

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES  
MARCH 10, 2026**

**PRESENT:** Committee members—D. Mielke, R. Simmer, K. Swanson, L. Moreno, E. Sowards, C. Layer.

**ABSENT:** J. Woods.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeff Craver, District Director; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; Ben Mills, Loud Thunder Ranger; April Palmer, Auditor.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 9:28 AM on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, in the second floor conference room in the County Building at 1504 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Rock Island, Illinois.

D. Mielke, R. Simmer, K. Swanson, L. Moreno, E. Sowards, C. Layer.

**TOTAL PRESENT 6**

J. Woods.

**TOTAL ABSENT 1**

President Swanson called for a motion approving the February Committee meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the February Committee meeting minutes. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the old year and new year claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$151,469.40.

**MOTION:** Mr. Layer moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$151,469.40. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson stated that there were no transfers of appropriation or resolutions this month, and made three calls for public comment.

There were no requests for public comment.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the three-year term Niabi Zoo Food Service Concession Agreement with Vander Vending.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to approve the three-year term Niabi Zoo Food Service Concession Agreement with Vander Vending. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the Professional Land Survey and Professional Engineering services for the proposed Splash Pad and Deck at Niabi Zoo in the amount of \$78,390.00.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the Professional Land Survey and Professional Engineering services for the proposed Splash Pad and Deck at Niabi Zoo in the amount of \$78,390.00. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Mr. Mielke asked if there was an estimated time of completion on the project.

Mr. Craver stated that there was not an estimate at this time. There's still a lot of prep to do before the bid documents can be put out, and the District hasn't received the grant documents. Perhaps the bid documents will be ready around the fall. Will need to play it by ear.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the three-year Beverage Sales Agreement with WP Beverages, LLC to be the exclusive vendor of the District.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the three-year Beverage Sales Agreement with WP Beverages, LLC to be the exclusive vendor of the District. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked if there were any questions regarding the routine reports presented in the packet.

There were no questions.

President Swanson asked if there was anything Ms. Palmer wanted to lift up from the Auditor reports.

Ms. Palmer stated that there was nothing of note, and no concerns as things stand right now.

President Swanson asked if there was anything from Mr. Mills report that he wanted to bring to the Committee's attention.

Mr. Mills stated that staff has been working on signage for the park, and getting everything ready for camping season.

President Swanson asked if there was anything that Mr. Jackson wanted to lift up from his report.

Mr. Jackson stated that staff is busy working on projects and getting ready for the opening on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

There was a brief discussion on turtles and bats.

President Swanson asked Mr. Craver if there was anything that he wanted to bring attention to in his report.

Mr. Craver stated that the water hasn't been turned on out at the parks yet because there is another cold snap coming through. Things are greening up though. Last week the Highway Department came out to the spillway to check a few things regarding some wash-outs along the shoulders. There were a couple things identified, including some issues that need addressed with the spillway. Staff has started looking into the best option for funding those repair and maintenance issues.

President Swanson asked Mr. Craver to touch on the staff's recent review of the District's OSHA compliance.

Mr. Craver stated that prior to the zoo receiving a complaint staff had begun to review the OSHA standards, and correct any deficiencies. Reached out to the new building supervisor, Kevin, and asked if he would be willing to come in and give the District his knowledge and expertise. Kevin has been very helpful, and the District is well on its way to being up to the OSHA standard. The amount of money that the District has spent in getting up to code is significantly less than the fines the District would have received.

Mr. Layer asked about the possibility of land donation.

Mr. Craver stated that there's a couple who has some land they're looking to donate, but this is in the very early stages. Will keep the Committee in the loop when there is anything of note to share.

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

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

Motion carried.

President Swanson called the meeting adjourned at 9:57 AM.

Submitted by: Cassie Sullivan  
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant