

## Report to the Rock Island Forest Preserve

November 18, 2019

To: Rock Island Forest Preserve  
From: Community Advisory Board  
Subject: Sponsorships vs Advertising

### **Background:**

As the CAB continues to meet, some of our recent discussion has centered on revenue generation and possible options other than entry fees. That discussion led us to the options of selling advertising, and soliciting sponsorships.

### **Report:**

In discussion, it became apparent that sponsorships and advertising are very different, particularly when dealing with the zoo. That reasoning is as follows.

The Zoo and Forest Preserve have more control over a sponsorship because they dictate the terms of the agreement. Typically a sponsor's message (if there is one) should be in concert with the mission of the zoo and not contrary to the purpose of the zoo.

It is an offering that the zoo would make with a business or individual in "trade" for recognition of their community support. The zoo sets the value for the sponsorship which may include the cost for the exhibit or event, how the sponsor will be identified, how long the signage may stay up for an exhibit, and placement of any signage attributed to the sponsor.

Sponsorships and their terms are controlled by the zoo as an offering, whereas advertising is the “purchase” of space to promote a business or individual who may or may not support the mission of the zoo. While the zoo could dictate the price, and where the placement and size of an advertisement might be, it is an open market, and messages that are opposed to the mission of the zoo could be purchased and would have to be displayed under the same terms as any other advertiser. The zoo would have little say in what the ad may look like, what it advertises, or if it is contrary to the vision of the Forest Preserve.

**Recommendation:**

The CAB would recommend to the Forest Preserve that guidelines or policy be set to accept sponsorships as a way to generate revenues, but not to pursue ads at forest preserve locations. While we recognize that there may be a number of appropriate ways to sell advertising that would benefit the Forest Preserve and Niabi Zoo, it can also be detrimental to the vision and mission of the Forest Preserve and Zoo.

With some forethought, most of these agreements can be worked out as a sponsorship which also has some tax advantages for those who sponsor or donate to the agency.

It would be appropriate for staff to identify the specifics of these policies which would then be approved by the Forest Preserve.

If there are additional questions, we would be pleased to answer those.

William Nelson, Chair of Community Advisory Board