

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Forest Preserve 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 Operations Committee Minutes
July 28, 2020**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Operations Committee met virtually via Zoom on Tuesday, July 28, 2020. Chairman Stoddard called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Those Members virtually present were Ms. Maureen Little, Ms. Terri Mann-Lamb, Mr. Chris Porterfield, Mr. Jeff Whelan, and Chairman Paul Stoddard. Mr. Tim Hughes and Mr. Craig Roman were absent. A quorum was established with five Members present and two absent.

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Ms. Mann-Lamb and seconded by Mr. Porterfield to approve the agenda as presented. Those voting yea were Ms. Little, Ms. Mann-Lamb, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Whelan, and Chairman Stoddard. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Whelan and seconded by Mr. Porterfield to approve the minutes from the May 26, 2020 Meeting. Those voting yea were Ms. Little, Ms. Mann-Lamb, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Whelan, and Chairman Stoddard. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Mr. Hannan reviewed the Forest Preserve District's Monthly Report with Committee which illustrated photos of the construction that has been occurring at the Afton South Prairie Wetland Bank. The report also depicted work that has been done by the Natural Resource Management staff and individuals enjoying the Kishwaukee River at Knute Olson Forest Preserve.

The Shabbona Pathway Committee recently had a groundbreaking ceremony with all the private and public partnership grants/donations that helped with the future trail connection from the Village of Shabbona to Indian Creek Schools, Shabbona Lake State Park, and Chief Shabbona Forest Preserve.

Mr. Hannan also shared that the beautiful newly acquired land east of the Kishwaukee River at the former Oak Club Golf Course in Genoa will be called *Riverwood Forest Preserve*. This land acquisition and preservation project has been wonderful partnership with support from the citizens of DeKalb County, DeKalb County Forest Preserve Commissioners (County Board) and the former land owner, the Wood family. The Wood family made many donations and many work hours along the way including: a generous monetary donation, maintenance shop, parking area donations, removing former clubhouse, mowing and cleaning up site, removing some tee boxes and sand traps, taking down many dead ash trees and also donations for future tree plantings and donating a future split rail fence that will be installed around the boundaries to

designate public and private land ownership. The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation awarded a 50% Grant to the Forest Preserve District to help with this acquisition (the 4th, 50% grant from ICECF awarded to the District to assist with land preservations). These conservation partnerships are very appreciated and important with keeping land acquisition costs affordable and assist the Forest Preserve District with other public land acquisitions in DeKalb County. The 103-acre acquisition closed on June 30th. The total Forest Preserve tax rate is less than 1% (7/10th of 1 %) of a homeowner's property tax bill.

Keeping with the Forest Preserve mission statement, the former golf cart paths will be public hiking, biking, and cross-country ski trails and Kishwaukee River fishing access. Benches or "sitting rocks" will be placed along trails. Interpretive signage will be placed along trails describing the habitat and wildlife. Open green space and picnic areas will mainly be in northern part of the site near parking lot and former clubhouse areas. As with other forest preserves, off road atv's, dirt bikes, etc, will not be allowed. There will be wide mowed greenspace buffers near homes and townhouses. A few former tee - off areas will be mowed for beautiful views of Riverwood and Kishwaukee River. Conservation work includes the middle areas of some of the former fairways will be converted from turfgrass to low profile colorful prairie pollinator meadows and the south areas near Knute Olson Forest Preserve will be an Oak savannah and prairie restoration projects. These will be multi-year conservation and land improvement projects. The Forest Preserve District has a great maintenance and natural resource management staff and volunteers take good care for this land. The Forest Preserve District has a very good working partnership with County Sherriff Roger Scott and County Sherriff vehicle and foot patrols.

The benefits and value of having beautiful recreational, educational and natural resource areas in DeKalb County are many. The value tax dollars return in preservation and restoration of native prairie, wetland and forest plant communities and diverse wildlife habitat areas, providing environmental education and volunteer opportunities for elementary high school and college students, service clubs, scouts and citizens. Forest Preserves provide well maintained and safe areas for a variety of outdoor recreational activities including long distance multi -use trails. Good health, spiritual and emotional well-being has been associated with those who take part in recreational activities and have a connection with nature. Clean water, flood control, recharging groundwater, soil conservation, water protection / conservation, and improved air quality are also beneficial functions of Forest Preserves. Home values, especially near Forest Preserves, have more added value than in areas lacking in forest preserves, parks, trails and natural areas. Tax dollars invested in Forest Preserves return to area businesses, creating direct and indirect job opportunities for local purchases like gasoline, sporting goods, bicycles, running shoes, outdoor clothing, canoes, kayaks, fishing equipment, books, binoculars, cameras, sleds, x-country skis, camping and picnic supplies along with local restaurants, coffee shops, motel/hotel, transportation, and other retail business. Employers can attract and keep employees in areas with a strong commitment to the quality of life that forest preserves, parks and natural areas provide.

SUMMIT RIDGE ENERGY SOLAR FARM

Mr. Hannan shared that he recently had a meeting with Kerri Neary of Summit Ridge Energy and County Board District 2 representative Mr. Tim Hughes. The company is looking at submitting an application for a Special Use Permit (KI-20-24 & KI-20-25) which will go before the Planning & Zoning Committee. The request is being made by Summit Ridge Energy – Hoppe-Nitzberg 1 & 2 Solar Garden for the approval of two Special Use Permits to establish and operate two adjacent, but separate, 2-megawatt solar

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gardens on property located on the east side of Pleasant Hill Road, in Kingston Township. The first solar garden (KI-20-24) will be 16-acres, and the second (KI-20-25) will be 16.19-acres.

Mr. Hannan explained that Ms. Neary discussed that Summit Ridge is willing to work with the Forest Preserve District on a tree screening plan that preserves the character of the surrounding area of the Hoppe Heritage Farmstead/South Branch Prairie.

Per their discussions, Ms. Neary's comments are in black and Mr. Hannan's comments are in red:

1. The area to the east of the facilities up to the forest reserve will remain farmland / corn will continue to be planted. This should provide somewhat of a nature buffer for you and there are some concerns about putting screening in the middle of a farm field here due to long term impacts, but please let me know what you think.

The Hoppe Lease Area 1a on the map is approximately 250 ft. south and west from the Forest Preserve boundary and in my opinion would not need to be screened as the solar panels are about 9ft tall and is far enough away from our site and would not diminish the character of the site. Also, tree /shrub planting or screen berms in the middle of an agricultural field may need to be removed at the end of the lease term.

2. It seems that a reasonable approach would be to plant some trees along the gravel access road to the north of the property, leading to your cabin, and perhaps along the property boundary line as it wraps around the cabin area. While we are very much open to using your preferred tree species, we would ask that we find something in the 8-10-foot range to avoid shading impacts to the solar facility. If you have a list of suggestions, please send them my way.

In map of Hoppe lease Area 1, I would suggest planting Northern Illinois native trees and shrubs in the 8-10 ft maximum height range along the south side of the gravel entrance lane and along west boundary of farmstead. I will advise on plant species type.

Mr. Hannan shared that Ms. Neary was in agreement with the suggestions and reiterated that all of this was dependent only if SRE is chosen in the lottery for this project.

The Forest Preserve Operations Committee all agreed with Mr. Hannan's comments and were okay with this Special Use Permit request going before the DeKalb County Board's Planning & Zoning Committee for consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Little and seconded by Ms. Mann-Lamb to adjourn the Committee Meeting. Those voting yea were Ms. Little, Ms. Mann-Lamb, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Whelan, and Chairman Stoddard. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Paul Stoddard

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary

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Hoppe Lease Area 1



Russell Forest Preserve

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Pleasant Hill Rd

Burton Ln

Market St

Winding Trail

Middleton St

Forrest Ln

Riverbend Dr

Stearn Dr

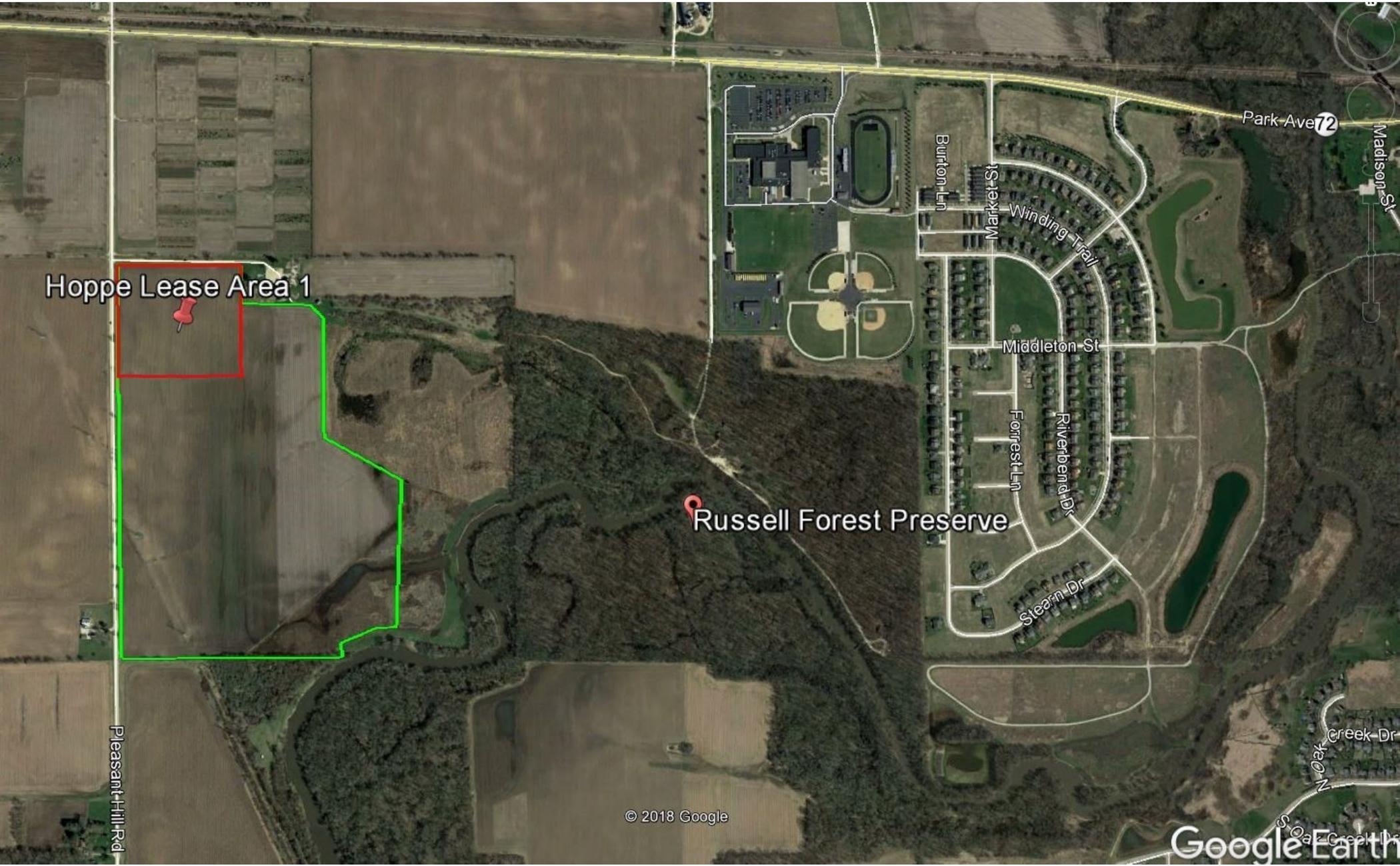
Park Ave 72

Madison St

Creek Dr

N Oak

Cooper Dr





Hoppe Lease Area 1a

Russell Forest Preserve

Burton Ln

Market St

Winding Trail

Middleton St

Forrest Ln

Riverbend Dr

Stearn Dr

Park Ave

72

Pleasant Hill Rd

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