

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

**MAY 11, 2016**

**I. Call to Order**

President Wehrli called the meeting to order at 5:43 pm in the Kendall County Board Room.

**II. Roll Call**

Commissioners Cullick, Davidson, Gilmour, Koukol, Prochaska, Purcell, and Wehrli all were present.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Cullick made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Prochaska. All, aye. Opposed, none. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Citizens to be Heard**

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

**V. Director's Report**

Director Guritz reported that the District is extremely busy with grounds projects, education programs, and reservations. Environmental Education Instructor John Deknatel recently resigned from District service to pursue teaching in the fall. The District does not plan to bring on a part time instructor at this time, but will begin looking to fill the position over the summer. For now, the District has enough staff depth to get through the school program season.

Rich McCaslin Construction will be donating his time to complete the sidewalk construction project at Ellis House and Equestrian Center, and will complete the project in the next few weeks prior to Sunrise Center North's move-in date of June 1, 2016.

Director Guritz reported that the Forest Foundation will be meeting with the Stephanie's Garden stakeholders' group to coordinate fundraising activities for the first phase development projects.

Director Guritz reported that a letter was received from the IDNR grant administration office informing the District that reimbursement for the Fox River Bluffs Forest Preserve acquisition is delayed pending approval of a State budget. Other agencies receiving LWCF grant funding in 2015 included the Joliet Park District and Kane County Forest Preserve District. Both agencies will be contacted to develop a strategy for outreach to local legislators to support efforts to secure the reimbursements for all funded projects.

Director Guritz stated that the District is in process of filling all remaining part time position openings, including the Ellis seasonal position; part time camp instructors, and Natural Beginnings Lead Instructor.

Director Guritz reported that efforts are underway to market summer camps in both print and online media. Yorkville Chamber of Commerce will be including information on summer camps in their upcoming E-newsletter edition.

Commission discussed opportunities to market summer camp programs to area schools. Director Guritz stated that some opportunities have been explored, but parents are inundated with backpack emails, and other direct marketing opportunities are being pursued.

Director Guritz reported that Scott Johnson, grandson of Richard Young, and Environmental Science Teacher with Oswego School District has been approached to develop biodiversity education and restoration programming next fall with high school students that will involve support with control of invasive species over the course of the 16-17 school year.

Director Guritz reported on recent staff member family losses.

Director Guritz reported on the documents received for the parcel trade with Kendall County for the widening of Eldamain Road. Director Guritz stated that approval under the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act will require unanimous vote of approval from the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into whether there was concern with meeting the environmental education budget for "Other Programs." Director Guritz stated that marketing efforts are beginning to pay off. This cost center was established primarily to cover revenues and costs associated with cooperative summer program offerings with the Kendall-Grundy ROE Outdoor Education Center, and these programs are full with waiting lists.

## **VI. US Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Program Agreement**

Director Guritz reported that the US Fish and Wildlife Service will be submitting documents to the District to establish a cooperative program agreement for continued restoration efforts at Maramech Forest Preserve, with the goal of eradicating honeysuckle from the preserve. As part of the agreement, USF&WS will select the contractor, and the District will match USF&WS funds up to \$5,000 to complete the project. Additional materials will be received within the next month.

## **VII. Kendall County Highway Department Proposed Property Exchange for Eldamain Road Improvements**

Director Guritz presented an overview and initial documents received from Kendall County Highway Department - Mathewson Right-of-Way Company conveying ownership of small roadside parcels totaling 1.5 acres at Subat Forest Preserve along Eldamain Road, Schaefer Road and River Road in exchange for approximately 1.9 acres of property adjacent to the Eldamain Road corridor at Hoover Forest Preserve.

Director Guritz reported that all was in order with securing approval from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Preserve impacts to Subat Forest Preserve are not significant, and the quality and location of the additional acres secured offsets the natural resource impacts by expanding habitat buffer area at Hoover Forest Preserve.

Approval of the exchange requires unanimous approval by the Board of Commissioners as stipulated in the Illinois Downstate Forest Preserve District Act.

Commission discussed opportunities for connecting Hoover Forest Preserve to Fox River Bluffs Forest Preserve.

### **VIII. Summer Public Program Fees and Charges**

Director Guritz presented the environmental education department's proposed public programs for the upcoming summer season.

The Committee of the Whole discussed marketing approaches taken for promoting the District's public programs.

Director Guritz reported that in addition to the E-newsletter, program announcements are posted in preserve kiosks, and within the District's new storefront website. Increases in registration are attributed to increased social media outreach, primarily to Facebook parent groups within surrounding communities.

### **IX. Bill of Sale for the Ellis Miniature Horse "Polly"**

Director Guritz reported that the District is entertaining two offers from individuals interested in taking ownership of Polly. One of the individuals expressing interests may also make an offer for the purchase of Madrid.

The Bill of Sale will be brought forward for Commission approval once District staff members reviews the opportunities presented for both Polly and Madrid. Commission expressed support for re-homing Polly with Rich McCaslin for \$1.00, or an alternate placement if the purchase offer extended helps to fund the District's budget for equestrian center operations.

Commissioner Gryder entered the meeting at 6:23 pm.

### **X. Citizens to Be Heard**

None.

### **XI. Executive Session**

None.

## **XII. Other Items of Business**

The Board of Commissioners discussed the potential donation of property adjacent to Cotswold Fen in the Cotswold Planned Unit Development.

Director Guritz reported that Attorney Coffey was coordinating outreach efforts to the homeowners to determine whether the District would be exempted from the covenants of the Homeowner's Association, specifically those dealing with ongoing maintenance of the acquired natural areas.

Commissioner Gilmour suggested that additional information be provided to the homeowners to provide some background on the fen area and the District's interest in conserving the property and natural areas. Director Guritz stated that this was a good idea, and would work with Attorney Coffey to respond to resident questions received.

Commissioner Purcell stated that the District should carefully consider acquiring this property considering the District's financial standing and ability to manage its current holdings.

Commissioner Koukol reported that more and more wedding and event venues are opening requesting permits in Kendall County, which may impact Ellis House wedding rentals in the future.

President Wehrli reported that the Historic Preservation Commission will be hosting a photo opportunity at the Millbrook Bridge in Shuh Shuh Gah Forest Preserve as a show of support for the restoration of the structure on Saturday, May 14 at 10:00 am.

Commissioner Gryder asked to brief the Commission on Finance Committee discussions regarding Millbrook Bridge.

Director Guritz reported that he will be contacting a firm specializing in bridge repair and/or demolition in order to research the approaches that may be taken in order to develop the US Army Corps of Engineers permit which will be needed to move forward either way.

## **XIII. Adjournment**

Commissioner Cullick made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Koukol. Aye, all. Opposed, none. Meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz  
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District