

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION  
JULY 16, 2024 – 6:40PM  
PRESIDENT KAI SWANSON - PRESIDING**

President Swanson stated, "Thank you all, ladies and gentlemen. I will call the Forest Preserve Commission Meeting to order. And, I ask the Clerk, can we please call the roll."

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

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

**TOTAL PRESENT 18**

C. Layer

**TOTAL ABSENT 1**

Ms. Kinney stated, "We have a quorum."

2. President Swanson stated, "Thank you very much. I am very pleased to call forward, Mr. Mike Petersen, Superintendent of our Illiniwek Park who also oversees Dorrance and AMÖWA Forest Preserves for an exciting update on some recent activities. It's you pick where you want to go with this, but I hope we hear about all of this. The floor is yours, Mr. Petersen." (Turns his mic on)

Mr. Petersen stated, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Like Kai said, I am Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Superintendent and oversee Dorrance and AMÖWA. So, just real briefly I'll cover the most recent events out at AMÖWA first that have been going on. We had a Bio-Blitz on June 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>...uh, if you are not familiar with what a Bio-Blitz is, it's just a specified site for an assessed amount of time to look for plants, animals, insects, anybody can help identify any new species if they can. The newspaper article that was written yesterday in the Dispatch/Argus, was a really good one. They mentioned there was 889 species found, and that's been updated now to 900; which is pretty rare. It's pretty exciting because AMÖWA is only 179 acres and has 900 species of plants and animals out there. The most notable species found are rare to this area and to the country. We have two species of Orchids and we have False Mermaid weed and one species of Orchid and False Mermaid weed are not known to be this part of Illinois at all. There are some small populations in Eastern Illinois and some populations in Southern Illinois. So, it's pretty unique that we are finding these species here in Western Illinois. A Bio-Blitz is a really good benchmark degree because we didn't know what was there. Before, we had a general idea...but now we know more specific plants and animals that are there so we can tailor our strategies to help out certain species if we need to. Also associated with a Bio-Blitz, are the volunteers that help

with it. There were about 30 volunteers who came out and helped. About 25 experts came out and helped and some of those volunteers help weed down and help with public activities, specifically hikes....so, like a bird hike, animal hike or a plant hike. There was about 60 people that came out to take advantage of this opportunity of the natural resources here in Rock Island County. Does anyone have any questions about that?"

Mr. Dewith asked, "Do you have many college students?"

Mr. Petersen answered, "There are a few from St. Ambrose that came. Specifically, I don't know their names or anything...but there were a few college students that attended."

Mr. Dewith stated, "I have one more question...is there very many invasive species?"

Mr. Petersen answered, "Yes, there are invasive species at AMÔWA. Invasive one is Honeysuckle...it's probably in about 85% of the woodlands out there. It's a large task to take care of. Since we've purchased the property in 2022, the staff has been working on removing it with forestry mulchers. And, we've also been working with Living Lands and Waters and other organizations that sponsor Honeysuckle removal events. To date, I think we've had eight Honeysuckle removal events out there and cleared about six or seven acres thanks to our volunteers. There is still a lot more to do, but we are chipping away at it slowly."

Mr. Dewith asked, "Do your people advertise before you do one? How do people know?"

Mr. Petersen answered, "Through our Facebook Page, a sponsoring event like Living Lands and Waters do a really good job putting out a press release to and on their website as well."

President Swanson stated, "If I could suggest one of the things I found very useful through Facebook, just becoming a follower of the various organizations like Living Lands and Waters and Illiniwek. Bio-Blitzes are actually sponsored by a group called Bi-Can; which hosts lots of organizations...and you get on there and listen and find out. But, I am usually very grateful when Mike tells us about the invasive (inaudible) of species."

Mr. Petersen answered, "Yesterday, Living Lands and Waters sponsored an event at AMÔWA. But due to the weather, only two people showed up. Sometimes you get a couple and sometimes you get a lot, it just depends."

President Swanson stated, "I'm anxious to hear other questions. Do you have any reports on any other facilities in your purview?"

Mr. Petersen answered, "I was just going to concentrate on AMÔWA. There is a little be more information with this site."

President Swanson stated, "That's fine. I'd like you to do that too. I would like to say, this is a record number of species in the history of Bio-Blitz's, right?"

Mr. Peterson answered, "Yeah, for this area...Scott County, Rock Island County and this region, the number of Bio-Blitz's that have happened in the last 10 years on all of these different sites, AMÔWA has had the largest number of species."

President Swanson added, "Anyway...please continue. If you don't mind, in addition to AMÔWA, if you care to give the Commissioners any updates on the accessibility on the camping out at Illiniwek...but, it's solely yours."

Mr. Petersen answered, "Okay, just to kind of cap off what's happening at AMÔWA...so, we purchased the property in 2022. Since then, we've been working a lot on establishing prairie. We have approximately 23 acres planted at AMÔWA West and East. Those sites...those fields that we planted are doing awesome. We are doing inventory plants, especially, during the Bio-Blitz. And one came back with 33 out of 34 species on a two-year old prairie plot. Prairie plots evolve over time...there is a lot of succession in there with these plants. Ya know, just because you put the seed in the ground, doesn't mean it will show up next year. It might be three, four or five years down the road before you see any of those seeds germinate. And so, we have not had a number of plant species in a plot that's only two years old. It's a really good sign that things are going well. We've also put in three miles of trail at AMÔWA West. There are roughly two miles of forest trail and three quarters of a mile of prairie trail...the trail kind of loops around one of our prairie plots. And, that's kind of what's going on at AMÔWA. There is a lot more to do out there, but we are chipping away at it. What's happening at Illiniwek...um, camping numbers and the campground this year are really good. People seem to be really happy with how we've been managing it...it has really good attendance, the campground. But, lately, we've had the flood going on and so, that has eliminated most of our tent camping. The RV Camping continues to be very popular. The trails at Illiniwek are also extremely busy. Last year, we did trail counts and we had an average of 237 people using out trails during the week. The Great River Trail that runs through Illiniwek has on average about 1,000 people a week that go through there; which is one of the reasons last year we did the upgrades to the road...part of that was a new public restroom. And, we received a very generous donation from an individual who lives very close to Illiniwek; which we were able to put in a bike rest area; which includes a pergola, a bike maintenance station, a bike rack all associated with that. So, that's a nice addition and a lot of people are very happy with it. That's what's happening in a nut shell."

President Swanson asked, "Thank you. Are there any other questions for Mr. Petersen while we have him here? Alright, I just want to thank you and your team. There are a lot of folks that work with you and you've got a lot on your plate between Dorrance, Illiniwek and AMÖWA. Thank you very much for your time."

Mr. Petersen stated, "I appreciate it...thank you."

President Swanson asked, "Friends, if you don't mind joining me in thanking Mr. Petersen..."

(Group Applause)

3. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to approve the June 18th, 2024, Commission Minutes and Public Hearing minutes, as presented. Commissioner Pekins seconded.

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

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

5. **PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:**

President Swanson stated, "Just a couple of things, and then I want you to start thinking about something here. Folks are getting out there enjoying the Preserves in seeing those numbers. Niabi Zoo is having some issues with cash flow because we reduced the admission price, so, the numbers are off a little bit. Staff are still looking at the best strategic options and will be bringing those detailed options to the Executive Committee in the future. The Committee actually had a golf (inaudible). And, it's absolutely beautiful out there...if you want to get out there and play around...just check it out. I know that Jay and Todd would welcome to have you there. The thing I want you to think about and then we can have a more active discussion towards the end when we do the Director of the Department Reports. You'll notice in your packet there is some information included about what varieties of securities might do for us. Here is why that's in there. Because of the storm damage early this year, we have come a long way towards getting the zoo back to where it should be...right? We have the addition of some new things and that's exciting...but between the insurance settlement; which is not finalized yet, but we are keeping tabs on that...and the very generous out-pouring of close to \$70,000 so far and climbing in private contributions to help rebuild. And, every other source...we all know that Jeff and his team who are like geniuses at finding money under rocks, we are going to still be coming up a little bit short. A couple of the Exhibits, most noticeably...the Pallas Cat, some of you call the 'Grumpy Cat' will not be able to be covered by the funds we have. Now,

this gives us a few options. You know that we've got a 'Strategic Master Plan' for getting where the zoo used to be. And we've been, for the most part, on target...we've added these things sequentially like the Painted Dogs, the Prairie Dogs that kind of thing. The storm, though, set us back because of the amount of money we are going to spend to get the Big Cat Exhibits back, the Pallas Cat, the Eagles and Bald Eagle Exhibit and these other things. So, that gives us another opportunity...if, and I am being very loosely here with figures, but if we could get here (higher) to build back where we should be with the Master Plan and the revenues post storm are only getting us here, (lower) well then, we've got to be creative. We've got to decide...do we want to continue with this Master Plan that we committed to years ago? I don't know how long a lot of you've been here, and I know you've all been provided a Master Plan and can see the logic behind it...so, if the answer is yes, how do we do that? One way is you do a Bond Issue. The problem with that is there is a big chunk you are wasting paying for interest. It's using tax revenues to pay off interest over time. Jeff is working on a proposal where we would take a look at what our taxation is. And, instead of raising taxes to pay levy's, raise taxes incrementally to just pay for the work, you'll see what I'm talking about. This might be more palatable than you might think. There are conversations around the table without this, as some of you know...there was a computational error in the way the tax bills were processed and people's taxes went up this year for the Forest Preserve line of your overall tax bill. I have yet to hear from any Member of the Commission who has heard from any taxpayer who has complained about that increase. And, the District has not received any calls...so, this has happened and people don't seem to notice because we are such a small thread in the pie, right? Next, and another thing that Mr. Craver reminded me over the last couple of years, we actually reduced that amount and all of you were flooded with calls of thanks for giving an extra \$.36 or so per month in their tax bill. So, I have to say that I kind of like this strategy...do it and measure it in a conscientious way to keep us on target with Niabi's Plan. I think everything that we've had going before the storm was trending in the right direction. We've got a good mix of private support...we've got good public/private partnerships going on there and having the storm taking the wind out of our sail is a bit of a hiccup, but I think if we want to make the decision to continue with the Master Plan, then we may want to consider this strategy. I don't want to vote on anything tonight, but I want to lay it out there now, so that when we get to the part of the agenda that's the Director and Department Head Reports, if you would like to have a conversation about some of those issues, we'll be able to. I just wanted to get this out on the table. And before we move in to our action items, Mr. Craver, is there anything that you would like to add at this time or wait until the end? What would you like?"

Mr. Craver answered, "Just wait until the end."

President Swanson stated, "Okay, just wait until the end. I want you to be thinking about that as we move through the agenda, and so, that's all I have for

President's Comments. If you have any questions on anything, that's during the Director of Department Heads."

(Board Member Westpfahl left the meeting.)

6. Commissioner Brunk moved to approve the Forest Preserve Claims and Treasurer's Disbursements in the amount of \$1,044,949.30, as presented. Commissioner McNeil seconded.

A roll call vote was taken.

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

**TOTAL YES 17**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

7. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to waive the reading and approve the Transfers of Appropriations as enumerated in your packets. Commissioner Vyncke seconded.

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

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

**TOTAL YES 17**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated, "There is a whole slough of Resolutions and if there is no objection, we can do this by an omnibus motion. As I am reading these, if anyone wants to single one out, then by all means you may do so." (No objection)

8. Commissioner L. Moreno moved to waive the reading and approve the Resolutions regarding FY24 General Fund Appropriation Amendment, FY24 Illiniwek Recreation Trail Grant Appropriations, FY24 Niabi Zoo Prairie Dog & ARPA Grant Appropriations, FY24 Niabi Zoo Improvements ARPA Grant Appropriations, Receipt of Grant Funds-Woodard Community Grant Fund (WCGF23), Receipt of Grant Funds -Woodard Community Grant Fund (WCGF24), Receipt of Grant Funds-Hubbell-Waterman Foundation Grant, Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriations-Zoo

Foundation Donation for the Purchase of Signage, Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriations-Zoo Foundation for the Classroom Door & Improvements, and Semi-Annual Review of Closed Session Minutes, as presented. Commissioners Adams and Sowards seconded.

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

**RESOLUTION**

FY 24 General Fund Appropriation Amendment

**WHEREAS**, amendments are required in the Forest Preserve General Fund #130 due to an increase in revenue from investment earnings, and

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are necessary for the expenses to be incurred for the 2024 Fiscal Year, 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 \$32,742.11 increased for the Forest Preserve General Fund #130 in the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$32,742.11	130-32-10 361.10	Investment Earnings
\$32,742.11	130-32-92 768.00	Machine & Equipment over \$5,000

SECTION 3. This Resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 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 installation of the lift station, construction of the restroom and site modifications, and

**WHEREAS**, construction continues on phase 2 that addresses the water, sewer and restroom, and

**WHEREAS**, payment is required for work completed, 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.

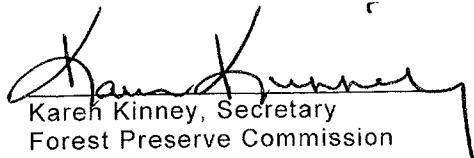
SECTION 2. Expenditures in the amount of \$106,891.26 shall be increased partially from grant revenue to be received & the balance from unencumbered funds to provide the required matching funds in the Development of Forests and Construction Improvement Fund #335 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$106,891.26	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 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

## RESOLUTION

### FY 2024 Niabi Zoo Fund Prairie Dog & ARPA Grant Appropriations

**WHEREAS**, Niabi Zoo was awarded \$436,100.00 from the Illinois Public Museum Grant program to construct a new Prairie Dog exhibit, and

**WHEREAS**, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources allocated an additional \$174,440 in grant funding to the District bringing the total grant award to \$610,540, which now has been expended in full with remaining expenses to be reimbursed from Rock Island County ARPA granted funds, and

**WHEREAS**, the Illinois Public Museum Grant program is a reimbursable grant, and

**WHEREAS**, construction on the project has been performed and completed, 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 \$8,570.00 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received to provide the necessary funds to complete the project in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

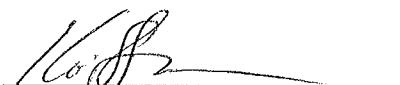
AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$8,570.00	131-32-35 767 MCPD24	Infrastructure over \$15,000

SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$8,570.00 shall be increased from Rock Island County ARPA funds granted to the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$8,570.00	131-32-35 331.10 ARPA	Federal Grants-General Govt.

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16th day of July, 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 \$135,347.26 shall be increased from grant revenue to be received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

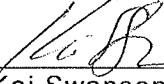
<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$135,347.25	131-32-35 767 ARPA24-60	Infrastructure over \$15,000

SECTION 3. Revenues in the amount of \$135,347.26 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>
\$135,347.25	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 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

## RESOLUTION

RE: Niabi Zoo Fund Receipt of Grant Funds-Woodward Community Grant Fund

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to increase the budget for the purchase of observational equipment and increase security throughout Niabi Zoo, and

**WHEREAS**, (WCGF23) Woodward Community Grant Fund in the amount of \$16,000 was awarded to Niabi Zoo in October of 2022, and

**WHEREAS**, funds are available from grant funds already received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131, 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 \$3528.20 be transferred from unappropriated funds within the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

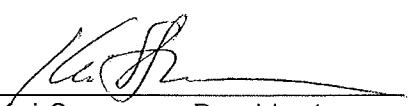
AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$197.60	131-32-35 522.00 WCGF23	Operating Supplies
\$3330.60	131-32-35 524.00-WCGF23	Small Tools & Equipment

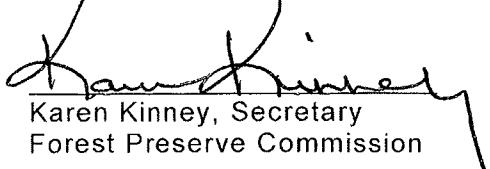
SECTION3. An amount of \$3528.20 be transferred from unappropriated funds within the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
3528.20	131-32-35 337.70 WCGF23	Local Grants & Culture

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

## RESOLUTION

RE: Niabi Zoo Fund Receipt of Grant Funds-Woodward Community Grant Fund

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to increase the budget for general support of Niabi Zoo, and

**WHEREAS**, (WCGF24) Woodward Community Grant Fund in the amount of \$10,000 was awarded to Niabi Zoo in October of 2023, and

**WHEREAS**, funds are available from grant funds already received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131, 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 \$216.50 to be transferred from grant funds already received and unencumbered in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$216.50	131-32-35 337.70 WCGF24	Local Grants-Culture & Recreation

SECTION 3. An amount of \$216.50 be transferred from the above described revenue received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

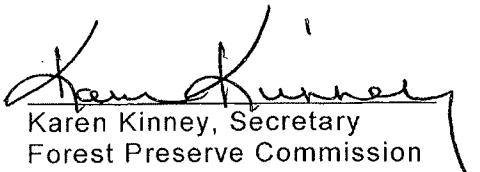
AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$216.50	131-32-35 522.00 WCGF24	Operating Supplies

SECTION 4. This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024.



Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission



Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

## RESOLUTION

RE: Niabi Zoo Fund Receipt of Grant Funds-Hubbell-Waterman Foundation Grant

**WHEREAS**, additional funds are required in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to increase the budget for the purchase and installation of generators, and

**WHEREAS**, (HWFG24) Hubbell-Waterman Foundation Grant in the amount of \$42,000.00 was awarded to Niabi Zoo, 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 \$29,809.00 to be transferred from grant funds to be received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

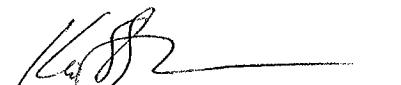
<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$29,809.00	131-32-35 337.70	HWFG24-00 Local Grants-Culture & Recreation

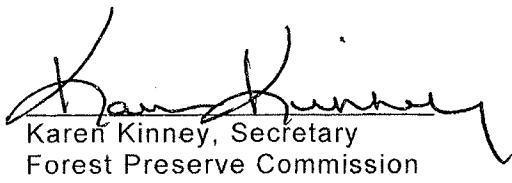
**SECTION 3.** An amount of \$29,809.00 be transferred from the above described revenue received in the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$29,809.00	131-32-35 768.00	HWFG24-20 Professional Services

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

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024.

  
Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

## RESOLUTION

### FY 2024 Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriation – Zoo Foundation Donation for the Purchase of Signage

**WHEREAS**, Niabi Zoo purchased signage for the Prairie Dog exhibit and concession building in the amount of \$12,483.80, and

**WHEREAS**, the Niabi Zoo Foundation has agreed to reimburse the District for the cost of the purchase in the amount of \$9,783.80, 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.** Revenues in the amount of \$9,783.80 shall be increased from the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

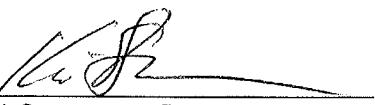
AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$9,783.80	131-32 364.10	Contributions from Private Sources

**SECTION 3.** Expenditures in the amount of \$12,483.80 shall be increased from the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

AMOUNT	APPROPRIATION	DESCRIPTION
\$9,783.80	131-32-18 763.00	Infrastructure \$2000-14,999
\$2,700.00	131-32-18 631.00	Professional Services

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

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024.



Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission



Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

## RESOLUTION

FY 2024 Niabi Zoo Fund Appropriation – Zoo Foundation Donation for the Classroom Door & Improvements

**WHEREAS**, Niabi Zoo installed an exterior door and performed improvements to the classroom in the administrative building in the amount of \$12,074.27, and

**WHEREAS**, the Niabi Zoo Foundation has agreed to reimburse the District for the cost of the purchase in the amount of \$12,074.27, 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.** Revenues in the amount of \$12,074.27 shall be increased from the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$12,074.27	131-32 364.10	Contributions from Private Sources

**SECTION 3.** Expenditures in the amount of \$12,074.27 shall be increased from the Niabi Zoo Fund #131 to the following:

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
\$12,074.27	131-32-18 766.00	Building & Remodeling over \$5,000

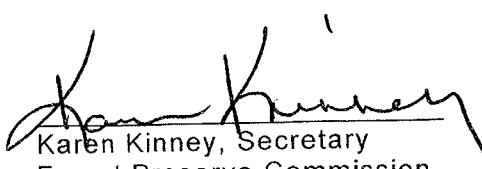
**SECTION 4.** This resolution to become effective immediately.

**ADOPTED** by the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission, Rock Island County, Illinois, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2024.



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Kai Swanson, President  
Forest Preserve Commission



Karen Kinney, Secretary  
Forest Preserve Commission

**Resolution**  
Rock Island County Forest Preserve District  
Re: Open Meetings Act Review of Minutes of a Meeting Lawfully Closed

**WHEREAS**, the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission strictly adheres to all provisions of the Open Meetings Act as defined in 5 ILCS 120; and

**WHEREAS**, 5 ILCS 120/2.06(c), calls for periodic review of minutes of meetings lawfully closed to determine if the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of these minutes or that the minutes or portions therefor no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection; and

**WHEREAS**, during regular committee meetings held during the month of July, 2024; Rock Island County Forest Preserve has reviewed minutes of closed meetings for all previously held closed sessions.

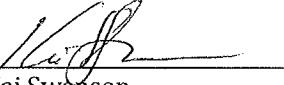
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT *RESOLVED*** that the following meeting minutes have been determined to contain matters where the need for confidentiality still exists:

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Reason for Closed Session</u>
08-08-1986	Personnel
12-05-1986	Personnel
02-08-1991	Personnel & Potential Liability
07-10-1992	Personnel
02-05-1993	Investments contracts
05-07-1993	Personnel
08-15-1995	Personnel
08-05-2005	Litigation
09-30-2010	Personnel
10-08-2010	Personnel
12-03-2010	Personnel
03-04-2011	Personnel
04-05-2012	Personnel
06-05-2012	Personnel
06-07-2012	Personnel
06-08-2012	Personnel
06-27-2012	Personnel
06-28-2012	Personnel
10-15-2012	Litigation & Personnel
07-11-2013	Personnel
09-12-2013	Litigation
11-14-2013	Litigation & Personnel
12-12-2013	Litigation & Personnel
01-16-2014	Litigation
11-13-2014	Personnel
02-11-2015	Personnel
04-16-2015	Personnel
10-14-2015	Personnel
11-10-2015	Personnel
02-16-2016	Potential Litigation
03-17-2016	Personnel
04-12-2016	Personnel

06-15-2016	Litigation
01-10-2017	Litigation
04-11-2017	Litigation
01-09-2018	Personnel
11-13-2018	Personnel & Land Acquisition
02-11-2020	Personnel
12-15-2020	Litigation
07-13-2021	Land Acquisition
07-20-2021	Land Acquisition
10-13-2021	Negotiations
01-11-2022	Land Acquisition
06-13-2023	Land Acquisition
03-21-2024	Land Acquisition
05-14-2024	Litigation

This *Resolution* to become effective immediately after passage. Minutes of those meetings determined to be made available for public inspection will be released as per the Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2.06(b).

DONE IN OPEN MEETING THIS 16<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2024

  
Kai Swanson  
President, Rock Island County  
Forest Preserve Commission

  
Karen Kinney  
Secretary, Rock Island County  
Forest Preserve Commission

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

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

**TOTAL YES 17**

**TOTAL NO 0**

Motion carried.

#### 9. **Comments from Commissioners: (NONE)**

President Swanson stated, "Alright...where here and now before the next section where we approve the Routine Reports, this is where we call the Comments from Commissioners but also reports. If you want to have a conversation about this now or raise questions that we could work into a proposal downstream, that would be fine. But, also, I would be very open to any questions that you would have on any of the Forest Preserves. And also have time incase Ms. Palmer has anything she would like to report. But are there any questions that you would like to put forward on the Director and Department Head Reports? Alright, seeing none. Are there any questions on this notion and how we move forward with Niabi? The Executive Board will vet this, of course, before it comes to you in any concrete form. No? I would like to thank Dr. Moreno for covering for me, as I was out of town last week. Mr. Brunk, the floor is yours."

Commissioner Brunk was recognized.

Mr. Brunk stated, "I was just going to say that ya know, it would be interesting to see what that would look like as far any money for the improvements for what have you."

President Swanson answered, "One of the things it would show, is that things are coming into conjunction. We have been able to turn back portions in the past because of the very sound fiscal management of Mr. Craver and his team. The other thing is, the constellation settlement we will see with the utility, that may create another opportunity in one fell swoop, there or two. So, we are looking at a lot of different options. Obviously, we would be willing to do anything that would light up on our constituents' radar that they would be angry and go after our hides. We don't want to do anything like that. But, if there is an opportune time to pursue this strategy than considering a Bond Issue over 20 years or so. Are there any other questions or comments on that? Seeing none. Ms. Palmer, do you have anything that you would like to present?"

Ms. Palmer answered, "No, but thank you."

President Swanson asked, "Mr. Craver, do you have any things that you would like to bring up from your report or other things."

Mr. Craver stated, "Just the comment on looking at the Bonds. We knew we were going to be entering into somewhat of a gap because of the snow damage. The intention was only to use the funds that we were allocated through ARPA and elsewhere. But, the snow damage happened, and instead of taking care and renovating two of the cat Exhibits, we kind of had our hands forced to either A) Push forward with renovating all four of those....or potentially shutting two of those Exhibits down until they could be secured. Staff at the Foundation has been working community outreach to get some donations to come in, but insurance is finicky and they don't want to pay for everything. So, needless to say...like I've said, I've put some estimates in there where our gap is and we need to close that gap as bills come due this fall." We were looking at the Bonding Issue and all of the other issues of deferred maintenance and necessities just provide access to the roads and parking...as I mentioned last month, restroom facilities and the type of funds we can get with Bonds and what the current rates are. It may be the best value to take an annual approach. Also, too, with some of the....not necessarily the roads and parking areas and restrooms, but with some things at the zoo...it provides us a strategic opportunity to spread those things out to get community support with matching grants. With the Bond funding issue, I believe you have to spend those funds within three years. So, there is a little bit of an opportunity there and also, as Mr. Swanson mentioned...the constellation agreement and it really looks like it should provide some additional funding with seven taxing bodies. So, that's an opportunity to capture those funds there and how to allocate them over the next seven years."

Commissioner Brunk was recognized.

Mr. Brunk asked, "I was just wondering...with the number of exhibits that are closed and the reduction in admission prices and stuff like that. If we had to estimate, how are we sitting as far as admission numbers compared to last year, the prior year?"

Mr. Craver answered, "In May, we were up a couple of thousand and in the packet there, you should be able to see that...and in June, unfortunately, we dropped down below last years. I wrote it all in the report this morning and the numbers are slightly down compared to last year for this month. We have had some pretty intense heat spells and some significant weather events. Again, we were closed on Monday. We tried this strategy that we started several years ago by closing the zoo on Mondays in the fall, trying to condense our operating days and still try to maintain the same number of visitors. We kind of used that strategy throughout this year as well being closed on Mondays. Part of the zoo's problem issue there is...we've been talking about mandates and minimum wage. Six years

ago, we were paying \$8.25/hr. and we are now up to \$15.00/hr. and struggling to pay the workforce. We also need to take into account the inflation that has been happening in 2022 and 2023. The dollars are just (inaudible) some choices had to be made and some is our bargaining dollars, the amount of funds that we allocate to the marketing efforts. There probably needs to be a little bit more there to get the word out. We start with different venues out there...again, we usually choose to go with social media because it's the most cost effective with, but that doesn't necessarily get everybody. So, it's just we are trying to make ends meet and trying to give people what they want by using those base dollars as effectively as we can. Again, as Mr. Swanson mentioned, up until 2020, we were trying to take any dollars that we could capture and any additional revenue that we got, we tried to allocate those into the Improvement Fund, and by rolling those into the Improvement Fund, that was something of a substantial nature so we could address some of these larger maintenances, but unfortunately, with Covid and the loss of revenue at the zoo, we had to shift those levy dollars out of the Improvement Fund and into the Zoo Fund. And then, once you think all is better and are back on that right road, we get one of the worst snowstorms ever recorded that collapsed several Exhibits. Needless to say, we found somebody looking for those ways, but sometimes it takes dollars to get those things there and also showing the community that there is a commitment from the Board here, to match those dollars. And, um...I think looking at a five to ten-year approach is better than a one-time Bond swoop that may tie your hands for 10, 15 or 20 years would be a better approach."

Mr. Brunk stated, "I understand what you are saying on the financials. I understand what you are saying about the financials, but in regards to the admissions itself with the hit of the storm...it sounds like they are doing a pretty good job of (inaudible) on his own as far as the admissions. So, that's good there...it's just a matter of building on that."

Commissioner Simmer was recognized.

Mr. Simmer stated, "I am challenging President Swanson...my daughter goes to Augustana, as he knows. And, um...she said so many of her classmates didn't even know we had a zoo in this area. Maybe get the word out there too, at Augustana to get some of these young girls and guys would go around. And, it's not like they are far off kids, they are Davenport kids."

President Swanson stated, "Yeah...if I had a dollar for every Quad Citizen who tell you they didn't know we had Niabi...but I will say I want to turn it right back to the comments from staff, Joel Vanderbush is working at the Augustana Biology Department. There is not a kid in that department that does not know there is a zoo. I cannot speak for the Accounting majors...no apologies."

(Group Laughter)

(Overlapping talking of multiple Commissioners)

President Swanson stated, "I appreciate that very much Dr. Simmer and I take it in the spirit for which it's intended."

Mr. Simmer added, "Yeah...it's just amazing they don't know."

Commissioner L. Moreno was recognized.

Mr. L. Moreno stated, "Is there any way we could be marketing a 'Date Night' out at the zoo?"

President Swanson answered, "Seriously, if Lee were here, his eyes would roll...but, I have talked to many parents who wish they would close one day, so they could close one day a week and stay open until like 10 o'clock. Ya know...it's the shift and the hours...something like that for both parents and their kids after work for a date night. I get it....so, duly noted."

Mr. McNeil stated, "How about a Friday night?"

President Swanson reiterated, "Friday night! It sounds crazy but nice. Are there any other questions or discussion about these Routine Reports? Please, Mr. McNeil."

Commissioner McNeil was recognized.

Mr. McNeil asked, "I just have a quick question. I know years ago, there was a Foundation...I don't remember the name of it that augmented it. What happened to that? Is that still here or is that dissolved?"

President Swanson answered, "It is. When that decided, so, at the time we had to intervene...the entire corpus bearing down was in a single savings account at a local bank. So, that did not tend to indicate (inaudible) mentality. After intense conversations, they decided to tighten the noose and take that money and put it into a foundation that was actually going to invest it and make some more money. At the same time, the folks who had been a part of that opted to step away. They were separately incorporated. I know Mr. Mielke has been a part of many of these conversations...a foundation is now in place of people who are really committed to the long-term and well-being of Niabi. And, everyone did great work at raising funds and doing events when the Society hadn't really done any events in over a decade or so. So, yeah...there is still some funding that comes that has evolved from that corpus as a contribution to Niabi. Lee and his team are invited to ask for some of those funds. There are some questions about the use of that...maybe they wouldn't use it the way I would be using it, but given the Articles of Incorporation,

there is not much that we can do about that because those were given to an independent...uh, private...uh, I don't know if it was a 501-C or what, but it was not given to us. I am glad you raised the question. The good reason about that is that the funds that do exist are being invested more prudently and fruitfully. And, the folks who are now in place of the Foundation are a crew who, by their actions, have put in their time in to events. Are there any other questions or thoughts? Alright, seeing none."

10. Commissioner Simmer moved to approve all Routine Reports from the Director and Departments Heads of the Forest Preserve Commission, as presented. Commissioner Woods seconded. (Record)

A voice vote was taken.

Motion carried.

The next meeting of the Forest Preserve Commission will be Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 5:30pm, in these chambers, following the meeting of the Rock Island County Board in the Rock Island County Office Building, 1504 Third Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois. Time is 7:12pm and we are in recess.

President Swanson declared the Forest Preserve Meeting recessed at 7:12pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



KAREN KINNEY  
COUNTY CLERK AND SECRETARY  
OF THE FOREST PRESERVE COMMISSION

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