

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES  
APRIL 11, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Committee members –L. Moreno, J. Woods, E. Sowards(via Zoom), R. Simmer, D. Mielke, C. Layer.

**ABSENT:** K. Swanson.

**ALSO PRESENT:** B. Perkins, District 13 Commissioner; Jeff Craver, District Director; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; Ben Mills, Loud Thunder Ranger; April Palmer, Auditor; Nick Camlin, Treasurer; Kurt Davis, Information Systems; Rudy Vallejo.

Dr. Moreno called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 9:30 AM on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, in the third floor chambers of the County Building, Rock Island, Illinois.

L. Moreno, J. Woods, E. Sowards(via Zoom), D. Mielke, C. Layer, R. Simmer.

**TOTAL PRESENT 6**

K. Swanson.

**TOTAL ABSENT 1**

Dr. Moreno called for a motion approving the March Committee meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Perkins moved to approve the March Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

Roll was called:

L. Moreno, J. Woods, E. Sowards, R. Simmer, D. Mielke, C. Layer.

**TOTAL YES 7**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$456,754.22, and transfers of appropriation.

**MOTION:** Mr. Perkins moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$456,754.22, and transfers of appropriation. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the transfers of appropriation.

**MOTION:** Mr. Perkins called for a motion to approve the transfers of appropriation. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to adopt the previous roll call. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to approve the resolution regarding the Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to adopt the previous roll call. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the Niabi Zoo Fund Expense appropriation – E. Hogan Trust.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to approve the resolution regarding the Niabi Zoo Fund Expense appropriation – E. Hogan Trust. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to adopt the previous roll call. Mr. Layer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the Niabi Zoo Fund African Painted Dog grant appropriations.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to approve the resolution regarding the Niabi Zoo Fund African Painted Dog grant appropriations. Mr. Perkins seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to adopt the previous roll call. Mr. Layer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the River Action/Arconic Foundation grant to benefit Amôwa Forest Preserve.

**MOTION:** Mr. Layer moved to approve the resolution regarding the River Action/Arconic Foundation grant to benefit Amôwa Forest Preserve. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to adopt the previous roll call. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno stated that there was a request for public comment from Mr. Rudy Vallejo.

Mr. Vallejo thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address them, and introduced himself. Then stated, "What I am here for is the Indian statue that went down in Rock Island here a couple days ago from the big storm. My stand on that is I would like to save it. I would like to preserve it. Get it back to the original state, you know. It's a very beautiful statue. I think there's a lot of folks in our area that grew up with that statue there at Watchtower Plaza. And so, you know, right now just treading water. I don't know exactly what direction to go. Yesterday I was at the City Council meeting, and you know they were going to decide whether to scrap it or maybe give it away. I don't know the situation. But I'm just out speaking to who I can I guess right now, and one of my thoughts was before even the statue went down when they were giving it away to Blackhawk Bank got it. I thought that would be so neat, you know, they were going to give it away. This to, uh, with that, this is my own thoughts, you know, and I shared it with a few people. I said that would be so beautiful to put on that hill that overlooks the interstate; I think Interstate 80 Illinois and Iowa on the hill there at the new Amôwa Park in Hampton at Illiniwek Park. I thought with the bridge being, you know, they get that bridge. The buffalo/bison bridge, and then that Indian statue. I thought, man that would be really something for the Quad City Area. And so that was kinda my, you know, kinda my goal. My dream, and so I just kinda wanted to share it and I didn't... This is the first time that I'm putting it out here, and I know that you know, of course, you're probably not anywhere thinking about anything like that. But I just wanted to share that with you, you know, to let you know what my feelings were about that. So I don't even have it in possession. I think I gotta go quite a little bit further, if in case they do and you know maybe someone says, yeah maybe that might be a good idea. And I know there's controversy. I know there are other Native Americans that don't want it, you know, but that's okay, you know, you gotta be tough. \*laughs\* And I tell people, don't let that scare you. Don't let that scare you, you know. I just think, myself, personally, that'd be very beautiful, and it's a landmark for our area. I don't want it to leave Rock Island County. There's so many memories that a lot of people have of that Indian statue down there on Watchtower. So, you know, we'll see where it goes from there, but I just wanted to again thank you for letting me come up and speak. To express my dream to you folks. I really appreciate it, so thank you."

Dr. Moreno stated that the statue was owned by the City of Rock Island, and ultimately it would be up to the city to decide what happened to the statue. The base for the statue was damaged in the storm, and would likely be very expensive to fix. Does anyone have any questions for Mr. Vallejo?

Mr. Mielke asked if anyone knew when the city intends to make a decision on the matter.

Dr. Moreno stated that he didn't know, and didn't believe that anyone here from administration had that answer either.

Ms. Woods stated that she has seen numerous comments by people in the Quad Cities expressing how upset they were that it was damaged in the storm. There is a lot of emotional investment for those who have grown up in the area seeing it.

Mr. Moreno stated that it was as Mr. Vallejo said earlier. When President Swanson spoke with several, and opinions were split. Some feel that it's very derogatory, and some don't. Possibly Blackhawk State Park would be a more appropriate place as it would keep it in Rock Island.

Mr. Vallejo stated that Blackhawk State Park already has a Chief Blackhawk statue. "At one-time Rock Island had the most beautiful powwow grounds in the State of Illinois. They had that amphitheater, and a lot of Indians, my grandma and my grandpa and a lot of relatives from Kansas, would come down here and dance, you know, in the powwow. They bring all these ... the Sauk, which is Blackhawk, and the Meskwakis, the Kickapoos, and Potawatoman. I'm a member of the Kickapoo tribe. My grandpa was Kickapoo, and my grandmother was Potawatoman, and so now that is gone. That beautiful amphitheater is gone. It's a parking lot. I mean, you know, and I was much younger, so I couldn't have much say in that I guess, you know, so. But this here, I'm going to try to do my best to preserve it. That's what I want. Preserve it. My goal is preserve it, get it restored, put it away, and store it. 'Til we see exactly what's happening. But like I said, I come today to just to throw it out there. But I would think that'd look so beautiful looking over the interstate Illinois Iowa."

Ms. Sowards stated that she also grew up with it too, and would like to see it up again. I had thought perhaps at Schwiebert Park, but would just like to see it up again.

Dr. Moreno thanked Mr. Vallejo for sharing with the Committee, and reminded people that this is City of Rock Island's decision.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the District and River Action.

**MOTION:** Mr. Perkins moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the District and River Action. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the proposal from Klingner & Associates, P.C. in the amount of \$5,000.00 for conceptual design and cost of development of Dorrance Park.

**MOTION:** Mr. Layer moved to approve the proposal from Klingner & Associates, P.C. in the amount of \$5,000.00 for conceptual design and cost of development of Dorrance Park. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to adopt the previous roll call. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the proposal from Klingner & Associates, P.C. in the amount of \$17,500.00 for structural and civil design services for the renovation of the big cat and eagle exhibits.

**MOTION:** Ms. Woods moved to approve the proposal from Klingner & Associates, P.C. in the amount of \$17,500.00 for structural and civil design services for the renovation of the big cat and eagle exhibits. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Layer moved to adopt the previous roll call. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called on Mr. Craver for the discussion on the Illiniwek Grand Trails & Support Facility Improvements.

Mr. Craver stated that regarding the Grand Illinois Trail and Support Facility improvements. The District received a grant in the amount of \$200,000.00 for this project. We built the project budget, for the most part, in 2019, and submitted the grant in February. A few years ago when this project was initially put out to bid, the budget was just under \$600,000.00. As of today, for phase one, the services of Hutchinson Engineering and Porter Brothers is about \$689,000.00, so the District has already exceeded that initial budget. There was originally planned a replacement for the septic field because the aged and failing septic and water systems at Illiniwek. Staff recommends, based on best practices, that the District move away from septic fields, and upgrade to hooking into municipal infrastructure. It will increase cost, but there is money in the District's fund to cover it. This would allow the District to set the ground work for the future of the preserve and upgrades that would benefit both campers and staff.

The Committee came to consensus, and gave support to changing the original plans, and laying the work for future upgrades.

Mr. Craver stated that he would put a resolution on the agenda for April's Commission meeting to reflect the changes.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the routine reports of the District Department heads.

**MOTION:** Mr. Layer moved to approve the routine reports of the District Department heads. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to adopt the previous roll call. Mr. Perkins seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Layer seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Mr. Perkins moved to adopt the previous roll call. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Dr. Moreno called the meeting adjourned at 10:10 AM.

Submitted by:  
Cassie Sullivan  
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant