".

Jeff passed away seven years ago and every year friends and family come together from all over the United States on a October weekend to donate money for trees, plant trees and install benches in his name. Mr. Hannan noted this is a wonderful group consisting of 2 year olds to Jeff's 90+ year old mother all digging holes and planting trees. He commented this year, along with remembering Jeff Arnold, trees were planted in Gary Haines memory and honor also. He is Michael Haines younger brother and worked with the District in the 1970's and planted trees in the early year's at Afton helping with land restoration and habitat improvements.

Mr. Brown asked if the value of a tree is public information if someone is interested in doing that. Mr. Hannan noted that the prices vary by size and type and can run anywhere from low cost seedlings to \$15.00 for a 5 gallon potted tree to over \$150.00 for 2' diameter tree plus the cost of planting. Mr. Brown commented that recently the DeKalb Park District had quoted a \$400.00 figure, though that may have also included a supplemental donation as well.

Mr. Hannan then reported that he and Gary Hanson had met with the donor who is partnering with the Forest Preserve District on improving the west trail head and more parking at the Great Western Trail. The donated funds for the trail head improvements and parking will be put in a reserve fund for this future project.

Mr. Brown asked about the monthly report of Forest Preserve activities and attendance. He was curious as to how the attendance counts were obtained. Mr. Hannan noted that shelter and camping permits show how many people are estimated by people when the call in a reservation for renting shelters and camping. Park managers and staff make observations of visitors at forest preserves and send information in their monthly reports. He noted the most daily use is on the Great Western Trail and DeKalb / Sycamore Trail. He noted the October weddings at Nehring and Afton Preserves.

Mr. Jones asked if there were ever any discussions of blacktopping the Great Western Trail. Mr. Hannan noted that the runners prefer the limestone surface. The limestone surface on the flat rail bed has been a good long term and affordable trail surface.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci commented that she will have a party next Friday at 8:00 pm at her home to thank volunteers and Land Stewards who work in the Preserves.

She then added that recently the Rules Committee of the County Board noted that this Committee is one of only three that meet after Executive Committee each month. They noted that this is problematic and the Committee will likely be asked soon to move their meeting date to a time before Executive Committee meets. Mr. Jones noted that the new

date does not need to become effective until after the next Forest Preserve Committee is seated. Ms. Fauci asked the Committee to think about options in this regard.

Mr. Gudmunson commented that he has noted that land prices have gone up significantly since the purchase of the Afton South Prairie.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Fauci, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee
JF:kjr