

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
AUGUST 10, 2021**

PRESENT: Committee members - K. Swanson, L. Moreno, E. Sowards, R. Simmer, J. Woods, A. Normoyle.

ABSENT: D. Cremeens.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Craver, District Director; Jay Verstraete, Golf Course Superintendent; Todd Collins, Club House Manager; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; April Palmer, Auditor.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 3:31 PM on Tuesday, August 10, 2021, in the Club House at Indian Bluff Golf Course in Milan, Illinois.

L. Moreno, E. Sowards, R. Simmer, J. Woods, A. Normoyle, K. Swanson.

TOTAL YES 6

D. Cremeens.

TOTAL ABSENT 1

President Swanson called for a motion approving the July Committee minutes and Special Meeting minutes.

MOTION: Dr. Simmer moved to approve the July Committee minutes and Special Meeting minutes. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2021 claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$695,334.01.

MOTION: Ms. Normoyle moved to approve the fiscal year 2021 claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$695,334.01. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2022 claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$216,511.21.

MOTION: Ms. Woods moved to approve the fiscal year 2022 claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$216,511.21. Ms. Normoyle seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2021 transfers of appropriation in the General Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund.

MOTION: Ms. Woods moved to approve the fiscal year 2021 transfers of appropriation in the General Fund and Niabi Zoo Fund. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the Niabi Zoo Receipt of Grant Funds – Moline Community Foundation Resolution.

MOTION: Ms. Normoyle moved to approve the Niabi Zoo Receipt of Grant Funds – Moline Community Foundation Resolution. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the Niabi Zoo Receipt of Grant Funds – Woodward Community Foundation Resolution.

MOTION: Dr. Simmer moved to approve the Niabi Zoo Receipt of Grant Funds – Woodward Community Foundation Resolution. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to lay on display for thirty days the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, Liability Fund, FISSA Fund, and Development of Forests & Construction of Improvements Fund.

MOTION: Ms. Normoyle moved to lay on display for thirty days the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, Liability Fund, FISSA Fund, and Development of Forests & Construction of Improvements Fund. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Mr. Craver stated that the fund balance numbers on the ordinances are estimated, and will likely change slightly before next month when they are approved.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to make public comment.

There were no requests for public comment.

President Swanson called on Mr. Craver to speak on the Regular Part-Time & Temporary Employee Pay Policy.

Mr. Craver stated that the parks are struggling to hire and keep seasonals, especially minors, this year. Every facility is having a lot more turnaround than in years past. The policy states that minors are paid a lower minimum wage than adults as per what the law allows. What staff is discovering is that most places are offering the \$11.00 per hour minimum wage, which is the adult minimum wage, to both adult and minor employees. Some businesses are even offering more than minimum wage in order to get and keep employees. Would like to change that wording in the policy to allow the same practice at the District's parks. Mr. Collins, have you had many issues with that this year?

Mr. Collins stated that he had two minors who interviewed and were offered positions, but turned them down when they found out what the pay rate was.

Mr. Craver stated that the issue is mostly felt at Loud Thunder, but there are a few instances at the zoo and at the Bluff.

President Swanson asked if there were any objections to Mr. Craver's recommendation.

Ms. Normoyle stated that she was in favor of the changes to this policy.

President Swanson called for a motion to accept Mr. Craver's recommendation for the policy change.

MOTION: Ms. Woods moved to accept Mr. Craver's recommendation for the policy change. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Craver was directed to redline the changes and present it for consideration to the full Commission in time for August's full Commission meeting.

President Swanson called on Mr. Craver to speak on the private partnership to support the mission of the District.

Mr. Craver stated that this item came from Dr. Moreno last month. Is that something that the Committee is wanting to discuss now?

President Swanson stated that with the Loud Thunder Endowment Fund there is an apparatus already to facilitate that partnership, but what the District really lacks in that area is champions. Is there anyone in particular in mind for that?

Dr. Moreno stated that he was confident that there were people out there interested in supporting the parks.

Ms. Normoyle stated that no one is immediately springing to mind. Before any kind of announcement can be made along those lines it will be important to have someone out there on board to champion the preserves.

Dr. Moreno stated that whoever it is will need a project to champion also.

President Swanson encouraged the Committee to give the matter some thought.

Mr. Craver stated that there was a handout regarding the land acquisition in East Moline. On one side there is a brief history of what has transpired thus far, and on the opposite side of the page there are three recommendations that the Committee has to choose from.

The Committee quickly reviewed the document.

President Swanson asked, in regards to option number two, what is the timeline for applying for the 2022 Clean Energy Foundation Grant cycle?

Mr. Craver stated that the next grant cycle is in February with announcements in May. Then it repeats itself with a deadline in August.

President Swanson stated, if the Committee decided on option two, then that would give East Moline time to figure out what it wants to do in regards to a concurrence.

Mr. Craver stated that without the concurrence from East Moline the sale was dead.

President Swanson stated that the impression he was getting was that the District is not desperate to get this land, but if the price was right would be interested.

There was consensus from the Committee to not pursue option one. [Reject the counteroffer and inform the City of East Moline the District is no longer interested in the property.]

President Swanson asked if Mr. Craver had a recommendation between option two or option three.

Mr. Craver stated that the sellers were giving the District the contingency to apply for the grant. That was three months, but if someone were to come in between now and February and purchase it, the District would be out that property. That's what happened with the property that came available that bordered Indian Bluff. I think at this time we would have to reject it, and should East Moline change their mind, then the District could pursue the property again if it is still available at that time. We could formally ask them to take a stand on the issue one way or the other. The timing is kind of poor in regards to that, but elected official positions do change given time. It's been vacant for close to twenty years. We can tell them that at this time East Moline is saying no, and we have to reject the offer, but that we would be happy to negotiate again if East

Moline's position on the sale should change. That way it is an inactive issue for staff, but the opportunity is still there. So to break down the two remaining options. Option two would be to accept the counteroffer with contingencies, and actively pursue a meeting between the city officials of East Moline, the District, and the sellers to see if East Moline will change its mind. Option three is to reject the counteroffer, and wait to see if the City of East Moline will provide a concurrence. Again, that would mean that this purchase would remain an open issue, but be inactive for District staff.

President Swanson asked Mr. Craver if he felt that option three would give them a better position to negotiate from in the future.

Mr. Craver stated that he did not think it would.

Ms. Normoyle stated that as far as price, much of it would be covered by the grant. The savings to the District is comparatively very small in relation to that. It's always great to get the land for less money, but the big question is does the District want this land or not. Is this land worth moving forward, or not?

Mr. Craver stated that it would give himself and Mr. Petersen more time to do some networking. Mr. Petersen has a contact in the Conservation Foundation. They have funds that they'd be willing to put towards the project. With option two, we don't know what the reasoning is for East Moline to be against the District purchasing the land. It may be a simple misunderstanding, or there might be some kind of condition that they would have for the District, or it could be that they don't want to give up the tax revenue. If the Committee thinks that the counteroffer is reasonable, and are comfortable with the 80% grant with the District picking up the 20% plus additional costs, then I have to something to work off of going forward. Since we don't have a concurrence from East Moline, the District will not make the current grant cycle, and will need to try in the next one. That concurrence can be worked on in the next few months waiting for the next grant cycle to begin in February. If by that time East Moline is still firmly against the sale, then there's nothing that can be done. Option three, of course, let us hold off until a more opportune time.

President Swanson stated that the consensus that he is hearing is that the Committee would like to pursue option two. Being very clear that the contingency stated that the District will only purchase if the funds are granted at the percentages that were previously discussed.

Mr. Craver stated that, again, the percentages are not guaranteed at the 80%. The Clean Energy Foundation may come back and only grant 70% or 65%. While rejecting the grant is an option, that's not a good idea in the grant world. When an entity rejects a grant, then that's a big mark against them going forward.

There was consensus to proceed with option two. [Tentatively accept the counter offer, with the contingency that the City of East Moline provides a concurrence and the District is awarded funds in the 2022 Clean Energy Foundation grant cycle.]

President Swanson asked if Ms. Palmer had anything from her reports that she would like to bring attention to.

Ms. Palmer stated that in comparison to last year at this time the fund balances are looking better. On the cash balances report comparison cash on the whole is up, though there are a couple funds that are down from last year at this time.

President Swanson asked if Mr. Verstraete had anything he'd like to report to the Committee.

Mr. Verstraete stated that it has been a good year for golf. The irrigation system is starting to show its age, and there will be some expensive parts replaced in the near future. However, replacing those parts will allow the Bluff to get another decade or so out of the system.

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

Mr. Collins stated that the golf numbers have been great. Golf outings are starting back up. Seeing more young people taking up the sport, so that's a good sign for the future of golf in general.

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

Mr. Petersen stated that it had been a pretty normal summer month at Illiniwek. Have noticed that more people are enjoying the trails out at Dorrance. Staff is installing some new signs. The waterlines need to be replaced, and that project should be starting soon. The well system will also need replaced soon. It's an ancient system, and is failing more often than not at this point. The Bio-Blitz went really well. There were six endangered species found out at Illiniwek this year. Of course there's the Rusty Patch Bumblebee. There are also Higgins-eye muscles, Pearly-eye muscles, Northern Long-eared bat, Indiana bat, and another bat that has never before been seen in Rock Island County.

MOTION: Dr. Simmer moved to approve routine reports. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Adjourned the meeting at 4:19 PM.

Submitted by:
Cassie Sullivan
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant