

*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  
April 28, 2015**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday April 28, 2015 at 6:00 pm at Chief Shabbona Forest Preserve. In attendance were committee members: Mr. Oncken, Ms. Polanco, Mr. Brown, Ms. Haji-Sheikh, Ms. Turner and Superintendent Hannan. Mr. Emerson and Mr. Metzger were absent. Guests included Dan Nolan, Mark Chestnut and Curt Herman of the Shabbona Trail committee.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Turner called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2014 meeting. Mr. Oncken moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Brown and the motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Turner called for a motion to approve an amended agenda. Ms. Polanco moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Oncken and the motion passed unanimously.

**MONTHLY REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Mr. Hannan began by noting that the full attendance and activities reports could be found in the members' packets. However, he highlighted information related to the recent burns conducted as well as noting that there would be a public star viewing party held at Afton Preserves on 5-16-15. The viewing will be sponsored by the Northwest Suburban Astronomers club as it has in the past.

**SHABBONA TRAIL UPDATE**

Ms. Turner invited Dan Nolan, president of the Shabbona Trail Committee to present an update on the project. Mr. Nolan introduced fellow committee members Curt Herman and Mark Chestnut. He noted that the committee now has 9 directors and is currently in the process of establishing their 501c3 tax status as a tax exempt organization.

He began by showing maps of the proposed trailway as well as noting where they need to finalize agreements with the various property owners along the way.

He noted that Jim Johnson, who has been handling the financial aspects of the project, estimates that the total cost will likely be in the area of \$900,000.00. Mr. Oncken asked about the timeframe for the project. Mr. Nolan responded that would be influenced by their ability to meet their fundraising goals as well as finalizing agreements with the landowners involved. However, he noted that they are currently at almost 1/3 of their

local matching fund goal and have several grants in play that will help them to close that gap. In addition, he commented that the landowners they are dealing with are quite supportive of the trailway.

He noted that they have signed agreements with 8 of the 10 landowners, but the final two represent the largest portions of the needed land.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh commented that, regarding the 501c3 status, when she was working with the DeKalb County Gardens organization they had partnered with another organization (the YMCA) as a bridge to shorten the application process. She commented that she felt that partnership was a good long-term solution and asked if the trailway committee had considered such a partnership. Mr. Nolan responded that they have begun conversations with some other local organizations.

Mr. Oncken asked if there was anything more the Forest Preserve could do to support the project. Mr. Nolan thanked the Committee for their generous support to date and noted that they are currently looking to start some local focus groups. Until they get to that point, they don't want to get too far ahead of themselves until their final landowner agreements are finalized. Mr. Chestnut commented that they are very optimistic about the fundraising activities that will be started in the community. He noted that the area also has approximately 400,000 visitors to Shabbona Lakes State Park each year and the trailway can be a great benefit to them as well. Mr. Brown noted that he had recently had a casual conversation with a gentleman he met in Oak Brook. When he told the man he was from DeKalb County, the gentleman recalled many positive memories of the campgrounds and fishing at the State Park. Mr. Chestnut noted that the trailway project has also sparked a lot of other beautification activities in the area, such as the determination to become a Tree City. Activities like these as well as the improvement to public safety that the trailway will bring will make a significant difference in the areas quality of life and should be well supported by the community.

Mr. Hannan commented, regarding the possible cost of the project, that a number of things can make that cost vary greatly, for instance he noted that he has currently been taking bids for re-paving work on the Peace Road Trail and the bids have been very diverse.

Mr. Oncken noted that he had recently seen a motorized scooter on the Peace Road Trail and commented that motorized vehicles should not be on the trail due to the damage and safety concerns they can cause.

Mr. Nolan commented that to manage costs, one thing they had done is to leverage with the local School Board to garner the best route for the trail through the school buildings themselves. This will provide a safe option for passage between the school buildings that the district does not have today. He added that they have really seen a lot of excitement growing for the project and again thanked the Forest preserve for their support and encouragement.

Mr. Hannan noted that partnerships are essential for projects like this. Mr. Nolan enthusiastically agreed commenting that he has seen greatly improved intergovernmental relationships within the taxing bodies.

Ms. Turner thanked the guests for their very thorough report.

#### **FEES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO TORNADO RELIEF**

Ms. Turner noted that each Committee of the County Board has been asked to discuss whether there may be any fee or requirements that may need to be waived to support tornado repair or rebuilding activities. Mr. Hannan noted that it did not appear any Forest Preserve fees would be involved. However, he added that Justine Luepkes, the manager at MacQueen Preserve, opened the cabins to allow some of the residents who were affected by the tornado to find shelter after the storm.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Ms. Turner asked if there were any Committee member comments. Hearing none, she proceeded to Executive Session.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Ms. Turner then asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Mr. Oncken moved to take the Committee into Executive Session, seconded by Ms. Polanco. A roll call vote was held with 5 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative and 2 absent.

Following the Executive Session, Mr. Oncken moved to return the Committee to public session, seconded by Ms. Polanco. A roll call vote was held with 5 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative and 2 absent.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Haji-Sheikh moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Oncken. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Turner, Chairperson  
Forest Preserve District Committee  
AT:kjr