

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES  
MAY 11, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Committee members - K. Swanson, D. Cremeens(via teleconference), L. Moreno(via teleconference), E. Sowards, R. Simmer(via teleconference).

**ABSENT:** A. Normoyle.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeff Craver, District Director; Ben Mills, Loud Thunder Ranger; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; Kurt Davis, IT; April Palmer, Auditor; Louisa Ewert, Treasurer.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 9:31 AM on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, in the Rock Island County Building in the third floor chambers, Rock Island, Illinois.

D. Cremeens, K. Swanson, E. Sowards, R. Simmer. (L. Moreno joined later in the session)

**TOTAL YES           5**

A. Normoyle.

**TOTAL ABSENT    1**

President Swanson called for a motion approving the April Committee minutes.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve the April Committee minutes. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

D. Cremeens, K. Swanson, E. Sowards, R. Simmer.

**TOTAL YES           4**

**TOTAL NO           0**

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$157,012.46.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$157,012.46. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Cremeens moved to adopt the previous roll call. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the transfers of appropriation in the General Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve the transfers of appropriation in the General Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund. Mr. Cremeens seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to adopt the previous roll call. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the Moline Community Foundation Grant Funds.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve the resolution regarding the Moline Community Foundation Grant Funds. Mr. Cremeens seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to adopt the previous roll call. Mr. Cremeens seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson made three calls to the public for public comment.

There were two requests for public comment:

Ms. Cathy Bizarri stated that she was speaking on behalf of the Illinois City Saddle Club. I have met with Mr. Mills and Mr. Craver a couple of times. The club has concerns regarding the intermingling of equestrian campers and non-equestrian campers. Most people don't have an understanding of horses and their behavior. We have concerns about someone getting hurt. Non-horse campers may not know the dangers of being near and around a horse. If a horse gets frightened, they are prey animals, so someone might get hurt. Mr. Mills and Mr. Craver are concerned that there will be empty spots, and they believe that educational signage will be enough to prevent. Accidents happen, and we don't want to see anyone get hurt.

President Swanson thanked Ms. Bizarri for sharing her concerns, and stated that Mr. Craver and Mr. Mills have been briefing me on the Saddle Club's concerns. They are highly attuned to the safety issues. The District always seeks to balance the demands of the various groups who utilize the preserve with the resources that are available to the District.

Ms. Vicki Bluedorn stated that she was also here as a member of the Illinois City Saddle Club, and wanted to echo Ms. Bizarri's concerns regarding the camping in the Horse Corral campground. If part of the new sites could be donated to the horse people, we could see if they would use them enough. Especially with people getting out and doing more things outdoors, it could be a win-win.

President Swanson thanked Ms. Bluedorn for her concerns. It is not within the mission of the District to subtract from public lands, so I don't think that would be on the table. The Committee appreciates your insights, and we will keep safety and the balance of, not necessarily

competing, but equally meritorious demands in balance as we move forward. Thank you both for your time, and for joining us this morning.

President Swanson called on Mr. Craver to discuss the future meeting times and locations.

Mr. Craver stated that typically the District starts having its meetings at the parks in April. This year we're a bit behind. I know we've adjusted dates and times to Committee member's schedules. Is everyone ok with the usual 3:30pm start time during those months where the meetings are held at the District's preserves?

There was consensus to move the meeting to 3:30pm for the meetings held at the preserves.

Mr. Craver asked if the Committee would like to go ahead and start that next month?

President Swanson stated that it was.

President Swanson asked if Ms. Ewert had anything she would like to bring to the Committee's attention.

Ms. Ewert stated that a new employee was hired recently to handle the District's accounts.

President Swanson asked Ms. Palmer if there was anything from the Auditor's reports that she would like to bring attention to.

Ms. Palmer stated that there was nothing of note in the Trial Balance Report. Fund balances are looking better than they were at this time last year.

President Swanson asked Mr. Mills if there was anything from his report that he would like to bring attention to.

Mr. Mills stated that the volunteer honeysuckle removal held in partnership with RiverAction went well. If there are any questions regarding the report included in the packet, I'll be happy to answer those.

There were no questions.

President Swanson asked Mr. Jackson if there was anything from his report that he would like to bring attention to.

Mr. Jackson stated that last week a grant was received for Invertebrates Exhibit that will hopefully be opened this summer. Illinois is moving into a new opening phase. The capacity of the zoo will be increased, and staff is working on a plan for that now. Rhinos will be at Niabi soon.

President Swanson asked Mr. Craver if there was anything from his report that he would like to bring attention to.

Mr. Craver stated that April began slow, but picked up toward the end, so staff was happy with the start of the season. Staff is currently working on the budget for fiscal year 2022-2023. In regards to the land acquisition that was discussed at last month's meeting. The bank is interested, but would like a contingency. Still working on the plan for that acquisition to present to the Committee. Still have not heard from the Village of Coal Valley on the water main project for Niabi Zoo. If they don't get the grant that they applied for, then they are still going to do the project in either 2023 or 2024. Loud Thunder staff is looking forward to opening up the remaining camping sites in the Horse Corral campground. Mr. Verstraete came out to Loud Thunder and met with Mr. Mills to give some advice on helping the grass to come in faster and thicker.

President Swanson asked what sums would be helpful in regards to the contingencies that were mentioned.

Mr. Craver stated that the total for the two properties was about \$1.5 million. When you're looking at the Clean Energy Foundation, believe they would provide eighty percent of the funding. However, one of the issues there is that the properties are not contingent or adjacent to one another. There's a small area in between. If they would accept one or the other, or both, the District is lacking that remaining amount. Unless the money was pulled from the General Fund or the Loud Thunder Endowment. Haven't been able to find another grant to make up the difference. There are a few State and Federal Grants out there, but have missed the application date for some of those, and they take quite a long time to get the monies for those grants also. As for the sum, the realtor stated that it was typically \$5,000.00 for every \$100,000.00 of the land sale, so around \$55,000.00.

President Swanson stated that Mr. Maranda had resigned, and I have approached Ms. Johnnie Woods about joining the Forest Preserve Executive Committee. She has agreed, and should be joining us in June.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve all routine reports from the department heads in the District.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve routine reports. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

D. Cremeens, K. Swanson, E. Sowards, R. Simmer, L. Moreno.

**TOTAL YES           5**  
**TOTAL NO           0**

Motion carried.

Adjourned the meeting at 10:09 AM.

Submitted by:  
Cassie Sullivan, Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant