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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Forest Preserve Operations Committee Minutes
September 27, 2022**

The DeKalb County Forest Preserve Operations Committee met for their regularly scheduled monthly meeting at the Sycamore Forest Preserve in Sycamore, Illinois on Tuesday, September 27, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Those Members present were Ms. Mary Cozad, Mr. Patrick Deutsch, Ms. Michelle Pickett, Ms. Terri Mann-Lamb, and Chairman Craig Roman. Mr. John Emerson and Ms. Maureen Little 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 Mr. Deutsch and was approved unanimously by voice vote to approve the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Deutsch moved to approve the August 23, 2022 minutes as presented. Ms. Pickett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FY2023 FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Hannan reviewed that the full Board of Commissioners unanimously approved placing the FY2023 Budget on file for public inspection last week.

This budget, like the County Budget, is using only the estimated 2.58% new construction valuation for any budget increase. The 2023 tax rate is less than the 2022 tax rate, homeowners and farm owners will pay slightly less Forest Preserve District tax in this budget. The Forest Preserve tax is less than 1% of a homeowner's tax bill.

Included in the text in the District's Budget Letter is the following: "As discussed with past Forest Preserve Committees and with Forest Preserve District Commissioners, as part of the long-range forest preserve land acquisition, maintenance and management plan, the FY2023 Budget will continue with the transition of a portion of the land acquisition funds to maintenance and management funds for all forest preserves and new land acquisitions as per the voter approved referendum in 2006."

Mr. Hannan added that it is so good to continue to receive wonderful public support, volunteer participation, generous grants, and donations for the DeKalb County Forest Preserves and the value citizens place on these local treasures.

It was reiterated that the Commissioners placed the budget on file on September 21, 2022. The Committee will hold a Public Hearing at the Committee's next meeting on October 25, 2022, with the potential final vote happening on November 16, 2022.

MONTHLY REPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Mr. Hannan noted that the Committee would be receiving a Fall Report soon. He also provided a brief historical timeline of how Sycamore Forest Preserve came to be. The sixty-acre preserve opened October 16, 2017. The land was formally known as the Evergreen Village Mobile Home Park and was subject to flooding almost every year, often more than once. A Federal FEMA Grant helped acquire the property, relocate residents, remove some roads, all the mobile homes and other structures and remove a sewage treatment plant. Floodplain prairie habitat was planted in the back 30 acres, and the front 30 acres will feature two open-air shelters, new asphalt roads parking and bike trail, picnic areas, hiking/cross-country ski trails and a fishing pond. The Great Western Trail was extended another half mile west into this new preserve and is now the new trailhead area. The East Branch Kishwaukee River flows along the preserve's western flank. The Sycamore Forest Preserve also has: Shelter Houses, Picnic Areas, Wheelchair Accessibility, Hiking, Cross-country ski trails, Fishing, Biking (Great Western Trail western trailhead), Birding, 30-acre prairie area, and near downtown Sycamore businesses and Sycamore Park District Golf Course.

The Annual Jeff's Trees event is scheduled for Saturday, October 8, 2022, at Riverwood Forest Preserve. The event will comprise of planting 50 oak trees at the preserve with a reception to follow.

Mr. Hannan ended by sharing that preserve staff have had a busy summer with timely rains and lots of sunshine. If weather continues to permit, staff will be conducting some fall prairie burns.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Mann-Lamb and seconded by Ms. Pickett to adjourn the Committee Meeting at 6:27 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Roman, Chairman

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary