

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

JUNE 15, 2016

I. Call to Order

President Wehrli called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Cullick, Davidson, Gilmour, Gryder, Prochaska, 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

Commissioner Koukol entered the meeting at 5:34 pm.

Director Guritz reported that inspections are underway for reported standing water issues at Subat Forest Preserve and Cannonball Sedge Meadow.

A review meeting is scheduled to prepare for the ICC hearing on the dedication of the Hoover railroad crossing as a public crossing. A meeting is scheduled with CMAP to review the Kendall County regional trail plan.

The OSLAD/Land and Water Conservation Fund grant application is under development for submission by the July 1, 2016 deadline. The Forest Foundation is planning the 2016 Fall Festival, and approved submission of a Mazda Foundation grant application to support student involvement with the Maramech Forest Preserve restoration initiative. The USF&WS approved a cooperative program agreement with the District for \$5,000 to support this continued effort.

The Hoover Nature Play Space water line extension is underway, and the Stakeholders' Group approved a budget and project schedule for completion of the mud kitchen and butterfly garden area over the next few months.

The Natural Beginnings Lead Instructor position has been filled by Jessica Vosburgh, with active recruitment underway for a part time Environmental Education Instructor and part time Grounds Maintenance Worker for Hoover Forest Preserve.

Sunrise Center North requested improvements at Ellis House are underway, with the ADA sidewalk and main barn side entrance now completed.

Marketing efforts continue with www.kendallforest.com now published, with a current Facebook ad running, and Stepping Stones E-newsletter going out in the next week.

A meeting is scheduled with HLR engineering to evaluate restoration or demolition permitting requirements for Millbrook Bridge.

Superintendent Olson reports that preserve visitation, use and rentals are all increasing, with Grounds Maintenance and Natural Resources division staff working hard to keep up with core maintenance and mowing of preserve areas.

Commissioner Purcell entered the meeting at 5:37 pm.

Commissioner Gilmour inquired into the monthly lease payment for Sunrise North. Director Guritz reported that the monthly lease payment is currently \$1,500.

Commissioner Gilmour inquired into the qualifications of Jessica Vosburgh. Director Guritz stated that Jessica has been a volunteer with the District, and has her children enrolled in the program. She was interviewed by Megan Gessler, and is a good fit for the program. In her first year, she will lead a class with a more experienced instructor.

Commissioner Gryder inquired into the Cannonball Sedge Meadow issue. Director Guritz stated that within the area, there is a resident that expressed concerns with high water levels. The meadow is located within a detention basin adjacent to Blackberry Creek, with the understanding that the District may have installed a French drain to assist with this neighbor's property drainage in the past.

President Wehrli provided insights into this issue in the past.

Director Guritz provided updates on the site inspection of floodwater issues at Subat Forest Preserve. Commissioner Davidson stated that the Subat drain line runs for a long distance east of the preserve.

VI. Cotswold Fen Parcel Donation – Ecological and Geological Assessments

Director Guritz reported on the ecological assessment performed with IDNR Heritage Biologist, Dan Kirk, and Kim Roman of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. Director Guritz also reported on correspondence with Brandon Curry, Quaternary and Engineering Geology Section Head for the Illinois State Geological Survey.

The plant community has been decimated by invasive and non-native exotic species.

The parcel offered for donation is degraded, but has some native plant and tree species surviving within the area. A shallow drainage ditch runs down the middle of the property from the road.

Geologically, the Cotswold Fen area serves as an important groundwater recharge area.

The water body covering approximately 40 acres is the largest kettle lake this far south in Northeastern Illinois formed at the end of the Pleistocene. The deposits in the lake likely contain a fossil record dating back 26,500 years before present.

Director Guritz stated that it is not unusual for communities to acquire property within groundwater recharge areas in order to protect water resources.

Director Guritz stated that draft responses were provided in the packets. The parcel, if accepted, would not be developed.

Commissioner Koukol asked about the annual taxes. Director Guritz reported that the annual assessment is around \$1,000.

Commissioner Purcell stated that he did not see any strategic value for the forest preserve district to acquire the parcel.

President Wehrli stated that we lack the resources to restore and maintain the donated parcel area.

Commissioner Gilmour stated that she also is not interested in acquiring the property, and inquired into the kettle lake formation.

Consensus and direction from Commission was to decline the offer for the donation of the property.

VII. OSLAD – Land and Water Conservation Fund Application Resolution

Director Guritz presented a draft resolution authorizing the District's 2016 application to the IDNR-OSLAD/Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program.

Director Guritz also presented the GIS exhibit showing the location and proposed acquisition area and improvements.

Director Guritz reported that this section of Little Rock Creek ranks among the top 5% in terms of water quality in Northeastern Illinois.

A public hearing is scheduled for 6 pm on Monday, June 20, 2016 to receive public comment regarding the District's application. Comments will be reported to Commission on June 21, 2016 prior to consideration of the IDNR resolution of authorization approval required in order to apply for the grant.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into whether the District will be able to provide public access.

Director Guritz reported that the preliminary site plan includes access and parking off of Burr Oak Road, and includes a proposed trail loop.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into whether the District has sufficient funds to cover the costs for the acquisition. Director Guritz stated that he anticipates that the District could cover 50% of the reimbursable closing costs, with the remaining funding paid at closing from outside contributions.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into whether the District would have remaining funds sufficient to open the acquired preserve areas to the public.

Director Guritz stated that the District should have funding necessary to begin the proposed improvements.

Director Guritz reported that there are many items that need to fall into place to allow this acquisition to move forward. This includes negotiation of a sale price for the property that falls within 10% of the appraised value.

Commissioner Gryder inquired into the initial improvements, and whether the District would be able to accomplish the start of improvements within three years of the acquisition. Director Guritz stated that starting improvements within the first three years following acquisition should be attainable.

President Wehrli stated that within the agreement, the District would need to start construction on the improvements presented on the site plan.

VIII. US Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Program Agreement

Director Guritz presented the form of agreement received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service extending \$5,000 in matching fund support for the continued restoration of Maramech Forest Preserve. Within the proposed agreement, the District will match the USF&WS \$5,000.00 contribution to remove 14.5 acres of non-native invasive species at a cost of \$688.00 per acre.

Consensus of the Committee of the Whole was to place the agreement on the following Commission meeting agenda for approval.

IX. Kendall County Highway Department Proposed Property Exchange for Eldamain Road Improvements Updates

Director Guritz reported that Fran Klaas, Kendall County Highway Department Engineer is working to secure an updated appraisal for the parcels that will be exchanged at Subat Forest Preserve, and Hoover Forest Preserve. Once the appraisal is completed, a resolution authorizing and approving the exchange of property will be brought forward for Commission approval. The exchange is favorable to the District in terms of both property area and value. The IDNR has signed-off on the exchange.

X. 2016-2017 Proposed Fees and Charges

Director Guritz presented a spreadsheet of fees and charges for all District programs and services, with a listing of proposed fee increases for 2016-2017.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the proposed fees.

Commissioner Gryder inquired into whether Latreese Caldwell had an opportunity to review the proposed fee increases for budget impact. Director Guritz stated that the Programming and Events Committee had reviewed the proposed increases, and that budget impacts could be calculated. However, the budget impact will be based on program volumes that will be calculated during the budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year. Commission may also wish to examine fees and charges, and make additional adjustments going into the next budget year. Director Guritz stated he would work with Latreese to examine budget impacts for the next fiscal year.

Commissioner Purcell requested confirmation that the Natural Beginnings charges and discounts are proposed for FY 17-18. Director Guritz stated that the proposed second sibling discount reduction is scheduled for the FY 17-18 fiscal year, with the current discount promoted in the 16-17 school year handbook.

Commissioner Purcell expressed concerns that the Commission had not reviewed or approved the second sibling discount. President Wehrli stated that the discount was in place for some time, and had been approved at some point in the past. Commissioner Purcell stated that the current board did not have an opportunity to review or approve the discount when fees and charges for the program were discussed last year.

Commissioner Purcell expressed concerns that students would be registered in the 17-18 school year under the current tuition rates. Director Guritz stated that there will be time to examine 17-18 school year tuition fees before registration opens in December of this year.

Commissioner Koukol stated that some of the items on the list need to go into effect right away, but concurred with Commissioner Gryder that closer examination will be needed going into budget discussions.

Commissioner Gilmour stated that fee increases need to be considered carefully in order to insure that the District is competitive with going rates for similar services.

XI. Kendall County Forest Preserve District Organizational Chart Updates

Director Guritz presented a revised draft of the Kendall County Forest Preserve District's Organizational Chart. An update is needed based on approved headcount and position title changes that have taken place over the past year.

The Committee of the Whole discussed the chart presented, and requested a change to show that the Natural Beginnings Program Manager reports to both the Executive Director and Grounds Supervisor and Resident for Hoover Forest Preserve.

Director Guritz stated that the part time Naturalist positions will be changed to Environmental Education Instructors.

The Committee of the Whole reviewed current staff assignments and position vacancies.

The Committee of the Whole discussed procedures for head count changes for the District, citing the recent vacancy of the approved Ellis Resident, Grounds Maintenance – Environmental Education and Events Support position.

Director Guritz stated that this position would not be filled, but the second seasonal position within the budget plan had been filled in order to insure adequate staffing levels at Ellis. President Wehrli stated that Commissioner Purcell made a good point, however, that changes such as these should be formalized by Commission approval. Director Guritz stated that other Districts approve a headcount ordinance, with ordinance amendments approved as headcount changes are considered and approved.

XII. Citizens to Be Heard

Todd Milliron of Yorkville inquired into whether the Committee of the Whole had discussed item VII on the agenda regarding the ICC petition. Mr. Milliron stated that some of the PUD residents had already voted, and they should be notified that the District will not be moving forward with the acceptance of the donation.

XIII. Hoover Forest Preserve – ICC Public Railway Crossing Designation Petition Updates

Director Guritz presented the agenda for the upcoming meeting. Representatives from all agencies have been invited, with confirmed attendance for the upcoming meeting scheduled at Hoover Forest Preserve. Information from this meeting will be presented at the July petition hearing.

XIV. Executive Session

None.

XV. Other Items of Business

Commission congratulated President Wehrli on the recent addition to his family.

XVI. Adjournment

Commissioner Davidson made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Cullick. Aye, all. Opposed, none. Meeting adjourned at 6:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District