

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION
APRIL 16, 2019 – 6:32 PM
PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON PRESIDING**

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

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl, K. Swanson

TOTAL PRESENT 24

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TOTAL ABSENT 1

2. President Swanson introduced Joel Vanderbush, Niabi Zoo Curator of Conservation and Education. He is addressing the Commission regarding brief updates on what's going on at the zoo.

Mr. Vanderbush stated, "Thank you, everyone. The last time I was here to talk with all of you, we talked a lot about our education efforts and tonight I want to talk about the other half of my job, which is the conservation effort at the zoo. Many people seem to be sometimes confused as to what the purpose of the zoo is and we have defined that in three key messages. The first key message is, of course, conservation is our purpose. The second is we educate people to inspire them to take conservation action. And the third is that everyone can become a conservation champion. Now, the little packet that was provided to you this evening kind of summarizes all of that information. Last year, we declared after some surveys were done and the public perceived us as entertainment as the supposed purpose of the zoo. We said that we really needed to redefine what the public sees us as, as far as an institution. So, we launched the Conservation Inside Speaker Series last year who has a list of all 12 speakers that came to see us last year. And that was a number of speakers from around the world as well as our local conservation experts to come out and just begin the conversation about conservation. And, as we go to conferences around the country, people are taking note. I was just asked to a zoos and aquariums committee conservation conference in March and a number of the people sought me out specifically to say, 'Your conservation series is doing so well...and we are so jealous, we wish we had it at our zoo too.' And, you know...that's a pretty big statement when very large zoos are saying that to you. So, that was just an introduction and will continue that this year. The relationships that we've developed through that conservation speaker series has been very important to us because we, as many of you may know, we do have a coins for conservation program at Niabi Zoo. We choose four conservation projects we are going to support through \$.25 of every single admission that comes through our gate, \$.25 goes towards conservation.

Now, it is a mandate with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums that you commit a certain amount of money to conservation efforts. And, over the last year, we've been able to contribute over \$25,000 to conservation. And that's a clappable thing."

(Group Applause)

Mr. Vanderbush continued, "Now, here's the thing, though...conservation can't be just about collecting some money off a check and feeling really good about it because you just mailed a check to someone. Conservation has to be action. This year alone, we've been able to...in naming a couple of our conservation partners...one of those is The Painted Dog Research Trust out of Zimbabwe. We had their field educator came to our zoo in February. His name is Mashu Bazuluzulu. You can't get much more Zimbabwe than that. And he came to help learn how to do community education in an outreach way that we are able to do successfully at Niabi; as well as to develop what they call bush camp. We call it zoo camp, but they want to do it there at their conservation and ecology center. We spent three days together working on that and then his boss, the Executive Director Dr. Gregg Rasmussen, just came in the beginning of April; in which he was one of our conservation speakers last year and is our first returning speaker that we can officially declare a conservation partnership with The Painted Dog Research Trust; which is very exciting. Now, as I say conservation can't just be about checks and things going on in Africa and other countries, we are doing some work and supporting some things there, it also has to take place in our own backyard. We have a wide variety of items that are up here on the shelf and some fancy little flyers there and a tiny little tag that says the last straw. If you look on there, it says Americans use 500 million plastic straws per day and none of these can be recycled. I am sure you would have to be blind or living in a hole to not be aware of the impact that plastic is having on the ocean right now. A hundred million animals are being affected by this kind of plastic pollution and we have to be able to try to snip the tie because we sit at the Mississippi River; which feed directly into the ocean and we can have an impact. People don't like to change, so we came up with alternatives. If you are not going to give up your straw, how about go with something like a stainless steel straw instead. Sustainable goods and conservation focused items are now being offered at the Niabi Zoo gift shop so that we can help stand on what we are preaching. You know, if you don't want to use plastic bags, you have to have an alternative for people. If you don't want them to use plastic bottles, you have to have alternative bottles that they can use like the refillable ones. If you don't want them to use the plastic coffee tops every time you go to Starbucks, you get one of these things. They have a refillable coffee cup that you can take to Starbucks and get a discount on your coffee and it still stays warmer much longer and don't burn your hands...so, it's pretty great. So, we have to be able to take conservation to a different level. It can't just be about what's happening in a country far, far away. It has to be what's happening here in the Quad Cities.

That's one of the things we are trying to lead and be out in front. We were one of those organizations that is the impetus to start the Bi-State Conservation Action Network; which is a large number of conservation organizations in the Quad Cities. We come together twice a year and talk about what he is facing in Africa and ironically enough, it's the exact same thing we are all facing here. It tells us that these ideas are universal and that we can all work together to find solutions. I know it's been a long night. I just wanted to open it up if there are any questions? And, thank you for allowing me to speak this evening."

Commissioner Mayberry was recognized.

Ms. Mayberry asked, "Thank you. So, I know President Swanson that you and I had a conversation about this exact topic posted probably posted a year ago last summer. Are there any efforts being made aside from what we are seeing tonight with things that are in the gift shop in our Forest Preserve as a whole and at Niabi Zoo as far as what we are putting out there for the public, the products that we provide and our snack shops, restaurants etc....?"

President Swanson stated, "So far, you have alternative straws at Niabi."

Mr. Vanderbush replied, "Yes. Now, of course, we don't do plastic lids or plastic straws anywhere in the zoo. We are also offering refillable items because we sell a cup of soda in a refillable cup, they can bring that cup back and get a deep discount on refilling it a second time. So, like popcorn buckets and things like that...we want it to be refillable."

President Swanson stated, "But to date, that has not been spread...and the next biggest consumer would be the golf course. I know we have existing stocks there, but I think it's been brought to Mr. Craver's attention that is something we would like to shift away from."

Ms. Mayberry stated, "Absolutely, thank you."

Commissioner O'Brien was recognized.

Ms. O'Brien stated, "I know recently we just approved a vendor to do food. So, are they following the same pattern by not using unnecessary plastic?"

Mr. Vanderbush answered, "Correct."

Ms. O'Brien stated, "Ok...in the snack shop and at the zoo?"

Mr. Vanderbush answered, "At the zoo, that's correct. Some of the other things we have done is we have eliminated plastic bags from our gift shop because we want to push people towards this. And just be thinking about how...convenience

is sometimes a greater enemy of things only because it's convenient, not because it's wise. So, we want to get people to go beyond recycle, reuse but also rethink."

Ms. O'Brien asked, "Just one more question. Are you doing anything at the zoo for the birthday this month?"

Mr. Vanderbush answered, "We absolutely are! We will have our birthday celebration. We know its Easter weekend, but it's also our birthday weekend. We have special activities at the zoo on Saturday and on Sunday. On Sunday, I will let you know that we will have the Native American coalition will be out for some activities on Sunday. They weren't able to come out on Saturday because of their Pow Wow and that's great. But they said they would commit to coming out on Sunday. So, we do Earth Day everyday but definitely this weekend."

Commissioner Mielke was recognized.

Mr. Mielke asked, "Do they make paper straws anymore? When I was a kid, that's what we had, right?"

Mr. Vanderbush replied, "That's one of the things that we have been looking into. They do make them and are making a comeback in Europe because they have banned plastic straws in places like Britain and France. The EU just signed an agreement to eliminate plastic straws. So, if it isn't plastic, what is it going to be? It's got to be the wax paper straws."

Mr. Mielke stated, "Yeah, we had paper bags, paper straws and milk in bottles delivered to your house. We had returnable Pepsi and Coke bottles. I don't know what happened...and..."

Mr. Vanderbush interjected, "Convenience happened."

Mr. Mielke stated, "Ok, I was just curious about paper straws, thank you."

Commissioner Boswell-Loftin was recognized.

Ms. Boswell-Loftin stated, "Congratulations to the zoo for the great things that you are doing there. I was wondering as we prepare to go into the camping season, will the parks have where you can recycle or recycle opportunities at the place where you park and camp?"

President Swanson stated, "We try to get people to take...I think, at this point, Jeff...recyclables you take out with you. Do we have any separate recycling bins at the campsites?"

Mr. Craver answered, "At the golf course, they have cans for consumers."

President Swanson asked, "But at the campgrounds?"

Mr. Craver answered, "At the campgrounds, no...we don't have an active recycling program where campers can do that, they are just dumpsters. That is something that we can look into."

President Swanson asked, "May we take that as a suggestion? I think it's a great suggestion, so thank you."

Mr. Vanderbush added, "On that note, we do have a public recycling drop off now at the zoo in the parking lot. We are moving forward on the plastic reduction campaign and see these flyers are starting to head toward that direction. So, we will be rolling that out more in the coming year."

Commissioner Simmer was recognized.

Mr. Simmer stated, "I would also like to remind everybody that memberships are available. They have a variety of price points, so grandparents as well as parents and adult children...there are all kinds of them up there and I just want to say that if you sit on this Board, you should all participate."

Mr. Vanderbush stated, "Absolutely. I second that!"

President Swanson stated, "Thank you. Just remember that the membership card, in addition to giving you and your family member's free access on a regular and continuing basis, it also gets you into events like the Pints for Preservation, last weekend's event and that sort of thing."

Mr. Vanderbush added, "And the Conservation Inside Speaker Series."

President Swanson stated, "That's right, because there is a charge if you don't have it."

Mr. Vanderbush stated, "You have an opportunity to meet these people who are coming from across the planet to come here to speak to you and that will get you in for free."

President Swanson stated, "I will hope you will join me in thanking the entire leadership team at the zoo for what they are doing, so thank you, Joel."

Mr. Vanderbush stated, "Thank you very much."

(Group Applause)

Mr. Vanderbush added, "At 10 am, I will be doing a Ribbon Cutting ceremony for our new African Primate Exhibit and it's not just a show of some new monkeys,...it is obviously for that, but it's also to shine a light on conservation issues facing those animals from the Congo swamp forests, where they come from in Africa where bush meat is the greatest crisis over there. Some of you might think of iconic primates such as Lolas gorillas, bonobos, and chimpanzees are all becoming extinct because of bush meat. And if you don't know what the bush meat crisis is, look it up. I am not going to spend all night educating you because that would take a long time. But, it is a \$2 billion industry...one hundred eighty thousand pounds of African bush meat is sold right here in the United States. So, if you don't think that it impacts us here, you've got to look into it more, bush meat prices. Come upstairs tomorrow at 10 am. If you would like to participate in the ribbon cutting ceremony, we have got lots of things planned for you."

President Swanson stated, "In addition to all of that, the two monkey's Azulu and Azizi are ridiculously cute...they are. Thank you, Joel, for that update."

3. Commissioner Adams moved to approve the March 19, 2019, Forest Preserve Commission minutes, as presented. Commissioner Simmer seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

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

5. **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "Certainly stole my comments on that, but it was fantastic. We can remember we have other great facilities and I know you are all looking for something to do on International Star Wars Day, May 4th (May the fourth be with you), it happens to be garlic pull day at Illiniwek. I don't know if Loud Thunder is doing one the same day, do you know, Jeff...off hand?"

Mr. Craver stated, "Not this time."

President Swanson added, "But I know that Ranger Petersen is hosting a garlic pull at Illiniwek. Come on out and pull some garlic. It's a great day."

6. Commissioner Simmer moved to approve the claims in the Forest Preserve General Fund in the amount of \$52,366.35, Niabi Zoo Fund claims in the amount of \$118,507.48, Liability Fund claims in the amount of \$351.50, Golf Course Improvement Fund claims in the amount of \$768.86, Loud Thunder Spillway & Improvement Fund claims in the amount of \$116,986.09 and Marvin Martin Fund claims in the amount of \$150.00. Commissioner O'Brien seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe,
D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno,
P. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 23

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$226,739.04. Commissioners Sowards seconded. (Record)

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe,
D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno,
P. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 23

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Normoyle moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriations in the Niabi Zoo Fund, as presented. Commissioner L. Moreno seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe,
D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno,
P. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, R. Simmer,
E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 23

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner O'Brien moved to waive the reading and approve the appropriation amendment for Niabi Zoo Fund appropriating \$50,000.00 for capital projects, as presented. Commissioner Maranda and Deppe seconded.

RESOLUTION
Appropriation Amendment for Niabi Zoo Improvements

WHEREAS, additional funds are required in the FY 19 Niabi Zoo Fund #131 as the Niabi Zoological Society has agreed to reimburse the District for improvements to the Large Cat House and Primate Exhibit at Niabi Zoo, 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 \$50,000.00 be transferred from additional donated funds in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

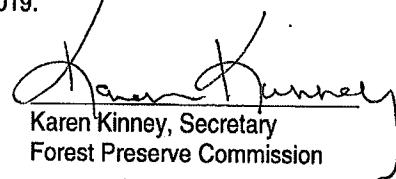
| AMOUNT | APPROPRIATION | DESCRIPTION |
|-------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| \$50,000.00 | 131-32-364.10 | Contributions from other sources |
| \$50,000.00 | 131-32-08 766 | Building & Remodeling over \$5,000 |

SECTION 3. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

ADOPTED by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 9th day of April, 2019.



Kai Swanson, President
Forest Preserve Commission



Karen Kinney, Secretary
Forest Preserve Commission

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, J. Deppe, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 23

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner Maranda moved to approve the purchase of a John Deere 4066R from Holland & Sons out of the Golf Course Improvement fund, as presented. Commissioners Simmer and Mayberry seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, D. Beck, L. Boswell-Loftin, R. Brunk, L. Burns, D. Cremeens, D. Johnston, E. Langdon, K. Maranda, M. Mayberry, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, P. Moreno, R. Morthland, A. Normoyle, C. O'Brien, R. Oelke, R. Reagan, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke, J.R. Westpfahl

TOTAL YES 22

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

11. **Comments from Commissioners**

Commissioner Mayberry was recognized.

Ms. Mayberry asked, "I just have a quick question as to where we are with the new cabin project at Loud Thunder, the progress?"

President Swanson answered, "We are not there yet, Jeff, I don't know if you have anything to say on that but they are in the order of improvement projects...and Ms. Mayberry is asking about the cabin project."

Mr. Craver stated, "Well first off, the campground improvement project is tied to the OSLAD Grant. We have signed out state of wards and are waiting on a grant from the state. We can't start any work being reimbursed for that until we have the grant from the state. So, we are on a holding pattern there. And, as far as the cabin project...it ties directly to the cost of what we will have remaining from the campground project. Strand Engineering is working on the design and we are trying to wiggle out a couple of issues that have come up in regards to that, mainly

trying to find a suitable kit that will ease the State and County Building Codes. So, it's still a work in progress and when I have something finalized and ready to put it up for bid, I will submit that and put it in front of all of you."

President Swanson stated, "That's an opportunity to remind the Commission that we wouldn't have had without that \$400,000 State grant had it not been for the initiative of Mr. Craver. So, thank you for that."

Commissioner O'Brien was recognized.

Ms. O'Brien stated, "On a positive note, I just heard on the radio recently, there was discussion from a local person calling in on a program on talk radio about how great Scott County is with their cabins that they have currently, which we are trying to build. And the comments that were made by this lady who called in was, 'Hey, our family doesn't have a lot of vacation travel time these days, but we can go to the cabins in Scott County. It's clean, it's nice and our kids don't know that we aren't at some fancy park in another State, they just think we are on vacation.' It's a great value, so I look forward to something like that being offered in Rock Island County someday."

President Swanson stated, "But ours will be a lot better."

Ms. O'Brien added, "Well, I hope so."

(Group Laughter)

President Swanson asked, "Any other comments from Commissioners? I would like to express gratitude to Commissioner Simmer for covering while I had a work conflict last week. I appreciate it very, very much. I hope you had a chance to look at those reports because there is just an awful lot of good stuff happening in your Forest Preserve District."

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

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated, "Just a quick summary of some things, the camping is open for the season, however, you will need a waterproof tent with some pontoons on it at Illiniwek, that is inhibiting some of that but we are on target. Niabi Zoo opened up this past Saturday...we really hope you'll join us if your

schedules allow tomorrow morning at 10 am at the zoo. It's going to be a very special celebration."

The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission is Tuesday, May 21, 2019, immediately following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board.

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting recessed.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



KAREN KINNEY
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

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