

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION**  
**FEBRUARY 16, 2016 – 7:02 PM**

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

S. Ballard, R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL PRESENT      25**

**TOTAL ABSENT      0**

2. Commissioner Terry moved to approve the January 19, 2016, Commission Minutes. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS: (Two public comment requests)**

President Ballard introduced Chris Francis.

Mr. Francis asked, "I just had a few questions regarding the SAP regarding the Niabi Zoo and in regards to the Memorandum of Understanding for the Society. First of all, I was wondering...to the goals of the SAP, do they include the AZA Accreditation?"

President Ballard stated, "I am sorry, I didn't quite hear what you are saying."

Mr. Francis reiterated, "I am asking you if the goals of the SAP, the Strategic Action Plan is an AZA reaccreditation part of the goals of the SAP?"

President Ballard answered, "Well, absolutely."

Mr. Francis stated, "Excellent. And then, how does the MOU between the District and the Society reflect the goal of the AZA accreditation?"

President Ballard answered, "Again, we've signed and MOU and we're going to talk about that in a few minutes. Obviously, we need to get the approval on it. My perception is that the MOU is a piece that we've been working on for a long time and I believe it's going to help move the zoo specifically forward to get the AZA accreditation that we are looking for."

Mr. Francis stated, "Excellent."

Ms. Kinney stated, "Sir, could you please use the mic? Please? Thank you."

Mr. Francis stated, "Oh, I am sorry. Is this any better?"

Ms. Kinney stated, "It's on."

President Ballard asked, "So, do you have a statement that you would like to make?"

Mr. Francis stated, "Yeah, I just wanted to ask a few questions and express my excitement on behalf of the animal handling staff at Niabi Zoo. We are very excited seeing new faces on the Society Board and are looking forward to the new perspectives that will assist the Society. Such aspects as project planning in an effort to avoid unnecessary displacement of our animals. Such as what occurred when the lion exhibit, and what was...when the renovation failed and ended. We are looking forward to seeing new perspectives on the willingness to fundraise for our previously neglected projects such as the lion's, the rhino's, the red pandas and the commissary areas and we are all looking forward to existing exhibits to work in time with the AZA accreditations. We are very excited to see the contributions to event planning to avoid repeating issues such as our Zoofari event last year, ending in the red. We are very excited to see the golf outing actually happening this year. And, we are also very excited to see...well, we are excited to avoid the situation that led to the Society stepping back entirely from Pints for Preservation Project, which led to zoo staff actually single-handedly managing the event. And, finally, we are very excited to see a new willingness to identify and abide by an expert...expert advice that's provided by Zoological professionals, such as in the past...Mr. Ruperhoeft and Mr. Rickadell. Basically, we have an exceptional managerial staff and an exceptional animal staff. We have a strong strategic plan in place and I have actually read it and am very impressed with what you have made there. Basically, breathing new life into the Society is going to be a great step for creating the scientifically sound institution that is also conservation minded. As an animal care professional, I am very excited to see that happen. That's my statement."

President Ballard stated, "Thank you very much. I just don't want to make this a long question, answer session. "

Mr. Terry asked, "Chris, you are an animal handler out at Niabi Zoo?"

Mr. Francis answered, "Correct."

Mr. Terry stated, "Well, it's nice to meet you and thank you for everything that you do out there and make it the great place it is. We appreciate it even more and enjoy it and I love the Zoo and thank you guys for everything you do."

President Ballard stated, "Your points are well taken. We appreciate your thoughts and thank you very much."

(Group applause)

President Ballard introduced the next speaker, Timothy Chambers.

Mr. Chambers stated, "I am Tim Chambers."

President Ballard interrupted, "I need you to speak up and state where you are from."

Mr. Chambers stated, "I am Tim Chambers. I am from Rock Island. I came here to stand up and express my support for the proposal to create a governing board for the Forest Preserve District, independent from the County Board. I understand it. I think this will go a long way for natural resource conservation in Rock Island County. This is a very important issue as we move forward into the future with issues such as bio change and the laws of bio diversity in general. I think this will go a long ways to support the Forest Preserve District to do their job and focus on their mission to conserve plans for recreation conservation in Rock Island County. And I would like to, again, express my overwhelming support for that decision so that we can move forward with an efficient plan management program. Thank you."

(Group applause)

President Ballard stated, "Thank you very much."

4. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the Forest Preserve claims at \$31,544.65, Niabi Zoo claims at \$58,075.34 and Forest Preserve Liability Fund claims at \$8,937.97. Commissioner Steffen seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES            24**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

5. Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve the Treasurer's Disbursements at \$51,321.48. Commissioner Doye seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES            24**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

6. Commissioner Langdon moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolution regarding the transfer of unappropriated Liability Funds. Commissioner Moreno seconded.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, additional funds are required in the Forest Preserve Liability Fund #133 for the necessary expenses incurred for the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year, and

WHEREAS, funds are available from unappropriated funds in the Forest Preserve Liability Fund #133, and

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

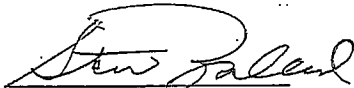
SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above...

SECTION 2. An amount of \$30,000.00 be transferred from unappropriated funds in the Forest Preserve Liability Fund #133 to the following:

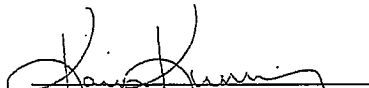
AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$10,000.00	133-32 416.00	Lost Time
\$20,000.00	133-32 636.00	Insurance

SECTION 3. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2016.



Steve Ballard, President  
Forest Preserve Commission



Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES            24**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner Simmer moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolution regarding Support of Creating a separately Elected Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Swanson seconded.

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

**RESOLUTION**

RE: Support of Creating a Separately Elected Board of Commissioners

WHEREAS, the residents of Rock Island County in 1941 through referendum approved the creation of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District; and

WHEREAS, the members of the County Board of Rock Island County, Illinois, are ex-officio members of the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District, and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board of Commissioners of Rock Island County Forest Preserve District support local control of units of government; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board of Commissioners of Rock Island County Forest Preserve District desire to establish a representative, efficient and effective governing body for the Forest Preserve District of Rock Island County; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District desire of such governing body for the Forest Preserve District of Rock Island County to be non-partisan and elected by the residents of the District; and

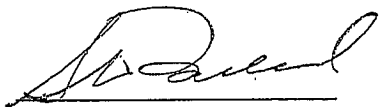
WHEREAS, the members the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District desire the governing body of the Forest Preserve District of Rock Island County shall serve solely as Forest Preserve Commissioners with no compensation or benefits; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District desire the size of a the Board of Commissioners shall be no larger than seven (7) elected Commissioners with terms that shall not exceed a maximum of six (6) years;

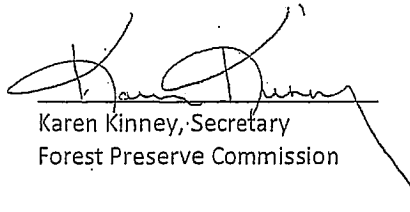
WHEREAS, the members of a separately elected Board of Commissioners for the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District shall hold no other elected or appointed office in the County of Rock Island, Illinois; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Commissioners of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District hereby support the efforts of State Representatives and Senators of Illinois to amend the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act, 70 ILCS 805, for the establishment of such Board of Commissioners to govern the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of February 2016.



Steve Ballard, President  
Forest Preserve Commission



Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Mayberry was recognized.

Ms. Mayberry asked, "Will this new Board of reform still report back to this Board at all?"

President Ballard answered, "No. When this legislation gets passed and is sent to Springfield by our area legislators, which I believe have agreed to take this forward. They are interested in doing that, providing this Board passes this resolution and, obviously, they have been monitoring the feedback from the community members or whatever...the citizens, I believe, from what I've seen so far, and what I have heard from people that have talked to me...and there has been quite a few, there has been a strong support to do this regarding this situation. So, what would happen, again, this Board would be...if this would pass this Board, this would be a brand new Board completely separate from Rock Island County. Rock Island County, as we see it today, would no longer have input into that business. It will be done by that independent board of seven individuals. They would be doing the governance that we are doing today. We would no longer have our hands in any type of the governance of the Forest Preserve. You have got to remember why it's called... You know we sit here today and remember that this Rock Island County Board Forest Preserve is obviously a separate entity from Rock Island County and the reason why it's called the Rock Island County Forest Preserve...it's pretty obvious because it's located in Rock Island County. It has its own levy...it has its own statutes and whether we like it or not, we, as County Board Members, when you are elected to the County Board, as we sit here, today, you inherit...whether you want to or not,...you inherit the responsibilities of the Forest Preserve the current way it's set up. And, that's why...hopefully, why you are starting to see that there are only like 13 Forest Preserves in the State of Illinois. Winnebago, in 2010, had the same type of governing body that we have here today. They got the legislators to pass a bill specific to Winnebago County and they are doing the same thing, today, that we are promoting to have our legislators do. And, I believe it's working out very well for Winnebago."

Commissioner Westpfahl was recognized.

Mr. Westpfahl asked, "Is the tax levy going to go with it or will we still have that?"

President Ballard answered, "No. The tax levy, again, the tax levies are still going to be there. This Board is going to be held accountable under the law of the State of Illinois, just like this Board is held accountable for doing the business of the Forest Preserve. Whoever gets elected to that Board is going to be held accountable to the taxpayers of Rock Island County. They are going to be held accountable to the Open Meetings Act and all the other stuff that comes with it and everything else. None of it is going to be done behind closed doors, unless



they are entitled to go into closed session regarding the things that we do like personnel, contracts and that."

Commissioner Steffen was recognized.

Mr. Steffen stated, "I think that you already answered my question when you said elected because I wanted to know if there were going to be appointments made?"

President Ballard answered, "No. They would be elected. And the first available time, I believe, sitting down and going through this process...the first available time because it's a nonpartisan election, has to be done when the municipal elections are done, which would be the first available time of March of 2017 or whenever the municipals are. So, we have a time of about 13 or 14 months or whatever, hopefully, to get this approved...if you guys approve it, and move forward with it or whatever."

Commissioner Deppe was recognized.

Mr. Deppe asked, "Just so I understand, if we pass this tonight, we will stay in our positions, here, until next March?"

President Ballard answered, "Absolutely. This Board stays intact. The legislation has to get passed first. If the legislation doesn't get passed, then all of this is for not because that's the only way it can be changed. We can't change it...us, here...the legislators have to do it in Springfield. And that's the way the other counties have done it in the past."

Commissioner Swanson was recognized.

Mr. Swanson stated, "Mr. President, I have asked a couple of other people this question and I would like your opinion on it. If we make this change, currently, there are employees of the Forest Preserve in the District who benefit from collective bargaining with employees of the county...do you envision this would still protect their rights and ensure there would not be an emulsion of their benefits?"

President Ballard answered, "I feel very comfortable that because of the current contract they would be in, that contract would still be recognized because it's a legal document and they would sit down and whatever. At the end of the day, no...but in the future, we, meaning us, here, on the County Board...they would be sitting at the table with the County Board not knowing what their contracts going to look like. Obviously, it would be negotiated with the future board and the Director of the Forest Preserve, Mr. Craver. That's the process. But, they have a contract they can continue. That's what I am being told. They would

continue that contract until that contract expires and they would still be recognized under the AFSCME and whatever and they would still be in the negotiated under that contract. So, as far as the employees go, there is no changes. I guess there would be a change, and that's my own perception, is that there wouldn't be, as we have today, we wouldn't be meddling in their day-to-day affairs. That's the best I can answer that...I am sorry."

Mr. Swanson stated, "I appreciate it...thank you."

Commissioner Langdon was recognized.

Mr. Langdon stated, "Yes, Mr. Chairman, with the committees...it would be a non-paid committee, right?"

President Ballard answered, "Absolutely....non-paid, no benefits what-so-ever. No compensation what-so-ever. It would be like a School Board Member, in theory."

Mr. Langdon stated, "Thank you."

President Ballard asked, "Are there any other questions about this?"

Commissioner Callaway-Thompson was recognized.

Ms. Callaway-Thompson stated, "So I understand...our legislators wanted to see support from this commission before introducing this legislation? So, we are voting to support a resolution for this proposed legislation?"

President Ballard answered, "Correct."

Ms. Callaway-Thompson asked, "Right?"

President Ballard answered, "Yes."

Ms. Callaway-Thompson asked, "So, if the legislation passes, is this coming back to us?"

President Ballard answered, "No."

Ms. Callaway-Thompson stated, "Okay."

President Ballard added, "The key is, for us to let them go forward to create the legislation. Once they create the legislation, now, it becomes law. And everything in the resolution states what we are doing in moving forward in this process. So, no...again, this Board would still be intact. I'm not going to be

around. This Board will still be intact seeing the day-to-day activities, in theory, will be done until that new board will be in place. Once this new board is in place, then, this Board would be relieved of their other responsibilities and duties. The soonest it would be...like I said, soonest I think it would be is March of 2017."

Ms. Callaway-Thompson stated, "Alright. I thought I understood that correctly at Executive Committee but I just wanted it clarified."

President Ballard asked, "Are there any other questions or comments? Roll call."

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke

**TOTAL YES 23**

J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL NO 1**

8. Commissioner Steffen moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriation in the Forest Preserve General Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES 24**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner Moreno moved to remove from display and approve the Forest Preserve Employee Manual, as presented. Commissioner Doye seconded. (Inc. by Ref.)

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES            24**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner Swanson moved to lay on display for 30 days the Forest Preserve Procedure Manual regarding Indian Bluff. Commissioner M. Burns seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

11. Commissioner Swanson moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding, as presented. Commissioner Steffen seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES            24**

**TOTAL NO            0**

Motion carried.

12. Commissioner Doye moved to approve the Hampton Youth Township Commission license for concession and ball diamonds at Illiniwek Forest Preserve. Commissioner Cremeens seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES            24**

**TOTAL NO             0**

Motion carried.

13. Commissioner Cremeens moved to approve the creation of an interim Curator of Conservation and Education position with a salary of \$15.00 per hour. Commissioner Maranda seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES            24**

**TOTAL NO             0**

Motion carried.

14. Commissioner Langdon moved to approve a one year agreement with Sunshine Sammi Inc., as the concessionaire at Niabi Zoo, and to allow the Oversight Committee to negotiate on the District's behalf and authorizing President Ballard to sign the agreement once the Oversight Committee has completed negotiations. Commissioner Cremeens seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

R. Brunk, M. Burns, L. Burns, K. Callaway-Thompson, N. Camlin, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, S. Doye, C. Filbert, D. Jacobs, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, P. Moreno, R. Oelke, V. Shelton, R. Simmer, M. Steffen, K. Swanson, S. Terry, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

**TOTAL YES            24**

**TOTAL NO             0**

Motion carried.

15. Commissioner Terry moved to approve the Routine Reports from the Director and Department Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

Due to the General Primary Election to be Held on March 15, 2016, the next Forest Preserve Commission meeting will be moved to Tuesday, March 22, 2016, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the County Office Building, Rock Island, Illinois, following the regular Rock Island County Board meeting.

President Ballard stated, "Ron, last month you ...you thought it was nice having the updates on what's going on with the Oversight Committee and stuff. They had their meeting. Basically, they are still moving forward and they Schultz & William are still looking at the other applications they have gathered and are in the process of interviewing people, knocking it down and hopefully getting it down to a manageable number. And then, obviously, present it to the Oversight Committee and this committee also...the Forest Preserve Committee. Hopefully, in the next couple of months we will be able to hire a new Director. He or she, whoever that might be. So that's the process going from there and the Oversight are happy and we are happy to help with the zoo. They are passionate about what they are doing. I think our staff goes to their meetings and, I think the staff, hopefully, the Oversight Committee can say this thing will be done for the right reasons to help move the zoo along in a positive forward motion, which I believe is right. One of the things that's not on the Agenda tonight...but will hopefully be on the agenda the following month...the City President, Emil Maslanski. Is that how you pronounce it?"

Mr. Mielke answered, "Emil Maslanka."

President Ballard added, "Okay...there you go. He said it's okay if I didn't pronounce his name right."

Mr. Mielke added, "He is the Coal Valley Village President."

President Ballard added, "So, what we are doing is, we are sitting down and had an initial meeting with Drue and we brought it to committee and the committee approved it. So, we are moving forward with having the States Attorney's Office and their attorneys look at some type of a governmental agreement about annexing the zoo, obviously, into Coal Valley. And, I think that's going to be very beneficial because years ago when they put in the sewer project out there, I think the county, the Forest Preserve and the Village cost-shared that project at a discounted rate and we, obviously, help pay for

that project that we are being told now that our discounted rate is coming to an end very shortly. And because we are outside of the city limits, we are going to be charged outside rates. That's approximately \$28.50 per gallon of usage and it could even go higher. So, I think it's going to benefit the zoo, especially, the Forest Preserve and also getting annexed into that because...not counting the water...we went out water bids. That hasn't been approved yet...and if that happens, we will probably be hooking onto the water someday and right now, I think that with just the sewer alone has potential of saving the zoo approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 in payments for the sewer. So, that's forthcoming, I just want to share that with ya so you'll be prepared for that. But, I think that's going to be a win-win for Coal Valley and also the Zoo/Forest Preserve. So, that's all I have on that for an update, Ron."

Commissioner Oelke stated, "Thank you."

President Ballard 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, sweeping tail on the final letter.

KAREN KINNEY  
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY  
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

KK: rw