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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve District Committee Minutes
February 18, 2014**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday February 18, 2014 at 6:00 pm at Conference Room of the Administration Center. In attendance were committee members: Ms. Fauci, Ms. DeFauw, Mr. Jones, Mr. Cribben, and Mr. Brown. Mr. Gudmunson arrived after the call to order and Ms. Haji-Sheikh was absent. Superintendent Hannan was also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Fauci noted that there was no meeting in January.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Mr. Hannan noted that there was a handout in the Monthly Reports demonstrating that it was a good winter for WinterFest and other outdoor activities. Ms. Doty has given a synopsis of the WinterFest event in the report.

He noted that the sledding hill has been extremely popular, and recently posted closed. With the heavy use and heavy snows, snow gets pushed to bottom of hills making abrupt bumps and jumps therefore creating unsafe sledding hill conditions.

Mr. Hannan then reported that the NREC library has been remodeled. There may also be a project moving the old Pleasant Hill Schoolhouse (if structurally sound) to the Hoppe Heritage Farmstead. The Ney Grange may contribute money to move the school and Mr. Hannan will apply for a grant if this project moves forward.

He noted that there was a schoolhouse that was moved in Kane County to LeRoy Oakes forest preserve that showed the possibilities for the project.

Mr. Gudmunson arrived.

Mr. Hannan went on to note that Resource Bank had moved a schoolhouse in Shabbona that is now part of the new bank. Discussions will be held with a professional mover to determine the viability of the move and if the structure is sound.

He also noted and discussed other reports and the Natural Resources report attached to the Committee packet as well.

He noted that there was also a schedule of upcoming Volunteer Days for the District for 2014. There will also be some restoration activities and winter tree identification programs during the upcoming Maple Syrup event at the NREC.

Pete Olson is also scheduled to hold his two annual bird walks at Wilkinson Marsh and Prairie Oaks again in 2014.

The District has also received a \$500 cash award from PDRMA for not having any losses or claims during our 2013 policy coverage period.

The campgrounds at Russell Woods and MacQueen Preserves have been again approved for camping by the Public Health Department.

Mr. Hannan then reported that IDNR continues the Chronic Wasting Disease program. IDNR staff has offered to come and make a personal report to the Committee at the March meeting.

Mr. Jones asked if anyone knew if the general deer population was down this year. He will ask Frank Osling from the IDNR to address the deer population numbers.

CHANGE OF MEETING DATE:

Ms. Fauci began by noting that the County is moving to having no Committee meetings between the Executive Committee and County Board meetings monthly. This would require a move by this Committee to the 4th Tuesday of the month. Ms. Fauci asked if this was something the current Committee would want to do now. Ms. DeFauw noted that she would prefer to keep the meeting date as it is through this year and then do the change in 2015. Mr. Brown asked if there would still be an allowance for having special meetings if necessary to handle pressing business. Ms. Fauci noted that would be the case.

The consensus of the Committee was to keep the meeting time and date as is for the 2014 year.

2013 BUDGET TRANSFERS:

Mr. Hannan noted that he will shortly have the FY 2013 budget transfers and amendments reviewed by the auditors and finance director. These annual transfers and amendments will be ready for the FP Committee review and Commissioner vote in March. He also wanted to point out that there was a \$550,000.00 land acquisition fund transfer done last month that showed up as a claim. There was no expenditure, this new accounting procedure preferred by the finance director will be addressed to the FP Commissioners at the County Board meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Fauci attended her last Statewide Forest Preserve meeting in Chicago last month. She noted that this is the 100th anniversary of the Cook County Forest Preserve (the

Burnham Plan). The Plan envisioned an emerald necklace of preserves around the city. The future goal for the preserves is to improve their lands.

She noted that the DNR code had recently been revised to add three animals (wolf, cougar and black bear) to the Illinois code.

Ms. Fauci noted that Peggy Doty recently did a very balanced and informative lecture on Illinois wildlife predators.

Kane County FP District is doing a program partnership with Toyota where the salaries of transitioning veterans are paid for by Toyota and the veterans learn work skills in the land restoration and management in Preserves and assist with their transition back from war. She believes the title of the program is the Transitioning Veteran's Work Program. The idea is to provide challenging meaningful work the environment. She went on to add that the stewards are working on a plan for native plantings around Russell Woods. She asked if Mr. Hannan might have any budget for this and he responded that there is NREC donation money available from a memorial fund.

Mr. Brown commented that it does seem as if there are fewer deer this year, but that the squirrel population seems to be thriving. He added that it was wonderful that the Preserves could offer County residents so many opportunities for healthy outdoor exercise during the winter.

Mr. Jones reported that a snowy owl was sighted near his farm on Old State Rd. near Clare. Mr. Hannan noted that one was sighted near Prairie Oaks and Afton preserves as well and other parts of DeKalb County . He commented that since lemmings are one of the owls primary food sources, in years where the lemmings populations decline up north, the snowy owls travel farther south for other food options.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Fauci then asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Ms. DeFauw moved to take the Committee into executive session, seconded by Mr. Jones. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 6 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative and 1 absent.

Following the Executive Session, Mr. Jones moved to return the Committee to public session, seconded by Ms. DeFauw. A roll call vote was held and the motion passed with 6 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative and 1 absent.

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