

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
September 22, 2015**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve District Committee met Tuesday September 22, 2015 at 6:00 pm at West Gathertorium of the County Administration Building. In attendance were committee members: Mr. Brown, Ms. Turner, Mr. Emerson, Mr. Metzger, Ms. Haji-Sheikh and Superintendent Hannan, Ms. Polanco was absent and Mr. Bagby arrived after the Call to Order. Guests included Frankie Benson of the DeKalb County Trail Riders.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Turner called for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2015 meeting. Mr. Metzger moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Emerson and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Turner called for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Haji-Sheikh moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Brown and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Turner began by recognizing Ms. Benson from the DeKalb County Trail Riders. Ms. Benson indicated she was there to observe and answer any questions the Committee might have about her organization.

MONTHLY REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

Mr. Hannan noted that last month Mr. Roloff had shown the Committee the high quality density and diversity of mussels in the Kishwaukee River. He added that the forest preserve district was successful in obtaining a \$4,000 grant for stream bank stabilization and erosion control at the South Branch Prairie. This was a matching grant from the Small Mouth Bass Association and will improve river aquatic habitat and quality.

Mr. Hannan then noted that on September 1st, the Sycamore High School Cross Country Team hosted the Sycamore Invitational at the Afton Preserve and the Conference meet is on October 17th.

Mr. Bagby arrived.

Mr. Hannan noted that the Scout groups use all the preserves for camp outs and other activities. While public tent camping is allowed only at MacQueen forest preserve, organizations like the scouts can tent camp with special permits at all preserves. Ms. Hannan commented that October the 10th the annual “Jeff’s Trees” event will be held at Prairie Oaks forest preserve. Friends and family donate time and money to plant trees in memory of Jeff Arnold. This is the 10th annual tree planting.

He noted that the Evergreen Village land restoration is coming along and much improvement and cleanup has occurred since the Committee visited the site last July.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh asked how much bike trail will be put into the site. Mr. Hannan responded that there would be a trail head and parking area at the property and there will be a future ¼ mile trail connection from Evergreen Village east to the Great Western Trail.

Mr. Hannan commented that 30 acres of the 60 acre site will be a floodplain prairie restoration. He reminded the Committee that this will be a process similar to what was done at the 55 acre South Branch Prairie floodplain restoration site. He noted that Boy Troop 16 of Sycamore will be assisting in cleaning up litter at the site.

He then reported that the National Bank and Trust Co. had recently held an event at the 1835 Miller-Ellwood cabin and then lunch at Natural Resources Education Center. There has also been a new event, a “VolksWalk” to Russell Woods, started by a Genoa resident as well.

Mr. Brown asked if the large section of ragweed at the Evergreen Village site had ever been farmed. Mr., Hannan noted that it had been farmed in the past, the ragweed was eliminated with 2 herbicide applications this Summer and a prairie seed mix will be seeded in late 2015. .

Mr. Hannan closed by noting that the annual “Terror in the Timber” fundraiser for Sandwich High School music programs will be held again this year in late October at Sannauk Forest Preserve.

FY2016 BUDGET

Mr. Hannan began by reminding the Committee that this is the question and answer time for the budget process. There will also be time for questions and final vote by the Committee on October 27th and to forward to the Forest Preserve Commissioners for their vote at the November 18th County Board meeting. He commented that the total dollars for the FY 2016 budget were the same total dollars as FY 2015.

Mr. Bagby asked about a line item for a new truck with a snow plow package. Mr. Hannan noted that this will be a replacement for an older vehicle with a plow that will be moved to the MacQueen Preserve to allow the District to retire the significantly older truck that is currently at MacQueen forest preserve.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh expressed thanks to Mr. Hannan for his diligence in keeping the budget balanced.

Mr. Hannan commented that the budget will be again balanced and noted the Afton wetland bank has been a great help in keeping the district budget balanced and the new Waste Management funds will help also. He reminded the Committee that the District has recently been approved by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to add a new Wetland Bank at the Afton South Prairie.

Mr. Brown asked about the longevity line item noted in the budget. He asked if these increases were intended as an incentive for County employees to stay. Ms. Turner noted that it is something the County uses to be so good at employee retention.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Metzger asked how metal detecting activities at the Preserves are handled. Mr. Hannan responded that if the people with metal detectors are respectful and do not cause any damage to the areas they are in, they do allow them. He noted that many individuals interested in metal detecting and geo-caching will often call ahead to be sure the District knows where they will be. At this time the District does not charge for permits as is done in some other Counties who use the funds to control the use and offset damage that can result from the activities.

Ms. Haji-Sheikh noted that she had recently met with the Kishwaukee Hospital liaison for the Pedal Pal activities. She noted that they will have an intern coming in who they will task with working with local businesses to highlight their activities to support the local biking community.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Turner then asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Mr. Metzger moved to take the Committee into Executive Session, seconded by Ms. Haji-Sheikh. A roll call vote was held with 6 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative and one absent.

Following the Executive Session, Mr. Bagby moved to return the Committee to public session, seconded by Mr. Emerson. A roll call vote was held with 6 Committee members voting in the affirmative, none in the negative and one absent.

Following the return from Executive Session, **Ms. Haji-Sheikh moved to approve the purchase of a 1.3 acre parcel (connecting Prairie Oaks forest preserve to the recently approved Conro property purchase) at \$12,000.00 per acre, seconded by Mr. Brown and the motion passed unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Emerson moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anita Turner", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anita Turner, Chairperson
Forest Preserve District Committee
AT:kjr