

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022**

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

ABSENT: D. Cremeens, R. Simmer.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Craver, District Director; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; Ben Mills, Loud Thunder Ranger; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; April Palmer, Auditor; Louisa Ewert, Treasurer; Kurt Davis, Information Systems; Kayle Ziegenhorn.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 9:37 AM on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, in the third floor chambers of the County Building, Rock Island, Illinois.

K. Swanson, E. Sowards, A. Normoyle, L. Moreno. (J. Woods arrived 9:39AM.)

TOTAL PRESENT 5

R. Simmer, D. Cremeens

TOTAL ABSENT 2

President Swanson stated that the District had been contacted by the Bison Bridge Project to explore a possible partnership regarding the meadow lands at Amôwa Forest Preserve. This project is far from being a reality, so let's keep that in mind. This is to gauge if anyone has any objections to having a discussion about the meadow lands being used for grazing should the project come to fruition.

Ms. Normoyle stated that the only concern would be that a bridge across the Mississippi River is quite a large responsibility for a non-profit to tackle, and am very hesitant to get the District involved with that aspect of the project. No objection to the meadow land discussion.

No Committee member voiced concern about discussions of meadow land use.

President Swanson called for a motion approving the August Budget and Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the August Budget and Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

Roll was called:

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

TOTAL YES 5

TOTAL NO 0

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the transfers of appropriation in District funds.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the transfers of appropriation in District funds. Ms. Normoyle seconded the motion.

MOTION: Ms. Sowards moved to adopt the previous roll call. Ms. Normoyle seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$251,508.97.

MOTION: Ms. Sowards moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$251,508.97. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding fiscal year 2022 General Fund Pollinator Meadows Grant.

MOTION: Ms. Woods moved to approve the resolution regarding fiscal year 2022 General Fund Pollinator Meadows Grant. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the semi-annual review of closed session minutes.

MOTION: Ms. Normoyle moved to approve the resolution regarding the semi-annual review of closed session minutes. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the fiscal year 2022 Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations.

MOTION: Ms. Normoyle moved to approve the resolution regarding the fiscal year 2022 Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the fiscal year 2023 Niabi Fund Prairie Dog Grant Appropriations.

MOTION: Ms. Normoyle moved to approve the resolution regarding the fiscal year 2023 Niabi Fund Prairie Dog Grant Appropriations. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to remove from display and approve the fiscal year 2024 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Preserve Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, Liability Fund, FISSA Fund, Audit Fund, and Development of Forests & Construction of Improvement Fund.

MOTION: Ms. Normoyle moved to remove from display and approve the fiscal year 2024 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Preserve Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, Liability Fund, FISSA Fund, Audit Fund, and Development of Forests & Construction of Improvement Fund. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

There were no requests for public comment.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the Klinger & Associates Prairie Dog Architect Agreement.

MOTION: Ms. Woods moved to approve the Klinger & Associates Prairie Dog Architect Agreement. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the Estes Construction management agreement.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the Estes Construction Management Agreement. Ms. Normoyle seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the IMEG Parking Lot Design Agreement.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the IMEG Parking Lot Design Agreement. Sowards seconded the motion.

Ms. Normoyle asked if a decision on whether or not the District was going with permeable pavers had been made, and pointed out that it was the option most in line with the District's mission on conservation.

Mr. Craver stated that pavers will be what's put out for bid with an alternative option for concrete. At the moment construction companies are extremely busy, and there is a harsh winter predicted. Staff has decided that in light of those two facts, the two parking lots will be put out for bid together later this year with construction happening in 2023.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a discussion on the trail closure practices.

Mr. Craver stated that before moving on to the trail practices discussion, wanted to confirm that 9:30 AM was going to work for the Committee for the remainder of the term.

There was consensus from the Committee that the time would work for the remainder of the term.

President Swanson stated that regarding the trail closures, some of our equestrians have brought some feedback to the Committee's attention. This gives the Committee an opportunity to take a look at the practices. What I've learned is that these conditions are highly localized. What may work for one facility may not work for a facility with very different hydrology. There is a very peculiar hydrology at Loud Thunder because it is a backed up creek. Also have looked at the available options for when trails are not accessible. There are places to ride along mowed paths. Though can certainly sympathize that if a reservation gets made with anticipation of riding trails in the timber, and that is not available come the day of camping, that would be frustrating and disappointing. In my exploration of this topic, it seems the District is well within the common practices of trail closure. And, of course, the professional staff is deferred to as they are the ones who are out on the premises and have the experience.

Ms. Normoyle asked if there was any way to predict how long a trail closure might be before conditions dry out to the point where they are again safe to use.

Mr. Mills answered that there was not a reliable way to predict that. There are too many factors that affect how fast or slow the ground is going to dry. Staff is very cognizant that people want to get out and use the trails, and the trails are checked daily. Changes to trail status are posted on Facebook, the message on the phone is changed, the signs on the park are changed, and office staff is informed. Over the years the District has put in a lot of money, and staff has put in a lot of time and effort to get the trails to a point where the trails are accessible to equipment. This is to ensure that staff and emergency responders can get to someone quickly who is in need of assistance. The closures are mainly to ensure that the trails stay in that hard won safe condition. The point of contact that the District has with the local equestrian community is Cathy Bizarri, and that has

worked out very well over the years, providing valuable feedback. There are three plus miles of trail to ride in the event that the trails in the timber are closed, and there have only been three weekends out of the entire camping season that the Horse Corral campground has been completely full. That means that if someone would decide to come out without a reservation, they would be able to get a spot.

President Swanson thanked Mr. Mills for the information.

President Swanson asked if the Committee had any questions about the routine reports from department heads.

Ms. Normoyle asked what a “train ambush” was?

Mr. Jackson stated that it was a fundraiser where when the train stopped volunteers would come up and ask the disembarking train riders if they would make a donation to the zoo. Guests were informed when they entered the zoo that day of the fundraising event, and as guests were waiting to board the train they were shown the master plan and told what the funds were going towards. The weather on that day was terrible, but Niabi was still able to bring in \$600.00 of donations, and people really seemed to enjoy it.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the routine reports of the District Department heads.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the routine reports of the District Department heads. Ms. Normoyle seconded the motion.

President Swanson asked Ms. Palmer if there was something that she’d like to lift up from her report.

Ms. Palmer stated that the 60 days that the District had to back date revenues and expenses into the old fiscal year has passed. There are reports in the packet that show the unaudited fund balances. The audit will start in October. Please note that Niabi Zoo Fund’s balance is double what it was last year, and that is great to see.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called the meeting adjourned at 10:16 AM.

Submitted by:
Cassie Sullivan
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant