

FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025

PRESENT: Committee members –L. Moreno, D. Mielke, K. Swanson, R. Simmer, J. Woods, C. Layer.

ABSENT: E. Sowards.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Craver, District Director; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; April Palmer, Auditor; Nick Camlin, Treasurer.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 9:33 AM on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, in the second floor conference room of the County Building in Rock Island, Illinois.

D. Mielke, K. Swanson, L. Moreno, R. Simmer, C. Layer. (J. Woods arrived 9:35am after roll was called.)

TOTAL PRESENT 6

E. Sowards.

TOTAL ABSENT 1

President Swanson called for a motion approving the January Committee meeting and the closed session minutes.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the January Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$180,972.76.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$180,972.76. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the transfers of appropriations.

MOTION: Mr. Mielke moved to approve the transfers of appropriations. Mr. Layer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the resolution regarding the 2025 Bike Path Grant Improvements.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the resolution regarding the 2025 Bike Path Grant Improvements. Mr. Mielke seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson made three calls for public comment. There were no requests for public comment.

President Swanson called for discussion on the impact to Amôwa Forest Preserve due to the construction of the I-80 Bridge. The overall impact seems to minimal. However, my first question is if they're going to take it, do we get any remuneration for it?

Mr. Petersen stated that it would be fair market value. It's disappointing that they [Illinois Department of Transportation] have to take any of it because the right of way that's already there is so wide. They are having to make the clovers bigger, so that requires more room. It won't impact the parking lot that we put in.

President Swanson asked if there was anything in that area worth making a fuss over?

Mr. Petersen stated that there was not much in that area by way of conservation. There was a mining bee was found at Amôwa East Prairie, so hopefully they won't be affected. It wouldn't hurt to bring it up. Could reach out to Angela Moorehouse would be a good person to reach out to. Will do that today.

Mr. Craver stated that they [IDOT] came down from seven acres.

President Swanson called on Mr. Craver for the discussion on the cell tower request at Loud Thunder. Would this help the office's connectivity?

Mr. Craver stated that since moving to Starlink for internet there have not been connectivity issues. The District has gotten several requests for cell towers in the past, and they tend to fall to the wayside because by law the District cannot offer a lease. The District can only offer a license which doesn't give the company enough leeway to do what they need to do for the tower.

Mr. Camlin pointed out that there are major property tax concerns as well in these situations, and more often than not the government entity that the cell tower resides on takes a financial hit. The best case scenarios usually have them breaking even with a lot of hassle.

There was consensus by the Committee to accept Mr. Craver's recommendation that the District reject the request.

President Swanson asked if there was any material change in the negotiations with the union.

Mr. Craver stated that the meeting with the mediator has happened.

President Swanson asked if it was necessary to go into closed session.

Mr. Craver stated that there was a conversation with...

President Swanson stated that he could brief that in open session. Is there anything other than that? What Mr. Craver is alluding to is a regional representative met with myself and Mr. Craver. We had a conversation, and I think it gave that person an addition context and perspective. The way I would summarize that is that it was a non-confrontational meeting. We were trying to express that it wasn't a matter of want, it was a matter of can't. Mr. Craver did an outstanding job, as usual, of breaking out what the finances are and what the District's obligations are. This person has asked for a subsequent meeting. If the Committee would like to go into closed session, we can, but I don't believe that anything has materially changed since the last time we were in closed session.

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

Ms. Palmer informed the Committee that there have been several disagreements with the current bank that the District, and County, have their purchase cards through. Mr. Camlin and I have been interviewing banks to find a better bank to do the purchase cards through. There will be new purchase cards issued when that happens.

President Swanson asked Mr. Camlin if there was anything he wanted to bring to the Committee's attention.

Mr. Camlin stated that the closing for the Tax Anticipation Warrant would take place next week. The interest on that ended up being 4%.

President Swanson called on Mr. Petersen for anything he'd like to lift up from his report.

Mr. Petersen stated that the snow plow attachment that Illiniwek has been using for the past twenty or so years has broken, and parts are no longer made to repair it. Staff is looking at renting a plow attachment for the skid steer. Will need to replace the dump truck that the old plow was meant for, so after that has been purchased, staff can look at getting a replacement snow plow that will work for that piece of equipment. The City of Port Byron has said they will plow Dorrance for us. Local high schools will be doing ecology classes.

President Swanson asked if there was a plan to put that out on socials or do a news release.

Mr. Petersen stated that Living Lands and Waters will be doing posts for their portion, and presumably the other three organizations will do that as well. Currently considering expanding the garlic mustard pull and honeysuckle removal to Dorrance as well.

President Swanson called on Mr. Jackson for anything he'd like to lift up from his report.

Mr. Jackson stated that staff is awaiting final supplies for some exhibits. The opening for Niabi will be April 18th. There will likely still be some construction on the exhibits when the zoo opens.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve all routine reports from the Director and Department Heads as presented.

MOTION: Dr. Simmer moved to approve all routine reports from the Director and Department Heads as presented. Mr. Layer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called the meeting adjourned at 10:12 AM.

Submitted by:
Cassie Sullivan
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant