

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 20, 2024 – 6:25PM  
PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON - PRESIDING**

1. Karen Kinney, County Clerk, called the roll: (Record)

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil, D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, K. Swanson, J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL PRESENT 15**

C. Enburg, R. Simmer, E. Sowards, B. Vyncke

**TOTAL ABSENT 4**

2. President Swanson stated, "Thank you very much. Good evening, ladies and gentleman, and am very grateful that we are going to turn things over immediately to our patient and wonderful partner we have from MindFire Communications. She's been here before...we are going to get a little update on some things we have talked about earlier, but ladies and gentlemen, I commend your attention to Ms. Chloe Roche. You may have the floor."

Ms. Roche stated, "Thank you. Can everyone hear me?"

(Multiple answers of 'yes' from the Commissioners.)

Ms. Roche continued, "Well I am super excited. Today, I am going to share with you some research we have done for the Rock Island County Forest Preserves. There is a lot of information...there is a report that is about 200 slides, so, I am doing the condensed version for you guys today. That is available to you if you for your specific preserve, if you are interested in it. So, high level...this is basically, the summary of our research objectives of what we found through the research. So, our first objective, was to understand the awareness and perceptions of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District. What we found, was that the community, even if they don't frequent the preserves all of the time, had a really positive outlook on the preserves and they value outdoor amenities. That's something that was all through the research. Our next objective was to test brand loyalty and referral. That is what we call a net promoter score. So, today, in this condensed version, I'll be sharing with you all of the net promoter scores of the preserves. So, overall...we did this research in 2017, and there was a positive increase. So, that was really great to see on all of the preserves with the exception of Niabi Zoo. People locally and in surrounding communities are likely to promote these preserves. Our third objective, was to better understand the behaviors and needs of the Rock Island County residents. They all...in the research we've done, are on social media and word of mouth were really how they've heard about most of these properties. The community overall finds the preserves really well-maintained

and they want to continue to see improvements and continue to see the community use these. Our fourth objective, was to understand the attributes our residents associate with the preserves. People really want to learn about conservation. That's something that we've found first and foremost...and then, they are very into events and outdoor amenities. That's what brings them to these properties. And then lastly, we wanted to identify any issues or strategies we could use to enhance, how can we use this to make these preserves better. So, we have some recommendations that we'll go through at the end here, and kind of talk about some of those strategies. So, what did we do? We gathered responses through an online survey. This was taken from November 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup>...this survey was an email list...we purchased an email list. We posted on social media. We had a press release and we really got the word out there. We had almost 2,000 responses...that was massive. That was way more than we had in 2017. And so, that was...we were really happy to see that. So, county demographics...overall, who took this survey? Sixty-seven percent (67%) were Rock Island County residents. We did have 33% that were not Rock Island County residents. Who were those people? (Shows slide) These are the counties they came from...Johnson County, Linn County, Knox County...the bigger the county is in this image, the more people that took it from that county. But, overall, the really large percentage was from Rock Island County. So, first up...like I said, I am going to go through the parks and preserves separately and talk kind of about their net promoter score. In the robust research, you will see a lot of information on these parks. This is just kind of the high-top level. So, first up is AMOWA. So, the net promoter score; again, is likely to recommend...I should tell you that starts at negative (-100) and goes to 100. So, 16 is a strong net promoter score. As you'll see, we have 40% of people that on a scale of one to ten, AMOWA is a nine or ten. We had 35% that said seven to eight and we had 25% that are zero to six. That's what we call detractors, they are people who aren't promoting us. So, high level, why did we get that rating? People said AMOWA is beautiful, relaxing, the park has potential, great place. These are kind of the key words that people were saying about AMOWA. The detractors, why did they give us a lower score? It's a new park, there is nothing there...that's what someone said...lack of trails...trials are still in development. So, this is not a surprise to us. This was very aligned with what we thought the community would say about AMOWA. Dorrance Park. So, Dorrance promoter score was 13, again...that's a pretty solid score. We have 36% of people who are promoters of Dorrance. In 2017, there was only 12% of residents that were promoters. So, that really skyrocketed, and that was great to see. Why did people give it that rating? They think it's well-maintained, beautiful, they love hiking, they love the trails for the environment and it's a nice park. You can kind of see all of those key words there. If people didn't give it a top rating...haven't been there in a long time, not much offered besides baseball, kind of lack of knowledge of what they can get from the park. So, that is what we found with Dorrance. On to Illiniwek...Illiniwek had a great promoter score of 25. Forty-three percent (43%) of people are likely to promote it. This, again, increased from 2017, where only 40% of residents were likely to promote it. At Illiniwek, people love the

trails, and accessibility of the trails, they are well-maintained. Again, kind of similar to other parks, needs improvements, average, nothing stands out and needs a trail map and certain things like that. Indian Bluff. This promoter score was 11. Again, a big increase...35% of people promote this golf course, compared to 2017, where 23% of residents were promoting it. Indian Bluff is really interesting because people think it's such a beautiful course. They think it's well-maintained, affordable...we kept seeing the word beautiful over and over again with the way it looks with still be a part of the Forest Preserve and so, that's something we can really lean into when we are promoting and it's very unique compared to other courses in the area. And then, here are some detractor scores...I don't golf much anymore, there is not much there other than golf. So, again, some of these scores are people who maybe don't frequent there and this is what they are saying. So, it just kind of gives you a full picture of how we are getting these ratings for these preserves. Loud Thunder. This type of area got a very high score of 39. Um, 54% of people are promoters with passives being 31%, that's a huge percent of residents that like this park. Again, there was a slight increase from 2017, and so, that just shows that Jeff and his team are continuing to make a positive impact on these preserves. Why do people love it? It's beautiful, well-maintained, it's a great place to fish...um, it's a great place for a picnic, great horse trails...really covered all of the aspects of the park, and you can tell that people are giving it a top rating for different reasons; which is nice to see. And then, the detractors...um, it's funny because we got so many people who said they loved fishing there and then, you have no fish for a reason why you had a lower score. So, there is a little bit of bias in here, but there are some reasons...poor fishing, summertime fishing is okay, a lot of fishing related ones; which...I don't know, maybe we can throw some more fish in the lake. (Chuckles) Martin...another really good score of 21. Another huge increase there...this is 42% of promoters, but in 2017, it was 5%. So, there was a large jump in Martin...nice place to walk. Um, there were some sentimental comments that you'll see throughout here...a great uncle, family members are filling this out, and so, a really positive score. Some reasons for lower scores, these are really positive too and so, that's what is really kind of funny. They could've rated this a six, thinking that was a good rating and not knowing to us that is a lower rating. So, you will see some positive things throughout here too. Niabi Zoo. So, their promoter score was a 17...um, they have 43% of promoters and in 2017, they had 57% of promoters for the residents...there are some reasons for this, we had a way larger survey. We had 2,000 people fill this out under 1,000 last time. So, the vast amount of people could have skewed this a little bit. That's just something to keep in mind, too, when we talk about Niabi. Here are some reasons that people gave it a nine or ten. These are the people who love the zoo and are likely zoo regulars...a fun local zoo, fun to see animals with the kids and grandkids, friendly people and nice variety of animals, kind, friendly...you will see a lot of words like that...a great size for a road-trip. Some reasons that people gave Niabi a lower rating...expensive, overpriced, more animals, weren't too many animals. You will kind of see those things there throughout that. So, we went a little further with Niabi Zoo and wanted to find out why people visited Niabi. Um,

so, you'll see here (shows slide) we kind of have it rated. So, people said they visit for fun. That was the top reason...because children in my life enjoy the zoo, was tied with that. So, likely the people who are coming to our community zoo is because they have little ones that want to be at the zoo. To learn about animals and environments was also on there, I have a pass, and others...but that gave us an idea. So, when we go to market the zoo, we know who to market to and what the messaging should be. So, this is just a summary of all the parks, as a whole. We asked how they would like to learn about things going on at the preserves, and this is what you see here. (Shows slide) Word of mouth is how most people know what's going on or social media is another huge reason people know what's going on and then third, you have the website. So, this...again, is just something to be conscience of how people kind of figure out what's going on in our community. So, 2017 vs. 2023, the importance of conservation, education and recreation. This is something that we really wanted to find out what people cared about. Do they really care about conservation or are they just going, 'yeah, it's fine' about these parks? (Shows slide) But, as you can see...conservation is actually the top-rated thing that the people in our community care about. They wanted to know that we are really taking care of these preserves...um, and they want to learn about it. Second...well, thirdly. So, on top...they cared about the conservation...they want to know that we are putting in the work to take care of the land in our community. Secondly, they care about our recreation and having activities to do with that land. And then, thirdly...that we have education there and are learning about what's going on, but this is just eye-opening to see and good to hear that they care about conservation. So, some recommendations that we took from the research, this is just listing those objectives that I covered with you guys in the beginning, the first score for AMOWA of 11, was very clear that clarifying the trail systems is something that the community is looking for. We have this new preserve and they just want to know how to use it or what's going to come of it. So, using social media and other mediums to kind of communicate that clearly with the public. Increasing signage, if needed. Also, this is in the larger report that we found younger audiences are more likely to promote AMOWA. So, that is really interesting...so, kind of using a younger brand voice is something that we can lean into for AMOWA. For Niabi, the admission pricing is fair, but the extra add-ons are what really angered people in this survey. So, looking at things like the parking fee and maybe removing that or the train or some of those extra add-ons that go on there that we could maybe find a happy medium with the public. And, most people visit the zoo for family fun experiences...so, we are really leaning into those events and marketing those and incorporating a more family fun messaging and really targeting...ya know, our average Rock Island County...um, rate when we go after the zoo. Indian Bluff, we really recommend to really lean into the beauty associated with it...beautiful, clean, great location are kind of the key words we kept seeing over and over again in this survey. Our photos for all of these preserves are pretty out of date. So, thinking of doing some sort of photo shoot for these preserves is something that we would highly suggest you invest in. They love to see them, they think they are beautiful, they think they are clean and

well-maintained...so, showing that off is a way to get the public back into them. So, overall...it was super positive. All of your net promoter scores increased, aside from Niabi Zoo; which was a slight decrease likely because of the vast amount of people that took this survey. We found that both residents and people in the close surrounding areas really value the preserves and value the outdoor amenities that we are providing to our residents. The opportunity to market with social media and digital retargeting these surrounding communities is something that could maybe be looked into and the costs for promoting the preserves to people in town but also those people out of town because they really value what we are doing here too. So, that's something that we could look into as well. Behaviors and needs of the Rock Island County residents. The community had a...I just...err, relies heavily on social media and word of mouth and investing in some sort of photo shoot, those are kind of our top needs that we've found from this survey. And, then something that we didn't cover in this survey, but it's in the larger report. Some residents don't understand how funds are allocated amongst all of the preserves. That was kind of the common theme of confusion. So, kind of looking at messaging on that especially, when we look to collect donations and being really conscience of how we are doing that and um, just understanding that residents really want to know how that works on the back end. So, overall...you guys, err...the Rock Island County Forest Preserve...Jeff, and his team are a huge asset to this community. Even people that don't go to Loud Thunder weekly, if they go once a year, they think it's a big asset and want to keep supporting it and know what's going on. Events and outdoor amenities are a major draw. So, keep pushing those events and building those activities that people can do and that net promoter score will just continue to increase. Does anyone have questions? That was a lot of information. It's a lot of preserves to go through, but anything specific on any individual forest preserve or the Forest Preserve as a whole?"

Commissioner Westpfahl asked, "You getting this all down, Rebecca?" (Chuckles)

Ms. Oberbroeckling answered, "Yes, sir."

President Swanson asked, "Are there any questions for Ms. Roche?"

Commissioner McNeil was recognized.

Mr. McNeil asked, "Just a quick question and to Mr. Swanson as well. This is nice social media work and the lake shoot you put together...are they being promoted well by the Quad City tourism groups, and other...ya know, across...?"

President Swanson stated, "Well, I am anxious to hear what Ms. Roche says, but I am grateful for the opportunity. Visit Quad Cities is just unveiling a brand-new video and I would say about 20% of it is shot in the Rock Island County Forest Preserves. In fact, the closing shot it was...we were watching it this weekend on the um, the Missouri Valley...it was Drake playing Murray State. And I ran there a

couple of times and Visit Quad Cities hosts the women's Missouri Valley Conference, a 30 second spot and you go through and say...okay, that's Illiniwek, and alright, that's Loud Thunder and that sort of thing. So, they are cognitive of what we want because that's a part of their strategy of reaching out to...and like you said, there is a sub-set who really want to do this like the younger folks at AMÔWA. And, so yes, I would like to hear your take on what Visit Quad Cities is doing."

Ms. Roche added, "We actually are in the larger research, Visit Quad Cities...or it might have been out there on the screen. Their website was a way people could find out, and there was a decent percentage of people that go there to learn about the different preserves. So, they are a good partner in that. I think there is always room to have more and we can reach out and gain more of those partners who could share the posts that we have or continue to cross-promote and that would be great. And we have a relationship with Visit Quad Cities and so, that's something that maybe we can consider going into more in this next year."

President Swanson added, "And, I know what you are doing, Mr. McNeil...you are giving us all the opportunity to remember we are all promoters. If you see some of the social media, if you see something going on at Loud Thunder or something that you can share with your circle and let them know what's going on there. So, for instance...I happened to notice today that the ramp was open at Loud Thunder; which...ya know, it may have to close again, but right now it is. And so, I would say that find that you have, that really big thing they have no fish...you really can't let Rod Simmer give repeat submissions because, I am sure it was him over and over again...because everyone else is happy to fish out there." (Chuckles)

Ms. Roche added, "Yeah, people spread the word quick. It was great to see that under social media, it was word of mouth as the second one...especially, with Niabi events or different things going on it gets shared around pretty quick."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you, Mr. McNeil and are there any other questions for Ms. Roche? Alright. I really appreciate the work that you are doing and keep it up. I know you are seeing opportunities and I know you are working with Jeff and his team because some of these are really about the renovations out at AMÔWA. These are things that we love to hear about but we realize that's the stuff that's going to Jeff's (inaudible)."

Ms. Roche added, "All around, it's really positive and if you want that full report, we have it too...it's 200 pages. So, pick a Friday night with some wine."

(Mr. Westpfahl chuckles)

President Swanson added, "Can we get that electronically?"

Ms. Roche answered, "Yeah."

President Swanson stated, "Yeah, if we can get that and Jeff can share that with any Member who requests it. I would like to get a look at it myself."

Mr. Craver stated, "Folks, as we are doing the update to the Master Plan, this data and our other input from our other stakeholders...pardon this process too, as MindFire sat down with some of our regulars from the golf course and...help me out quick...who else met?"

Ms. Roche stated, "Living Lands and Waters."

Mr. Craver continued, "Oh...we met with conservationists from our conservation partners, Living Lands and Waters, the Fish and Wildlife Service. Over the years, we've kind of picked out the groups and those were the two we sat down with this year. But, it will be in their pendency's for the updated Master Plan and I will get a link, since it is such a large document, to our website and I can get that out to all of you for your review."

President Swanson added, "And, I really don't want to speed you on your way and I thank you for your time tonight...but, I found it fascinating that conservation was number one."

Ms. Roche added, "So, did I, I wasn't expecting that."

President Swanson added, "We talk enough about...but that's what's attracting people? Because, at the end of the day...it's the taxpayers who are keeping us going, and they see that as a valuable admission alongside with recreations and all that kind of stuff...that's good to know."

Ms. Roche added, "Yep, definitely. Thank you, guys."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you very much, and thanks for being with us."

3. Commissioner Moreno-Baker moved to approve the January 16, 2024, Commission minutes, as presented. Commissioner L. Moreno seconded."

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS - (NONE)** (Three calls were made.)

5. **PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "As you know, the zoo took it on the chin in that one-two blast of snow that we had in January. Just sort of to make it short and condensed for other Members of the Executive Committee...actually, Mr. Mielke and I got to put eyes on the situation. That first round of snow, basically, froze up on top of the canopies that go over our Exhibits. And then, you put another 20 inches on top of that...and you've got steel posts that were just crumbled up. And in one case, I think it was the (inaudible) on the North/South side of the cat house; which has four enclosures...they had drilled the canopy into the wall. So, that weight was pulling out of the walls on the North and South sides. And so, we've got some pretty critical problems out there. All of the animals are fine. In fact, we had a surprise USDA inspection right as we were getting a grip on what all the damage was, but they commended us on the ability to take care of all of the animals. Um, so that's not an issue here. But, that is something that we are going to view strategically as we move forward. How we recover; which is well into six figures of damage, and what decisions we will make, Jeff and Lee and the team are putting together some options and they are still putting together some information gathering with insurance, engineering firms and that kind of thing to see where we go forward. But, just to let you know...talking about how we move forward with Niabi; whether it's simply recovery status as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, or do we start looking at ways we can come back from this to be in a stronger position for the years beyond. So, another couple of things from the President's Comments, we are going to have to revisit the fees at the zoo. We are probably going to lower them because there won't be as many animals on exhibit. We are going to move back a little bit, the opening date from its normal time to give the staff more time to get this all cleaned up. But otherwise the staff at all the other preserves are making sure that everything is ready to open. Some of them are hustling because of this nice weather, and I appreciate the hustle. We are going to try to get some revenue dollars in pocket even as we can take advantage of this kind of stuff. One thing that was not in your packet because it came in kind of late, Lt. Col. Brian Nielsen, the Civil Air Patrol of the United States Auxiliary made a request they usually make a little more in advance, to do some of their training work at Indian Bluff and Loud Thunder was it? Indian Bluff and one other...this Saturday and we didn't have time to put it in the packet. But, this is just some information that they will be out there this weekend. That's it for my report. We can talk about any of those things now or later."

Commissioner Westpfahl was recognized.

Mr. Westpfahl asked, "I read in the paper that there was going to be a backlog on getting these things repaired. Do you have to have a certain contractor to do that so it passes inspection or can you just get qualified builders to go out there and redo it?"

President Swanson answered, "That is what the team is assessing. That's a very good question, but you didn't hear that there is going to be a backlog on some of

the things because it's not simply the construction part, it's the equipment and the materials that they are going to be using. And so, I know, Jeff...you are welcome to weigh in on this, but Lee is working with the insurance. We are working with some of the providers to the fact that we have a...I thought we were going to have a measure here where we were going to move forward with some emergency powers to help expedite this."

Mr. Craver added, "At this time, assessing what damage has been done as President Swanson stated, looking at what was done and what we should do to prevent this from happening in the future is still in progress...uh, in taking into account costs and what we are going to get in or what we may possibly get in insurance and then, staging out those improvements. Much of what the modern zoological exhibit design is they are moving away from your chain-link and Iron bars from your 1950's and 60's to modern times and also keeping the animals happy and what have you. It is the stainless-steel overhead, high tension netting that they use. And so, that's possibly one backlog, but we were on track to replace the Cat-house exhibit and the Eagle exhibit and do some repairs to the Rhino roof. We will be adding some soffits/gutter repairs to that Rhino project and a few other gutter projects. And, I really think it's evaluating the palace cat, the carousel, the canopy collapsed...while it's an outdoor carousel, it's really meant to be...it has an overhead covering/top to it. And, in the previous area where they call it the Australia house...the lorikeets, the parakeets, the guinea pigs...that group has sustained a little bit of structural damage and we are addressing that area. And then, on the bio-diversity building, where we have outside horticultures on each side, there are two rows of fencing where the singing dogs and foxes and other animals on display...those things might have to be put back the way they are, as of now. And, taking a look at the design/architectural things and/or enhancements for structural and esthetically improved and move us towards AZA accreditation in the future."

President Swanson asked, "Also, the Red Wolf Exhibit...did that need some work?"

Mr. Craver answered, "Luckily, we had a structural engineering firm come out because we were concerned that we would have to excavate it. Half of that Exhibit is...you can actually stand on the top of it, if you go down to the one area, we were concerned that we were going to have to excavate that because it was the back wall that is fully encased and the cost of it to be done...but, the structural engineers believe that we can put that out and get some quotes and possibly get that work done for less than \$10,000.00. But, you'll never know until you actually get those quotes and bids, but they believe that can be taken care of from inside the facility and not having to totally re-excavate it."

President Swanson asked, "And what about the Colobus Monkeys? The Colobus, they are going to need some...?"

Mr. Craver answered, "Yeah. We'll take a look... Some of the newer...you have the Colobus, you have the Gibbon Exhibits and some of the newer things on that because the weight of the snow created some sagging on those structures. And so, we'll take a look at that and some additional re-enforcements of some of those structures. So, there are some things there that is just going to have to take some time. Myself and the staff are taking a look at our options of what makes sense to put back, what looks and is with plans for future improvements. It's most likely going to take a while...but, we also must take into account all of the other needs in deferred maintenance items throughout the District and what will be the best course moving forward for not only just the zoo, but the District as a whole going forward with our capital plans for the next five to ten years."

President Swanson stated, "Thank you, Mr. Westpfahl for that. We will be trying to find people who are going to be looking at some things we will need to do to look at that strategy over the horizon....not just the near term, but beyond that. Thank you with that.

Commissioner Mielke was recognized.

Mr. Mielke asked, "I know, um...(inaudible) interview on tv, you mentioned donations. I mentioned that I think you already talked about um...needing a program where we address the public the need for a way maybe through MindFire we do... Is that still kind of in its infancy stage or?"

President Swanson answered, "Yeah so, the first part of that is getting a fix on what exactly we need to do. So, I am gonna miss some steps here, but once we find out what the price tag is to get us back to square one versus what it would be to get us moving forward with this Master Plan that we had anyway. Right? The Strategic Plan. Then, you look at what insurance is going to cover, what other sources of funding there are...I am pleased to report that Representative Sorensen, Representative Johnson and Senator Halpin have all taken an interest in this and are looking at State grants and that kind of thing. So, we will find what our other sources are and what Mr. Mielke is saying is, that is going to leave us with a gap...and that is going to tell us what philanthropy would do to get us this far, this far and this far, right? Then, it's going to be a coordinated campaign of some kind, right? And, including reaching out to rotary clubs, optimus clubs and other civic organizations that we can. Getting some free media wherever we can to talk about the campaigns, Community Foundation of the Quad Cities may put together a matching program, as you may remember when a building collapsed in Davenport, they put something together that if you gave \$10 bucks, they found donors that would make it \$20. So, there is a lot of things on the table, but that first step is assessing what we need to get how far down the road...anything, Mr. Mielke, that you want to add for having eyes on that day?"

Mr. Mielke added, "Well, I think we need to make sure the public knows when they come visit...that, ya know...this is...somehow we need relate...look what this experience is...but this is out, this has already leaked out. But, I think through the fee structure...that's one good way, to reduce fees because this is a limit...a limited status that could help going forward."

Mr. Craver stated, "Part of that, too, is that we already had the Cat house online thanks to Rock Island County's ARPA grant through the District...but the plan was to keep the cat's in place and to address two of those exhibits...put two out there for an alternate and hope that we would get good pricing. So, while construction was being done on the two, they could still move all the cats within the house...they could move them to different chambers to allow them to get their outdoor time and to be on display. And so, construction would be occurring on two, but we still have two on display...but due to the storm, the cats have been displaced and we actually had a contractor in the area removing all of those beams. The Eagle would have been temporarily displaced because new netting was scheduled, but at this point in time...the snow displaced and has moved much of those support piers, they were wood and will have to be reset or replaced with metal. And, the Rhino would still...Kito will still be on display because the work in that exhibit can be done by us; the housing structure of the roof. So, we lost that...we probably lost the Palace cats and depending on what we can do to ensure the safety of the public, the staff and the animals...we lost the Guinea Pig and Lorikeet...our prior Lorikeet area, that one exhibit as well. And so, there will still be some things that will be happening throughout the whole season at the zoo. And, there are some things that we are hoping that we'll get online or will come online...but, to kind of make up for some of those things that folks are missing out on, it's still a great time to come out to the zoo. The Prairie Dogs Exhibit will be coming online. If you hadn't been able to make it out last year towards the end of the year, come out and see the Painted Dogs. The Zoo Camp will be going on...um, you know...there is always the possibility of...the staff will be working to get that second White Rhino. And so, there are a lot of good things still happening at the zoo. It's just unfortunate that we can't provide the full experience that the staff...or the public would expect. And so, we will off-set that experience, a reduction in price is recommended."

Mr. Mielke added, "Yes. So, we should accentuate that to the public."

President Swanson added, "Right! And, when they are there, hopefully, we'll have QR Codes everywhere you look to make a donation. Alright, we can come back to this again when we get to the reports, but seeing no other questions for the President's Comments, we will move forward."

6. Commissioner Layer moved to approve the Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$428,615.03, as presented. Commissioner Adams seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil,  
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, K. Swanson,  
J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 15**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner Brunk moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriations as enumerated in your packets. Commissioner Woods seconded.

Commissioner Adams moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner L. Moreno seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil,  
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J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 15**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Adams moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolutions RE: The Execution of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village of Rapids City for a sanitary line connection, as presented. Commissioner Perkins seconded.

(Note\*\* The Resolution is in .pdf format and begin on the next page)

## RESOLUTION

RE: Execution of an Intergovernmental Agreement with Village of Rapid City for sanitary connection from Illiniwek Forest Preserve

**WHEREAS**, the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District is constructing a new restroom and supporting sanitary system at Illiniwek Forest Preserve, and

**WHEREAS**, the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District desires a connection to a sanitary line that is parallel to RT 84 which runs through Illiniwek Forest Preserve,

**WHEREAS**, the sanitary line is owned and maintained by the Village of Rapid City, and

**WHEREAS**, the Village of Rapid City is to provide an intergovernmental agreement which allows the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District to make a connection to a sanitary line from Illiniwek Forest Preserve, and

**WHEREAS**, timely execution of such agreement is in the best interest of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District's operation of Illiniwek Forest Preserve and the construction schedule of the sanitary system funded in part by a Recreation Trail Program grant received, and

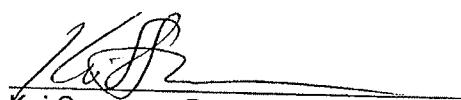
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Illinois as follows;

**SECTION 1.** An emergency exists as outlined above.

**SECTION 2.** That the President of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Kai Swanson, is hereby authorized to execute an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Rapid City pertaining to a sanitary line connection from Illiniwek Forest Preserve's sanitary system.

**SECTION 3.** This resolution is to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois this 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024



Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission



Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Burns moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Brunk seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil,  
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, K. Swanson,  
J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 15**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

9. Commissioner Adams moved to waive the reading and approve the Audit Fund Additional Appropriations, Niabi Zoo Improvements – ARPA Grant Appropriations, Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations, as presented. Commissioner Perkins seconded.

(Note\*\* The Resolutions are in .pdf format and begins on the next page)

## RESOLUTION

Re: FY 24 Audit Fund Additional Appropriations

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required in the Forest Preserve Audit Fund #161 for the necessary expenses incurred for the 2024 Fiscal Year, and

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required for professional services, and

**WHEREAS**, funds are available from unappropriated funds transferred from the General Fund in the Forest Preserve Audit Fund #161, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

SECTION 1. An emergency exists as outlined above.

SECTION 2. An amount of \$5,200.00 be transferred from unappropriated funds in the Forest Preserve Liability Audit Fund #161 to the following:

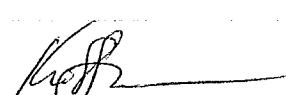
AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$5,200.00	161-32 391.60	Transfer from General Funds

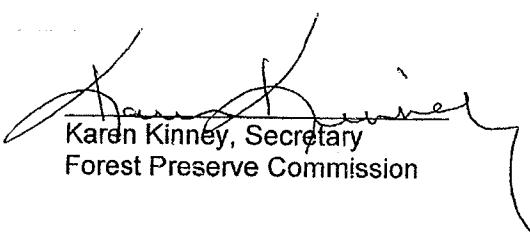
SECTION 3. An amount of \$5,200.00 be transferred from unappropriated funds in the Forest Preserve Audit Fund #161 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$5,200.00	161-32 631	Professional Services

SECTION 4. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

**RESOLUTION**  
FY 2024 Niabi Zoo Improvements ARPA Grant Appropriations

**WHEREAS**, the Forest Preserve District was granted funds from Rock Island County for improvements at Niabi Zoo, and

**WHEREAS**, design and engineering for the improvement projects has been performed, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

**SECTION 1.** An emergency exists as outlined above.

**SECTION 2.** Expenditures in the amount of \$33,647.30 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$33,647.30	131-32-35 767 ARPA24-60	Infrastructure over \$15,000

**SECTION 3.** Revenues in the amount of \$33,647.30 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

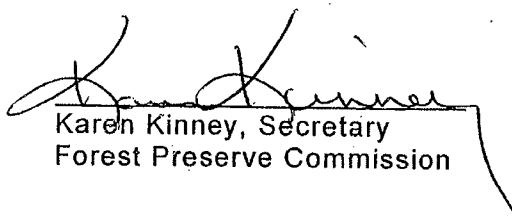
<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$33,647.30	131-32-35 331.10ARPA24-00	Federal Grants-General Government

**SECTION 4.** This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024.



Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission



Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

**RESOLUTION**  
RE: FY 24 Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations

**WHEREAS**, Illiniwek Forest Preserve was awarded \$200,000.00 from the Illinois Recreation Trail Grant program to construct a new restroom facility and make trail improvements, and

**WHEREAS**, the Illinois Recreation Trail Grant program is a reimbursable grant, and

**WHEREAS**, while construction of phase 2 has begun with the design and construction of the lift station and payment is required these funds complete the payout for phase 1, and

**WHEREAS**, construction continues of phase 2 that address the water, sewer and restroom, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Forest Preserve Commission of Rock Island County, Rock Island, Illinois, as follows:

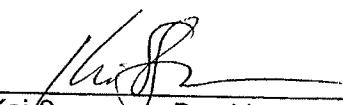
**SECTION 1.** An emergency exists as outlined above.

**SECTION 2.** Expenditures in the amount of \$59,362.75 shall be increased partially from grant revenue to be received & the balance from unencumbered funds to provide the required matching funds in the Development of Forests and Construction Improvement Fund #335 to the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$59,362.75	335-32-35 767 RTP 23	Infrastructure over \$15,000

**SECTION 3.** This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

Commissioner Burns moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Layer seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil,  
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, K. Swanson,  
J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 15**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

10. Commissioner Woods moved to waive the reading and approve the Amendment to Regular Part-time & Temporary Pay Policy, as presented. Commissioner Burns seconded.

Commissioner Mielke moves to approve the previous roll call vote. Commissioner Morthland seconded.

D. Adams, R. Brunk, L. Burns, E. Dewith, T. Foster, C. Layer, P. McNeil,  
D. Mielke, L. Moreno, M. Moreno-Baker, R. Morthland, B. Perkins, K. Swanson,  
J. R. Westpfahl, J. Woods

**TOTAL YES 15**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

11. **Comments from Commissioners: (None)**

President Swanson stated, "I did have one question on the report, Mr. Craver. You noted in your report that we are getting a Moody's revisit...um, was that scheduled just when we are going to hear from him?"

Mr. Craver stated, "Thursday."

President Swanson reiterated, "It will be Thursday. Okay. So, just so you know, especially, the newer Members of the Commission...they have looked at us and they really like our performance and the way we reserve for appreciation, and do a lot of fiscally strong things. In the past, they have so much as told us as past structural weakness on the county's budget has negatively impacted our bond rating, but thanks to the good work that you all have done as a County Board, we are hoping that will be somewhat mitigated. The reason that's important is that tells you the cost of our own money...if you get a higher rating, you get a better rate...if you get a lower rate, you gotta pay more money. Thanks to this County

Board and all of this good work, hopefully, we will have and be better off when we hear from them on Thursday. Are there any questions for Mr. Craver regarding the course in your packet?"

12. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve all Routine Reports from the Director and Departments Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission, as presented. Commissioner Woods seconded.

Mr. Craver stated, "Real quick, in addition to your agenda, I put some information there; which comes from the Illinois Association of Park District...Commissioner Mielke joined me last week for a Legislative Breakfast out in Geneseo. We got to hear from some of our Representatives on what's happening down in Springfield and what the Legislative platform is for IPD. In addition, IPD has been working with acuity research and they are doing some State-wide research on Park Districts and Conservation Districts, Forest Preserve Districts and other recreational, municipal departments who offer services and open spaces. There are some stats in there and when you look in there and see our favorability ratings here and our net promoter scores, a lot of other agencies throughout the state are also getting a lot of great scores. Folks look at us as an essential service within their community, is a factor on where they want to live and overall when we come to you and ask for some more funds for improvements, those things are generally supported by a majority of the residents, not only here in our community, but throughout the state. The top sheet is in reference to the State Budget in recommendations of what the State should be allocating for land and waters for conservation purposes and the support this has shown through the different groups throughout the State. And so, I just found it very interesting and plus the kid on the last memo of the Forest Preserve is a pretty cute kid. I hope you guys all enjoy that."

(President Swanson chuckles)

Mr. Craver continued, "It's all kind of simple there, but you know people really do appreciate what we do and see us as a value in the community."

President Swanson stated, "I want to thank you for lifting up the legislative breakfast. Thank you, Mr. Mielke for attending. Just out of curiosity was former Senator Steven there? He's been there in the past."

Mr. Craver stated, "I don't know."

President Swanson added, "I am sorry I couldn't make it this year. I am sorry, did you have a comment?"

Mr. Mielke stated, "I did want to thank, Mr. Craver for inviting the Representatives to sit with us and them talking to us face to face about conservation. It was a really good opportunity. I'm glad I was able to attend."

Mr. Craver added, "It's a really great opportunity to get some face time with our busy Elected Officials and do a little networking with them and the other agencies to hear what's going on down in Springfield."

President Swanson stated, "I thank you, again."

Mr. Mielke added, "It was within the District and so, it was good."

President Swanson added, "Exactly. Any other questions before the House?"

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated, "And let's see...come back from free style and do what Cassie tells you to. With that friends, the next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission will be Thursday, March 21st, 2024, at 5:30pm, following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board in the Rock Island County Office Building, 1504 Third Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois in these Chambers. Thank you for your time and attention."

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting recessed at 7:10pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



KAREN KINNEY  
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY  
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

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