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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve Operations Committee Minutes
May 26, 2020**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Operations Committee met virtually via Zoom on Tuesday, May 26, 2020. Chairman Stoddard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those Members virtually present were Mr. Tim Hughes, Ms. Maureen Little, Ms. Terri Mann-Lamb, Mr. Chris Porterfield, Mr. Craig Roman, Mr. Jeff Whelan, and Chairman Paul Stoddard. A quorum was established with all seven Members present.

Others present via Zoom included Forest Preserve District Superintendent Terry Hannan and Kathy Lampkins.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by M. Whelan, and it was carried unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Roman, seconded by Ms. Mann-Lamb and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the April 27, 2020 Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Mr. Hannan reported that all forest preserve have been very well used by people and families outside getting exercise, fresh air, reconnecting to nature and un-plugging for a while. Shelters, Lodges, the Natural Resource Center, toilets and campgrounds are all currently closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Trails, greenspace, parking lots, picnic and conservation areas are open and social distancing is required.

The County saw a great deal of rain the past week and many preserves were temporarily closed, especially Sycamore Forest Preserve and Potawatomi Woods. Once the waters retreated the preserves were opened back up.

Mr. Hannan was very pleased to report that the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation has approved a grant of up to \$597,563 to DeKalb County Forest Preserve District for the purchase of the Wood's Property in Genoa (previously Oak Club Golf Course). He continued that the Forest Preserve District was awarded a 50% grant for the Wood's Property acquisition. The \$1,175,127.00 appraised value minus the \$587,563.00 ICECF Grant (also added \$10,000.00 grant to assist with restoration costs) minus the \$250,000.00 donation from the Wood family = \$337,564.00 balance for the Forest Preserve District divided by 103 acres = \$3,309 per acre.

If the District were to include the work and cost Mr. Wood has done to improve the property like, clean up and mow weeds and brush that had grown in former golf course neglect, remove 50 + dead ash trees along future trails (former golf cart paths), remove some tee boxes and sand

traps, remove old clubhouse, will install split rail fence on boundaries, donated parking lot and donated maintenance barn/shop and he discussed with me donating new trees to plant, all this lowers our cost substantially more... possibly down to \$0.

The Wood property will be named RiverWood Forest Preserve. Closing is planned for late June. This is the 4th 50% grant received from ICECF partnerships (Prairie Oaks, Swanson Grove and Nelson Prairie). Mr. Hannan noted that these have all been good investments for DeKalb County and that the Forest Preserve District thanks the Committee and all of the Commissioners for their support.

Mr. Hannan also shared that Peggy Doty received a \$5,000 grant from the DeKalb County Community Foundation to add to the donations she previously received in order to build a screened-in porch attached to the Natural Resource Center at Russell Woods.

He also shared that he and Mr. Michael Haines of Kingston will be working over the next few months to talk to a realtor and property owners in Kingston in order to see what would be needed to extend a trail from Genoa to Kingston. This has been a project that has been in the works for many years but not all property owners have been on board with the concept of a trail. The trail would help connect Genoa to Kingston without seeing walkers, bikers, or kids on Illinois State Route 72. Mr. Hannan shared that he would keep the Committee informed on the progress of the *hopefully* future project.

He lastly shared that the Sycamore Park District has officially approved bids for the Construction of Segment 1: Sycamore Forest Preserve to Old Mill Park Trail Connection. Work will likely begin this Fall, perhaps sooner. This marks a long and difficult path to this half step of the DCFPD and SPD Goal of Connecting the old terminus of the Great Western Trail at the east end of Sycamore, all the way to Leon Larson Park in west Sycamore. The plan is to submit a grant application this fall/winter for the last segment. AND, once the City works with the Old Mill, LLC to get in a lighted crosswalk at Mt. Hunger and Route 23 this project will become what it has long been envisioned in the Greenways and Trails Plan for our area.

In May of 2018, the Sycamore Park District received word that it is one of IDOT's 2018 Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant recipients. The District's grant application was approved for the full amount requested, \$1,698,980. The grant will fund 75% of the engineering and construction cost for a .8-mile paved trail segment from the new Sycamore Forest Preserve to Page Street in Sycamore. The Sycamore Park District and DeKalb County Forest Preserve District have entered an intergovernmental agreement for shared planning, implementation and funding of the grant's local match, \$424,750. The total project cost is \$2,123,730.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Mann-Lamb, seconded by Mr. Whelan and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Paul Stoddard

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary

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