

**KENDALL COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

APRIL 4, 2018

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Flowers called the Operations Committee meeting to order at 6:04 pm in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Hendrix, Prochaska, and Flowers all were present. Commissioner Purcell entered the meeting at 6:06 pm.

III. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Hendrix made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Prochaska. All, aye. Opposed, none.

IV. Citizens to be Heard

No public comments were offered by those in attendance.

**V. Review of Preliminary Financial and Income Statement Reports
through March 31, 2018**

Director Guritz presented preliminary financial and income statement reports through March 31, 2018. The District is ahead of the prior year's financial statements for the same period on a cash basis by approximately \$30K. \$20K of this amount is from farm lease yield payments credited to the current fiscal year. Ellis House and Equestrian Center has increased YTD revenues. Environmental Education has a decrease in total costs YTD.

Commissioner Purcell entered the meeting room at 6:06 pm.

Director Guritz presented a report by Environmental Education Program Manager Emily Dombrowski of all spring school program bookings. Environmental Education shows a positive difference of \$11K YTD over last year. Based on reservations, school program revenue is estimated to be \$18K by the end of May 2018. It was reported that Environmental Education Spring Break camps showed a net gain of \$60.00.

Commissioner Purcell asked if benefits are included in staff cost.

Director Guritz replied that benefits are included when calculating staff cost. There is a \$5K difference YTD over the prior year in staff benefits costs.

The Operations Committee discussed the difference and suggested that the change is expected with the addition of a full-time staff member's benefits costs.

Director Guritz reported that the Meadowhawk Lodge is past the year's budget expectations for revenues for contracted rentals. Social media marketing efforts are credited for the increase in rentals and program enrollments.

Commissioner Purcell asked whether the promotional codes have been used in rentals.

Director Guritz responded that there have not been additional wedding bookings on the discount offer, but there have been one or two second event booking requests received from the Facebook advertisement's promotional code.

VI. Special Use Permits

a. Kendall County Probation – 23rd Judicial Circuit Event – July 18, 2018 @ Meadowhawk Lodge from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm – Waived Rental Fee

Director Guritz presented a special use permit for Kendall County Probation 23rd Judicial Circuit training event.

b. Kendall County 4H Special Use Permit Amendment – Kim Eisenaugle Shelter Use (Moonseed) April 11, 2018 4 pm to 7 pm – 4H Outdoor Cooking Skills

Director Guritz presented a special use permit amending the Kendall County 4H special use permit for the use of the Moonseed shelter for an outdoor cooking skills event.

VII. 2018 Nature Play Space Project Overview and Budget

Director Guritz reported on an Illinois American Water grant application. No match is required for the \$10K grant request. This grant would help to support the next phase in the development of the Hoover Nature Play Space. The Community Stewardship Restoration Challenge Grant project total is \$28K, with a possible \$10,000 grant through the ComEd Green Region program. Proposed Phase II projects for the nature play space includes a hobbit tunnel and a water feature connected to the existing butterfly garden. The Amenities and Events grant, American Illinois Water, and the 100+ Women Who Care donations would all combine to complete the Phase II projects.

Commissioner Purcell asked if the District will have to fund any of the play space projects.

Director Guritz responded that costs will be covered by the grants and volunteer support efforts.

2018-2019 Proposed Fees and Charges Review and Discussion

Director Guritz presented a report on updated fees and charges. The Ellis House and Equestrian Center fees will be reviewed for possible fee increases. Director Guritz requested Committee deliberation and directions.

Commissioner Purcell asked how the budget was determined with respect to enrollment within the different lesson program offerings.

Director Guritz responded that a formal assessment was not completed as part of budgeting. The lesson program revenues are based on historical levels for participation.

Commissioner Purcell asked if when fees were increased in the past.

Director Guritz responded that shelter rentals have not been increased for 3 years. It is suggested that various shelter prices could be differentiated based on popularity.

Operations Committee suggested raising the Harris shelter 1 and 4 fees due to their increased use.

Director Guritz remarked that the bunkhouse rental fee was increased by \$10.00 per evening in the previous year. The group and family campsite fees have not been raised.

The Operations Committee suggested keeping the family campsite fees the same, and to look at increasing group campsite fees.

Director Guritz responded there are 3 group campsites, with each overnight counted as a rental event. Active promotions of group and family camping opportunities may increase campground use.

The Operations Committee suggested additional program events, like Stargazing, to increase group campsite use. The Operations Committee gave the direction to review the fees of group campsites again in 6 months.

Director Guritz also remarked that coffee service fees could also be increased. There is a proposed fee increase for Ellis House and Equestrian Center rentals for Saturday events, that should be significantly higher than Friday and Sunday events. Saturday events have a greater demand.

The Operations Committee suggested increasing Saturday fees for weddings. It was also suggested to market towards cooperate meetings, events and retreats for rentals.

Director Guritz suggested reducing the discounts for various groups for rentals.

The Operations Committee remarked that there are not enough government rentals currently to warrant the changes. The discounted events that are hosted at District facilities are bringing more people out to see the venues who might possibly rent in the future.

Commissioner Purcell asked why there are differences in wedding rentals at the two venues.

Director Guritz remarked that there are capacity differences at the venues. Social media efforts are working toward increasing both, especially Ellis House and Equestrian Center rentals.

The Operations Committee asked how Ellis House and Equestrian Center lessons are selling, and when the fees were last increased.

Director Guritz responded that the fees were increased in the past year. The Ellis House and Equestrian Center staff varied on thoughts as to whether fees should increase.

Commissioner Hendrix remarked that the current prices for horse lessons are good, cautioning that increasing these fees could negatively impact sales.

The Operations Committee suggested tracking the customers who buy one lesson and return to buy a package lesson. It was also suggested to offer packages that have a 2-day a week option. Additional lessons would require an additional lesson horse.

Director Guritz reported that out of 4 horses owned by the District, two new horses will need to be brought in. Finding placements for current horses and purchasing replacement lesson horses is a work in progress.

Director Guritz reported that summer camp fees were raised last year. Birthday parties have been raised and are doing well.

Commissioner Purcell asked whether the cost for the hay ride option was cost effective.

Director Guritz replied that the additional option is for birthday parties, and other group tours, with a per-individual fee that does cover staff costs. School program increases will take effect in the fall semester. Natural Beginnings will also increase.

Commissioner Purcell asked if Natural Beginnings is budgeted at full capacity.

Director Guritz responded that Natural Beginnings is budgeted with full enrollment.

VIII. KCFPD Personal Policies Manual – Draft for Review

Director Guritz presented a draft of a KCFPD personal policies manual. The manual has been worked on with President Gilmour and Vice President Prochaska. The States Attorney's Office 2017 personal policies manual was used as a template for the KCFPD manual.

Director Guritz stated that requiring FMLA paperwork after an employee misses 5 consecutive work days is a better fit for the District KCFPD. The vacation day roll over policy

is another area where adjustments were made to the draft policy as a better fit to District operations.

The Operations Committee suggested that more time will be needed to look over each of the draft manual sections.

IX. Hoover Forest Preserve Maintenance Project Updates (Lighting and Lift Station Pumps)

Director Guritz presented an update on Hoover Forest Preserve lighting and lift station pumps. Proposals for the parking lot solar lights and lift stations pumps have been requested.

X. Hoover Railroad Crossing Improvements Updates

Director Guritz presented an update on the Hoover railroad crossing improvements. A subcontractor will be installing crossing gates, and will tap into the Hoover electrical line under a separate meter. ComEd has been working with the project coordinators, and the District will not pay for the power used for the gates.

XI. Lesson Horse Donation and Acquisition Updates

Director Guritz presented an update on the Ellis lesson horses.

XII. Pickerill-Pigott Forest Preserve Master Plan Updates

Director Guritz presented an update on the Pickerill-Pigott Forest Preserve master plan. A virtual tour and survey are being worked on in addition to the open house. The open house will be on May 5, 2018. KAT will provide transportation to and from the preserve to allow participants an opportunity to see the preserve and offer comments on the master plan.

XIII. Little Rock Creek Farm Lease Agreement

Director Guritz presented a report on the Little Rock Creek farm lease agreement. A farm operator currently contracting with the District has been contacted about farming the preserve's 8-acres.

The Operations Committee discussed different crops for the 8-acres.

XIV. Executive Session

None.

XV. Other Items of Business

None.

XVI. Citizens to be Heard

No public comments were offered by those in attendance.

XVII. Adjournment

Commissioner Hendrix made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Prochaska. Aye, all. Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Executive Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District