

**KENDALL COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES**

**OCTOBER 11, 2017**

**I. Call to Order**

President Gilmour called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm in the Kendall County Board Room.

**II. Roll Call**

Commissioners Cullick, Davidson, Giles, Hendrix, Purcell, and Gilmour all were present.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Cullick made a motion to move agenda item “XVIII – Upland Design Master Planning and Preserve Public Access Cost Estimations Proposal” to follow the review of the claims list, and otherwise approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Hendrix. All, aye. Opposed, none.

**IV. Citizens to be Heard**

No public comments were offered by citizens present at the meeting.

**V. Director’s Report**

Director Guritz provided updates on priority projects.

Director Guritz reported that he has signed off on the IDNR Conservation Plan for State listed species submitted by HLR Engineering as part of the construction permitting process for Millbrook Bridge. Director Guritz stated that this will be a 6-month process. The Conservation Plan is informed by the District’s intention to leave the bridge piers in place if demolition is the final disposition of the Millbrook Bridge. Director Guritz stated that the acquisition of Little Rock Creek has been extended as an offer to mitigate impacts to the two State listed fish species presumed present in the project footprint.

Director Guritz stated that Henneberry Forest Preserve restoration project is moving forward. The soybean crop has been harvested, and the drain tile disruption work has been completed.

**VI. Motion to Forward Claims for Commission Approval for an Amount  
Not-to-Exceed \$16,978.37**

Commissioner Davidson made a motion to forward claims in the amount of \$16,978.37 to Commission for approval. Seconded by Commissioner Cullick.

Commissioner Davidson inquired into claim #110 for the purchase of binoculars. Director Guritz stated that the District will be reimbursed from the Forest Foundation of Kendall County for the purchase of the student binoculars that will be used as part of District environmental education programs. Funds will be contributed from the Henry Weidman Memorial Fund. President Gilmour provided added insight into Henry Weidman's teaching career.

Commissioner Davidson inquired into claim #265. Director Guritz stated that the expense was incurred for continuing restoration efforts at Tucker-Millington Fen. Efforts this year focused on continued eradication of Phragmites and Reed Canary grass from the site, which will continue for another year to insure that control has been achieved.

Aye, all. Opposed, none.

## **VII. Upland Design Master Planning and Preserve Public Access Cost Estimations Proposal**

Director Guritz reported that a proposal was requested and received from Upland Design, Ltd. in the amount of \$10,300 to lead the District through a master planning process for Pickerill-Pigott Forest Preserve. The proposal also included cost estimation alternates for initial public access improvements for Fox River Bluffs and Little Rock Creek Forest Preserves totaling \$1,320 for each. The proposal was forwarded to Commission for review.

Michelle Kelly with Upland Design presented the proposal and overall master planning process to the Committee of the Whole. The process includes creation of a digital base map using AutoCAD for planning purposes; site analysis and site access needs; initial discussion with the Board of Commissioners; a public input and concept planning phase; and development of a phased master plan for presentation to the Board of Commissioners.

Michelle Kelly stated that the goal is to identify initial costs for public access, possible grant sources for improvements, and collection of the baseline information needed in order to apply for outside grant funding.

Commissioner Davidson inquired into what the reimbursable costs included. Michelle Kelly stated that reimbursable costs will be no more than \$300.00, primarily used for the development of color renderings and public meeting exhibits. Michelle Kelly stated that the cost for each color rendering is approximately \$14.00.

Commissioner Purcell asked what the master plan will provide the District, expressing concerns over taking on the cost without moving forward to provide initial access. Director Guritz stated that taking the time to plan for public access is an important effort. Pickerill-Pigott is the closest forest preserve to the two main population centers in Kendall County. Master planning helps to identify phasing and design for long term improvements, which

helps with insuring that future efforts compliment and build upon initial improvements. The master planning process also identifies site conditions that may not be compatible with plans for development. The completed master plan also is needed to secure outside funding support where public input gathered during the master planning process is documented and included as part of the required submissions within District grant applications.

Commissioner Purcell stated that the buildings should be torn down, expressing concerns for the long term maintenance costs for sustaining these buildings on the landscape with limited uses.

Commissioner Hendrix asked how important the master plan is with respect to securing outside grant support. Director Guritz stated that having a master plan including the cost estimates for completion is vital in order to compete for limited grant funding pools. Michelle Kelly stated that public input is typically required, with this requirement achieved through the master planning process.

Commissioner Davidson asked whether this is included in the current fiscal year budget. Director Guritz stated that the project is included in the preliminary capital fund budget for the upcoming fiscal year, with efforts getting underway in early December following approval of the budget and the Upland Design proposal.

President Gilmour stated that it would be helpful to get out to the preserve to get a feel for the area, get a handle on the current condition of the property, and generate ideas for future public access and improvement projects. Director Guritz stated that the goal is to prepare the site for a mid-November open house with the Board that will be scheduled to occur as around the Committee of the Whole meeting in November.

President Gilmour stated that the District has known this has been coming, and it's important to take time to consider the future plans for the property.

Michelle Kelly stated that all of the components needed to apply for grant funding are included as part of the master planning proposal. Michelle Kelly presented an overview of the OSLAD grant proposal requirements. Michelle Kelly presented an overview of past master planning efforts, including a strong focus in the past for protection of sensitive natural resource areas that are identified and conserved within the overall plan.

Commissioner Purcell asked whether Upland Design has completed planning efforts in the past that resulted in the demolition of aged structures. Michelle Kelly stated that the pre-existence of homes and other buildings on forest preserve properties is more common than not, with decisions to demolish versus decisions to reuse existing structures made approximately 60% of the time.

Michelle Kelly stated that you have to have an identified use that ties to the mission and can be sustained by the agency, or a partner agency that will help offset future improvement costs.

## **VIII. FY 17-18 Preliminary Operating Fund (Fund 270) Budget Review and Discussion**

The Committee of the Whole discussed the preliminary FY 17-18 Operating Fund budget for the District.

Director Guritz stated that the preliminary budget will be revised to take into account the proposed \$100 tuition increase for the Natural Beginnings Two-Day sessions, with a reduction of trash removal costs by \$1,000 based on the outcome from competitive bidding completed in 2017.

Director Guritz presented a report detailing additional changes to be entered into the preliminary budget based on Commission directions leading up to presentation of the final budget.

Director Guritz presented a report on recommended staff salaries for the upcoming year.

Commissioner Purcell asked what the current balance is within the preliminary Operating Fund budget. Director Guritz stated that the projected surplus is around \$8,000, and includes an additional \$10,000 budget contingency, and \$15,000 for potential general or worker's compensation liability claims. Commissioner Purcell asked whether the budget includes salaries coded to the capital fund. Director Guritz stated that the preliminary budget does not currently include staff salary figures in the capital fund budget, but this will be considered for inclusion to offset in-house restoration efforts for the Eldamain-Schaeffer Fen project where the District received incidental take permit funding from Kendall County Highway.

Commissioner Purcell asked if the budget anticipates a full levy for the upcoming year. Director Guritz stated that the preliminary budget relies on taking the full levy for the upcoming year.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the insurance quotes received for the upcoming year. Director Guritz stated that the budget currently anticipates a 21% increase in the coming year based on the current level of staff participation within the existing plans.

Commissioner Purcell asked whether this included insurance costs for Emily Dombrowski. Director Guritz confirmed that the preliminary budget includes costs for continuing her existing coverage for the full fiscal year.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the situation with the reduced number of wedding events for the upcoming year. Director Guritz reported that there are only three events contracted for the upcoming year. The preliminary budget anticipates that this program will get back on track in 2018. Director Guritz stated that he would like the opportunity to get the program back on track, with the understanding that if District staff efforts do not result in significant contract bookings for the following year, the District will need to eliminate the service, preferably following fulfillment of the remaining 2019 contracts.

Director Guritz stated that the District already needs to restructure rental and wedding program communications to insure that program costs are carefully managed within the upcoming fiscal year. The preliminary budget includes a severe reduction in part time staff support costs for Ellis rentals.

At this point, there are three choices to consider: 1) eliminate the program now; 2) continue to operate the program through 2018 only, or 3) work to recover the program in 2018, and should this not materialize, fulfill the remaining 2019 contracts and discontinue bookings for the program in 2020.

Commissioner Purcell stated that he is prepared to make the decision to eliminate the program now. Commissioner Hendrix stated that Director Guritz agrees that if the program does not experience a recovery in the upcoming year, than it should be discontinued, but that as it stands, the program has been worked to generate surplus revenues that have helped offset the costs for operating the preserve and facilities. Commissioner Hendrix stated that intentionally incurring loss is not a good long term strategy if the program is able to recover.

Commissioner Davidson stated that he would support a decision to continue the program for another year so long the program is discontinued by a date certain next year if program performance does not improve.

Commissioner Purcell stated that while Director Guritz has done a great job reducing the operational costs, the District has been unable to generate sufficient program revenues to fully offset the costs for operations, further stating that extending one more year is unlikely to change this situation. Director Guritz stated that without a marked turnaround, the District will not be able to sustain the service into the future.

Commissioner Davidson stated that he toured Ellis recently, and complimented staff efforts for the general appearance of the facility.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the history of the initial acquisition project.

Director Guritz stated that as of today, the preliminary budget design includes revenues and related expenditures to fulfill current contracts for 2018, and accept future contract bookings for 2019.

Commissioner Purcell stated that if the District does not achieve six bookings for the upcoming year, he will not vote to approve the budget, and will campaign to eliminate the service for the upcoming year.

Commissioner Davidson expressed concerns with the total amount for salaries and benefits for the upcoming year. Commissioner Davidson stated that any salary increases over a standard amount should be brought before Commission for approval. Director Guritz stated that he did not take issue with this, and would bring forward the proposed promotional salary for the Environmental Education Manager position, and proposed market adjustment for the Natural Resource Technician. For the Technician position, the District typically pays outside consultants \$50 per hour for their services. The challenge the District is experiencing is securing the part time extension of support from this position at \$14 per hour is not competitive enough because the marketplace typically pays significantly higher.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into whether the twenty-seventh pay period is accounted for in the preliminary budget. Director Guritz stated that the additional pay period salaries and associated benefits are covered within the preliminary budget.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the levy and operating funds for the District.

The Committee of the Whole provided direction to include a motion to approve the preliminary budget for publication and public inspection, noting that the budget can be amended based on discussions moving forward.

**IX. FY 17-18 Preliminary Capital Fund (Fund 950) Budget Review and Discussion**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**X. Hoover Supervisor and Resident – Residence Lease Agreement Renewal Discussion**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XI. Pickerill-Pigott Forest Preserve – Part Time Resident and Grounds Maintenance Worker Position Discussion**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XII. Baker Woods Forest Preserve – Ellis House and Equestrian Center Part Time Caretaker Position and Lease Agreement Discussion**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XIII. Environmental Education Program Manager Position Description**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XIV. OmniTRAX-Illinois Railway Crossing Agreement Updates**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XV. Millbrook Bridge Permitting Updates and Directions**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XVI. Middle and High School Wetland Study Field Trip Fees and Charges**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XVII. Natural Beginnings 2018-2019 Program Year – Amendment of 2-Day Session Fees and Charges**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XVIII. Ellis Pond Restoration Project Budget and Grant Agreement**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was summarily adjourned prior to discussion.

**XIX. Executive Session**

None.

**XX. Other Items of Business**

None.

**XXI. Citizens to be Heard**

None.

**XXII. Summary of Action Items to be Taken**

None.

**XXIII. Adjournment**

Commissioner Davidson and Commissioner Hendrix adjourned from the meeting at 8:28 pm. Meeting was summarily adjourned due to lack of a quorum at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz  
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District