

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION
MARCH 21, 2017 – 6:00 PM
PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON PRESIDING

1. Karen Kinney, County Clerk, called the roll: (Record)

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl, K. Swanson

TOTAL PRESENT 23

D. Johnston, B. Vyncke

TOTAL ABSENT 2

2. President Swanson introduced Speaker Ranger Ben Mills from Loud Thunder to do a presentation and briefing on what services are offered at Loud Thunder Forest Preserve.

Mr. Mills stated, "Some of you know me and some of you don't. So I will tell you a little bit about myself and some of the services we provide at Loud Thunder Forest Preserve. After high school, I joined the United States Navy. I was stationed in Japan. After that, I went to college at WIU down here in Macomb. I got a degree in Recreation Parks Administration. My minor is natural resource conservation. After college, I went to (inaudible) and worked there as an arborist. I achieved my certified arborist credentials. Then, I moved on here to the Loud Thunder Forest Preserve. I have been here 6 years now. Some of you might not know my facility is right outside Illinois City. It's the home of Lake George, stocked with muskies, walleye, crapes and catfish out there. We have some sport fish out there. There are some flat-heads out there. I have 118 camp sites in the park. We have RV camp sites as well. We have 12 miles of trails for horses, biking and hiking. We have a boat rental with 38 boats in that fleet 22 of those are paddle boats, kayaks and canoes and 16 of them are boats with trolling motors on them. We also offer two boat launchers on the dock as well. It's a public park with access to the Andalusia Slough. We have another public boat access to Lake George, so come on out and bring your boats. We have three shelters in the park...one has a horse corral in it. We also have a large pavilion, some of you may know about from the IBEW picnics in the clubhouse and this kind of thing. We have 1,300 acres of natural preserved lands and prairies plus 240 acres of road marked conservation area...don't know if anyone has had the pleasure of walking on that. We have some restorations going on that started before my time. We have an archery range out there...an elevated platform, targets at 10 yard increments and is 40 yards on the archery range and is open all the time. We also have a program that is only open to Rock Island County residents...we do educational programs...we have boy scouts and girl scouts and churches that come out. We also do a bi-

annual Eco camp where we bring out 4th and 5th graders and teach them about conservation and wildlife. We run about 500-600 4th, 5th and 6th graders through the park every year. I have three full-time employees that work for me and 8 seasonal that work during the summer season...camping season. The first and foremost responsibility is safety. I make sure the patrons have a good time and go home safe. Also, safety of the staff to make sure they are well trained and go home safe. I oversee the grounds and the aesthetics; I take care of the mowing and the trash services. We are constantly looking for things that may or may not be foreseen as a hazard to the general public. I also oversee the maintenance of all of our equipment. My guys take very good care of it. We also...I am in charge of overseeing the building maintenance, and in charge of the spillway and dam inspections and maintenance. Also, like I said, I am in charge of the natural resource maintenance and conservation of Loud Thunder Forest Preserve. At my facility, I am striving to fulfill the mission of the District. Bear with me, if you are not familiar with it, I'll read it to you here...it's long. The District is to maintain and acquire lands and facilities of Rock Island County with the intent to restore, conserve and protect waters, forests, prairies for the purpose of conservation, education and recreation for its residents and fiscal responsibility. I have been working towards this, using established park-plan goals and objectives for Loud Thunder outlining the 2013 park plan. One of the main objectives that I have been focusing on has been to preserve and improve the health of the existing natural habitat of the park. I wrote a Forest Management Plan that covers a lot of the park and that plan was approved by the State Forester. The main goal of my plan is to focus on removing invading species and re-establish the native hickory/oak forest at Loud Thunder Forest Preserve. I have also planned to plant several species of oak trees in and throughout the park because the regeneration/germination of oak trees in the park is non-existent. I have been identifying a lot of the issues like ash bore, gypsy bug monitoring and other related issues to stay abreast of things coming down like the emerald ash bore...we all know about that and elm disease is also in our area. We are also going to be having a bio-glitz here in May. I don't know if anybody is familiar with a bio-glitz but what they are going to do is...it's a 48 hour event where we bring in professionals who can identify every living, breathing thing in the park. They will make an inventory. So, why is this important to us? Because at this point in time, I don't have an inventory as to what is in our park. Obviously, we have deer and coyotes, but we're going to have an itemized list because without this, we can't protect these animals and other things unless we know they are there. So, another thing I have been working on is Lake George...just improving it as a fishery overall. We have been working together with The Boy Scouts of America since they are our closest neighbor towards fighting some of this erosion issue. Another thing in that 2013 park plan that I have been working on is increasing the awareness of Loud Thunder and increasing services that we provide as a District. We recently hired a group called MindFire, that is helping us with social media...I don't have a Facebook account, so I am lacking on the social media end of things. They are

helping me out where I fall short there. These folks just posted the first notice on the first day of spring...we are looking for good things out of them. I have also partnered with lots of groups like River Action Group, The Muskies, Inc., Boy Scouts of America, IDOT, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Illinois State Biologists. Also, my previous employer... (inaudible) River Action just donated \$14,000 to help build a 4.5 mile trail improvement plan...much needed. It will be a multi-use trail for equestrian use and eventually a horse coral, which is still a work in progress. We are going to pull back some of the brush on these trails and new soil so that folks can see them. We had 5 boat docks donated and solar power lights to allow people to come in at the docks after dark. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service...they donated over \$15,000 towards the prairies in the last year and some of the agricultural fields on the property. We are taking them out of agriculture and putting them back into prairies along Loud Thunder Road. This is a high quality mix, not just grass; it's not a mediocre mix...that's why it's so much money. That's just under 20 acres of prairie going in right off of Loud Thunder Road. So that's a great thing they are helping us out with. Another thing the Great Lakes donated over \$20,000 of plant material for the parks...so, I say thanks to these groups. We have a lot of folks in the community that come out and volunteer their time, whether or not they stop in my office to let me know that they did. There are a lot of people that help pick up trash along the trails and put it in the nearest trash receptacles. We also worked with United Way...we had several miles of trails added last fall from the help with The United Way. And, the last thing that I have been working on per our plan is providing access to preserve lands for recreational opportunities. I am improving ADA access according to the District's accessible audit transition plan. We installed 3 ADA boat compliant docks on Lake George. We have established three areas for lake fishing...one of those is located in the campground for those familiar with the park. That's going to be real nice too. The parents can just walk their kids right down to the dock and fish off the lake, where before that was not going to happen. So, we have had to cut the trails down around the lake. That was pretty labor intensive, but everybody on my staff was happy to do it. We all know how much the general public is going to love it. We also have increased the amount of fish cribs for when we get ice. We want to get some structure on the lake so people can get out there and know where the fish are at. I am kind of tired of hearing the lake is a dead lake. Every spring and fall, I go out and fish with these guys and they have phenomenal fish that they caught in that lake. It's not tough to figure out how to fish there and have fun on the lake. That's all I really have for you all and I want to wrap it up by saying thank you for the opportunity and hope that some of you will come and check it out. If not, and you are just driving through, please refer us to other people and tell them the District is really working hard to provide a top notch facility for them."

President Swanson stated, "Before we open it up to questions, I know, Mr. Mills, one of your projects on accessibility of one of the shelters is involving local students, right? ...who are learning the trades?"

Mr. Mills answered, "That's correct. Yeah. We are working with Blackhawk. Jeff is facilitating that for us and working on getting us accessibilities at the park pavilion, it's one of our bigger shelters at the park, and we have a lot of groups that's where the IBEW will come out. We have always had a bathroom there. The bathrooms have always been accessible, to my knowledge. He's helping us out and gets us some students in training to help us out and will be a cost savings to the District."

Commissioner Steffens asked, "Regarding the summer jobs, how do you advertise those and what is your starting pay?"

Mr. Mills answered, "We pay minimum wage. To be honest, most of the advertising is through the local Rockridge Shop teacher...and most of my guys come back. Some go on to the service, we have had a lot join the service...if they are not, then they do stick around."

Commissioner Maranda was recognized.

Mr. Maranda asked, "I remember the Veteran's hung out there, is that still going?"

Mr. Mills answered, "Yes. We currently still do the Veteran's hunt. That happens right before...I am working with (inaudible) on that."

Mr. Maranda stated, "Yup. Ok. I didn't hear you mention it, so that people do understand they do have the veterans out there."

Mr. Mills stated, "Yes. Thank you for reminding me of that."

Commissioner O'Brien was recognized.

Ms. O'Brien asked, "There was a project you were looking into for the (inaudible)? Was that your project or someone else?"

Mr. Mills stated, "That's the project that the Fish and Wildlife Preserve was conducting...I was giving them access to the property."

Ms. O'Brien asked, "Do you know much more about this since you brought it up?"

Mr. Mills answered, "Well, they have not caught an eagle on the property yet. They had an individual from Seattle who had the licensing to actually catch an eagle. And, for whatever reason the day they were going to trap, that person

had terrible weather and the birds weren't flying to catch one. They made the effort several times."

Mr. Swanson added, "But it was a great partnership."

Commissioner Mayberry was recognized.

Ms. Mayberry asked, "Ben you mentioned the River Action Group and the work that they are doing with the bike trails. Do you know when that's going to be complete?"

Mr. Mills answered, "It's kind of a weather thing at this point. We have a lot of clay, so if we are trying to get it going as quick as we can. But like you say, I am restricted as to when we can put it out in the property. I don't know if you have ever been out there, but we have some challenging geography out there."

Commissioner Reagan was recognized.

Mr. Reagan asked, "Is there a way we can get some newer bathrooms out there? I have had complaints that they are very open, is that a new concept?"

Mr. Mills answered, "You know...it's good that you mentioned it. We have been working on the toilets. They are not completely done yet, but they are going up, if that's what you are referring to? We have taken the design from the Boy Scout camp...so, we saw their facilities are like ours and the enclosed ones provide excellent areas for the rodents and things like this. You wouldn't believe what we are spending on things like toilet paper for a toilet that may or may not be used. As soon as we clean it up, the rodents are going after those toilet paper rolls."

Ms. Mayberry asked, "This is all very enlightening for us, especially the public too. Does the Forest Preserve have a newsletter?"

President Swanson answered, "No we don't at present. But, I think I saw..."

Mr. Craver stated, "No, we don't have a newsletter."

President Swanson added, "I was going to say, Mr. Craver might want to write that down as a note."

Mr. Craver added, "If you purchase a Niabi Zoo membership, you do get a Zoological newsletter as a member but we do not have a Forest Preserve newsletter as an outreach."

Ms. Mayberry stated, "Ok. Because I know Ben mentioned the effort on social media and I think that people need to be made aware as much as possible of the great things going on out there so they can take advantage of them."

Commissioner Simmer was recognized.

Mr. Simmer stated, "I highly encourage everybody to purchase a Zoo membership. They are very reasonable. Just a couple times out there pays for it easily. At one point, we kind of...not necessarily demanded that, but we encourage it greatly."

President Swanson added, "And, if I could, to follow Ms. Mayberry's point, until we do that kind of stuff as Mr. Mills mentioned, we are working with MindFire, so if you have a Facebook account, like the Forest Preserve District...promote and push those stories because I know we have some great social media experts here. Any other questions? Thank you for taking the time to come in."

(Group Applause)

3. President Swanson stated, "I think I would entertain your indulgence to defer the approval of the February Commission Minutes. Those were in the email that was sent to you, I believe from Cassie...but they are not available online. So, if anyone is uncomfortable approving the minutes at this point, we could defer."

Commissioner Burns stated, "They weren't in mine."

President Swanson stated, "Ok. There is some question and Jeff, you and I have to talk to figure out a way to make those more accessible."

Mr. Craver stated, "We have had some technical issues with our internet and so I apologize for that. I believe Cassie attempted to forward those to everyone. So, I guess should it happen in the future, we will make other arrangements to ensure that everyone receives them in a timely manner."

President Swanson stated, "Then I will ask your indulgence that we postpone until the April meeting and we'll approve minutes for both, if that's alright?"

Commissioner Camlin was recognized.

Mr. Camlin stated, "Actually, I think according to OMA and FOIA that you actually have to have them within 30 days or at the next meeting is when approval must be done. I would say I did read them and I thought they were characterize very well and I would say let's trust each other on this one and pass them now so we meet that 30 day or next meeting requirement for OMA."

President Swanson asked, "May I entertain that as a motion to approve?"

Mr. Camlin answered, "That is a motion to approve."

President Swanson asked, "And a second from Mr. Steffens. Any other discussion? This is with the pledge that we will get the minutes out there much more transparently."

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS: (None)**

5. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the Forest Preserve Fund claims at \$43,765.24, and the Niabi Zoo Fund claims at \$84,748.93, the Liability Fund claims at \$31,500.00. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

6. Commissioner Simmer moved to approve the Treasurer's Disbursements at \$24,992.85. Commissioner Steffen seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 21

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner Brunk moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriation in the Forest Preserve General Fund. Commissioner Shelton seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Steffen moved to approve Support for the Quad City Convention & Visitors Bureau Resolution, as presented. Commissioners Camlin & O'Brien seconded.

Note ** (The Resolution is in .pdf format and begins on the next page.)

RESOLUTION

RE: SUPPORT FOR THE QUAD CITY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

WHEREAS, tourism is a major factor in the economic health of the Quad Cities region, generating \$800 million per year in direct visitor spending and employing 7,000 residents in the hospitality industry, and

WHEREAS, the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau and other regional partners rely on hotel/motel taxes generated by the work of our local hospitality industry; and

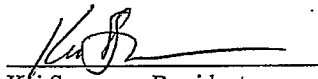
WHEREAS, the state government is facing budget challenges may not be able to provide additional tourism support; and

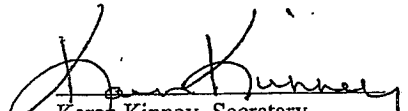
WHEREAS, surrounding states are increasing their expenditures in tourism and heavily targeting Illinois residents in their advertising campaigns; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserve District of Rock Island County wishes to support the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau through hotel/motel funds received from Rock Island County; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District hereby shall provide the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau twenty-five percent of the net funds received in hotel/motel funds to maintain tourism at the existing levels and to continue to grow visitor revenues for the State of Illinois, local governments, the hospitality industry and destination facilities like the Rock Island Forest Preserve District's Niabi Zoo.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 21st day of March 2017.


Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission


Kara Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 21

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the Additional Funds appropriated in the Niabi Zoo Fund. Commissioner Terry seconded.

Note ** (The Resolution is in .pdf format and begins on the next page.)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, additional funds are required in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 for the necessary expenses incurred for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year, and

WHEREAS, funds are available from additional fees raised within the Niabi Zoo Fund #131, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:


SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.


SECTION 2. An amount of \$90,000.00 be transferred from Additional fees raised in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$65,000.00	131-32 347.20	Zoo Parking Fees
\$25,000.00	131-32-347.22	Train Fees
\$90,000.00	131-32-18 767	Infrastructure over \$15,000

SECTION 3. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 21th day of March, 2017.


Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission


Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 21

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner Oelke moved to approve the Concession Agreement with Sunshine Sammi Inc., for Niabi Zoo, as presented. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

11. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the beverage agreement with AD Huesing for Indian Bluff, Loud Thunder and Illiniwek Forest Preserves, as presented. Commissioners Noyd and Shelton seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

12. Commissioner Steffen moved to approve the Visitor Package Fees for Niabi Zoo, as presented. Commissioners Maranda and Simmer seconded.

Commissioner Mayberry was recognized.

Ms. Mayberry asked, "Mr. President, could you just expand on this?"

President Swanson stated, "Yes, I would be happy to do so. Essentially, we asked Mr. Jackson because we are making changes in the overall revenue scheme, which is why we have some additional funds for improvement. So what he did was, he put together the following packages that will represent a 10% discount overall: For instance: A family of 4 with admission, train, carousel and parking is a package of \$47.00. There will be a discount for this. If it's a single adult with a child over 3yrs., with admission for both, train and parking and carousel ticket for \$20.25, roughly a 10% discount. If it is a single senior with a child, admission for both, parking plus the train and carousel ticket for \$19.35. Again, these are all roughly a 10% discount deduction. I would also like to remind folks that there are many membership options including a partnership with the family museum for a Zoo-seum pass, which allows unlimited visits to either facility up to 6 guests of admissions at a time for \$100.00. There is a fun bundle that includes the Putnam, the QC Botanical Center and even our beloved QC River Bandits and I think there was an additional one..., Mr. Craver what am I missing? Oh, in addition to that I think there are about 30 free days. And any number of special attractions like mother on Mother's Day and things like that and so forth. Does that help to address your question, Ms. Mayberry? Was that your question, Mr. Oelke? Ok. Thank you very much. Any other questions? Hearing not, the clerk will kindly call the roll."

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, S. Noyd, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

13. Commissioner Brunk moved approve the Code of Conduct/Ethics & Commissioner Creed, as presented. Commissioners Terry and Mielke seconded.

President Swanson stated, "We have an update on this. Mr. Craver kindly brought that to the attention of the State's Attorney's Office. If I could read from that? 'In summation, ultimately, the adoption of the Creed and Code is a policy decision for the Forest Preserve District's Board for consideration and not a legal matter.' It's an aspirational document. It was a call to a level of governance to

which we might aspire. So, it might be rightly pointed out, there is no teeth to it. But the legal opinion is ...there is no legal opinion because it's not seen as a legal matter. It would be up to the discretion of any Commission Member whether we bring it up for discussion or consideration. Mr. Brunk."

Commissioner Terry was recognized.

Mr. Terry stated, "Point of clarification...this is with the amendment that passed at the last meeting?"

President Swanson answered, "That would be my understanding since it was deferred...yes."

Commissioner Oelke was recognized.

Mr. Oelke asked, "There was a bullet point that said prejudicial and it should say non-prejudicial."

President Swanson stated, "Ok. Thank you very much for catching that...non-prejudicial. And so, yes...if we could take that as a friendly amendment, I would certainly accept it."

Commissioner O'Brien was recognized.

Ms. O'Brien asked, "I wanted to know, as I saw this online and noted the changes except for this one that was just caught were made. So, I think that it looks better than it did last meeting."

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, S. Terry, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 19

TOTAL NO 0

E. Langdon

TOTAL ABSTAINED 1

Motion carried.

14. Commissioner Shelton moved to approve all the Routine Reports from the Director and Department Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission. Commissioner Maranda seconded. (Record)

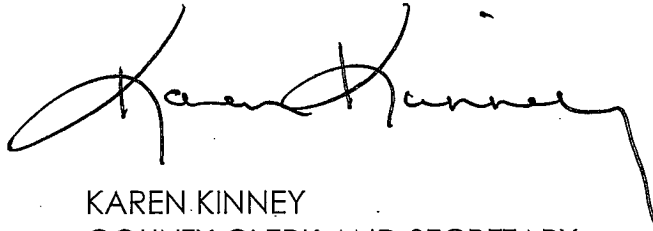
A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission is April 18, 2017, immediately following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board.

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting recessed.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Kinney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

KAREN KINNEY
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

KK: rw