

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Committee members –L. Moreno, J. Woods, K. Swanson, E. Sowards, R. Simmer.

**ABSENT:** D. Mielke, C. Layer.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeff Craver, District Director; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; April Palmer, Auditor; Rudy Vallejo.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 3:41 PM on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, in the parking lot at Amôwa Forest Preserve West, East Moline, Illinois.

L. Moreno, K. Swanson, E. Sowards, R. Simmer. (J. Woods arrived at 4:17pm after roll was called.)

**TOTAL PRESENT 5**

D. Mielke, C. Layer.

**TOTAL ABSENT 2**

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

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

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2023 treasurer's disbursements, and the fiscal year 2024 claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$432,471.54.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the fiscal year 2023 treasurer's disbursements, and the fiscal year 2024 in the amount of \$432,471.54. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2023 transfers of appropriation.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve the fiscal year 2023 transfers of appropriation. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2023 resolutions regarding Liability Find Additional Appropriations, Niabi Zoo Fund – Truck Donations, Niabi Zoo Fund African Painted Dog Grant Appropriations, Niabi Zoo Fund Prairie Dog Grant appropriations.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2023 resolutions regarding Liability Find Additional Appropriations, Niabi Zoo Fund – Truck Donations, Niabi Zoo Fund African Painted Dog Grant Appropriations, Niabi Zoo Fund Prairie Dog Grant appropriations. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the fiscal year 2024 resolutions regarding Development of Amôwa Forest Preserve, Niabi Zoo Fund African Painted Dog Grant Appropriations, Niabi Zoo Fund Prairie Dog Grant Appropriations.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve the fiscal year 2024 resolutions regarding Development of Amôwa Forest Preserve, Niabi Zoo Fund African Painted Dog Grant Appropriations, Niabi Zoo Fund Prairie Dog Grant Appropriations. Dr. Moreno seconded.

Motion carried.

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

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the resolution regarding the semi-annual review of closed session minutes as presented. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated that Mr. Rudy Vallejo was here today to make a public comment.

Mr. Vallejo thanked the Committee, and stated that he was part of the Kickapoo tribe of Kansas. Am here to speak regarding the “statue” that had been on 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Rock Island that was felled and damaged by the storm in April. Have been attending the City of Rock Island Council meetings. The City has said that they aren’t going to destroy it. Currently it is at the Rock Island Public Works Ground Department. About a month ago the City Manager, if we can find a place to put the “statue” to reside, preferably in Rock Island, if there’s a park to put it in. That’s why I’m here. A few months back I came to one of the Committee meetings, but things had only just begun. Things are a little clearer now. Would like to ask the Committee to consider putting the “statue” here at Amôwa. Inter-Tribal League of American Indians is the organization I’m with. At this point what we’re trying to do is find a place for it. Then we would be able to go to the City of Rock Island and start that process. Our group is planning to get it repaired.

Dr. Moreno expressed concern about placing the “statue” at Amôwa since it is so secluded, and law enforcement would be an issue.

President Swanson stated that the matter could not be discussed by the Committee at this meeting since the matter is not on the agenda, but at the end of the meeting when Committee members have the opportunity to make comments, someone is welcome to request that matter be put on a future agenda.

Dr. Simmer asked if they had reached out to Blackhawk State park, since that is in Rock Island.

Mr. Vallejo stated that there is already a statue at the site.

The Committee thanked Mr. Vallejo for his comments, and taking the time to come and address the Committee.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the purchase of John Deere Gators for Bluff, Niabi, Loud Thunder, and Illiniwek.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to approve the purchase of John Deere Gators for Bluff, Niabi, Loud Thunder, and Illiniwek. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

President Swanson asked if anyone had reached out to the John Deere Foundation for a donation of gators for Niabi.

There was a brief discussion on who would contact the John Deere Foundation. President Swanson volunteered to make a second attempt to contact the John Deere Foundation.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called on Mr. Craver for information on the bid for the Illiniwek restroom, lift station, and site improvements.

Mr. Craver stated that the bid opening for that will be Thursday. Hutchison Engineering will do the opening and review the bids to ensure they meet the criteria. Staff would like to purchase the lift station separately to save some money. If the construction company purchases it, they'll tack on ten percent to the cost. Would like to put the purchase of the lift station as a separate item on the Commission for this month.

There was consensus from the Committee to put the purchase of the lift station separately on the Commission agenda.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the low bid for the Bluff storm water improvements.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the low bid for the Bluff storm water improvements. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Mr. Craver stated that the low bid was put in by Langman Construction in Rock Island. The bid is notably lower than all the other bids, but they do appear to meet all the criteria to be considered a responsible bidder. Langman bid was for \$186,583.00.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked Mr. Jackson if there were results of the necropsy of the Painted Dog that passed that he could share with the Committee, and whether or not Niabi will be able to get more members of that species.

Mr. Jackson stated that the necropsy results had come back. It was a [inaudible] infection in the thoracic cavity. They believe that the entry point was when the animals were being sedated for shipping. That was the only animal that had to be anesthetized. There may be an opportunity for staff to acquire another female so that breeding can occur as planned. The Prairie Dog exhibit was delayed due to a sub-contractor backing out, but that project is now continuing. Pints is coming up. The open season for the zoo is winding down. Niabi will host its first ever Zombie Run this fall.

President Swanson asked Ms. Palmer if there was anything that she wished to bring to the Committee's attention.

Ms. Palmer stated that the new external auditors would be in the office soon to begin the Forest Preserve Audit.

President Swanson asked Mr. Petersen if he would give an update on the Amôwa properties.

Mr. Petersen stated that this parking lot is at the south end of the Amôwa West property. The parking lot was completed in May, and the solar lights were added after that. Will be planting four acres of prairies hopefully this fall. Had a forestry contractor come in and do some invasive species removal. Living Lands and Waters is sponsoring some honeysuckle removal events. It's definitely an ongoing process to remove the honeysuckle. Behind the outhouse at the edge of the parking lot is an old two track road, which will be used as part of the trail system. There's only really space out here for two to three miles of trails, so FORC is not interested in helping to build the trail system. Illiniwek staff will put in the trail system. There were two species of rare orchids found at the Amôwa properties. One is called the Showy Orchid, and the other is called the Three Birds Orchid.

President Swanson asked Mr. Craver if there was anything he would like to bring to the Committee's attention.

Mr. Craver stated that there were a couple of last minute transfers, and a last minute resolution that will be added to the Commission agenda.

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

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

Motion carried.

President Swanson called the meeting adjourned at 4:34 PM.

Submitted by:  
Cassie Sullivan  
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant