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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve Operations Committee Minutes
July 26, 2022**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Operations Committee met for their regularly scheduled monthly meeting at the Afton Forest Preserve in DeKalb, Illinois on Tuesday, July 26, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Those Members present were Ms. Mary Cozad, Mr. John Emerson, Ms. Maureen Little, Ms. Terri Mann-Lamb, and Chairman Craig Roman. Mr. Patrick Deutsch and Ms. Michelle Pickett were absent. A quorum was established with five Members present and two absent.

Forest Preserve District Superintendent Terry Hannan was also present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Ms. Mann-Lamb, seconded by Ms. Cozad and approved unanimously by voice vote to approve the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Emerson moved to approve the May 24, 2022 minutes as presented. Ms. Mann-Lamb seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

Ms. Michelle Pickett arrived. There were now six Members present and one absent.

MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Mr. Hannan shared that Afton's original 240 acres was acquired in 1973 and the Afton South Prairie added an additional 76 acres in 2008. The area was restored to a beautiful forest preserve from a rolling eroded farm. About 285 acres have been restored to many native plant communities – prairies, wetlands and woodlands. Other features include large open green space areas, evergreen and hardwood tree landscapes, a playground, numerous benches, an observation deck, several picnic shelters, large picnic areas and 5 miles of hiking trails, including almost a mile of handicapped access trails. Cornell University's Ornithological Lab, a premier bird research center, recognizes Afton Forest Preserve as a "National hot spot" for bird watching, with over 250 species of birds observed there since 2004. The mix of prairie, trees, shrubs, wetlands, stream, pond, grasslands and open space provides places for recreation, education and habitat diversity for birds and other wildlife.

Mr. Hannan additionally provided a sheet that broke down the grants that the District has been awarded over the years from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. From 1978 to 2022, Mr. Hannan and the Forest Preserve District have been awarded close to \$5 million in grant funds plus numerous donations. Most of the Land Acquisition and Development grant awards were 50% matching grants. ISTEAs grants were 80% grants, forest preserve District 20%.

Riverwood Forest Preserve was awarded a \$598,000 Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation grant, plus a \$250,000 Bob Wood Donation, parking lot, and maintenance building donations. In addition, there was a \$45,000 split rail boundary fence donation and other property maintenance work provided by the seller of the property. Mr. Hannan provided an example of what the District has to do when they receive grant funding. Riverwood's final report for the grant was distributed in the meeting packet.

Mr. Hannan also reported that he is working on the FY2023 Budget. That will be distributed next month. Summer Camps are happening at the Natural Resource Center at Russell Woods. The Land Stewards are volunteering and working at the various preserves and the District Staff are completing summer maintenance projects. Lastly, there are many Eagle Scout projects happening right now. The Forest Preserve District is always thankful when the Eagle Scouts chose to complete their projects in one of the various preserves.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hannan also shared that at the August Forest Preserve District Commissioners Meeting, he would like to recognize the Sycamore Lions Club for their 28 years of cleanup on the Great Western Trail and for their donation of the Lions Picnic Shelter and bench at the Sycamore Forest Preserve, where the Committee is currently meeting.

Mr. Roman announced that this would be his last Committee Meeting prior to resigning from the County Board, pending the sale of his house. He explained that he and his family will now call Madison, Wisconsin their new home. He thanked Mr. Hannan and the Committee for all their work and that he will greatly miss being a part of the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District. The Committee bid Mr. Roman farewell and thanked him for his leadership.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Mann-Lamb and seconded by Ms. Pickett to adjourn the Committee Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Roman, Chairman

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary