

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

APRIL 13, 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, Gryder, Koukol, Prochaska, and Wehrli all were present.

III. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Gryder 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 Forest Foundation appointed seven new board members. Efforts are underway to plan and fundraise for the 2016 Fall Festival.

The Stephanie's Garden stakeholders group also plans to raise funds later this spring, and policy guidelines have been drafted for Forest Foundation board review. The District will accept donations of supplies. President Wehrli stated that a credit for materials with a local plumbing supplier will provide some of the required materials.

Director Guritz reported that a meeting was held with Hank Cryder to discuss the drain tiles at Ellis. An inspection and quote for repair has been requested from Antrax, Inc. of Plainfield.

Director Guritz reported that he met with Ellis Equestrian Center staff this week. The Lesson Horse "Missy" is lame, likely with a foot abscess, and staff are working to schedule an appointment for veterinary care.

An interview was held with Anne Vickery from WSPY. Interview topics included Sunrise North, District programming, efforts to balance the budget, bond refunding taxpayer savings, and Millbrook Bridge. Director Guritz thanked the Board for their support and efforts to balance the District's budget.

Director Guritz reported that volunteer workday efforts at Maramech Forest Preserve included burning of all of the brush material cut by contractors as part of the ComEd Green Region grant.

The bond rating conference call with Moody's went well, with the District's bond rating leveling off.

Meadowhawk Lodge portico repairs are underway and should be finishing up next week. Following sign-off, the insurance company's release will be presented to the Board for approval.

Attorney Berault has finalized the KC-TAP intergovernmental agreement, which will be presented to the Board for approval next week.

District staff is working with Sunrise North to help with the scope of work that needs to be completed to support their operations at Ellis House and Equestrian Center.

Commissioner Purcell entered the meeting at 5:38 pm.

VI. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund Collaborative Grant Opportunity

Director Guritz reported that The Conservation Foundation has requested a letter of commitment from the District to participate in a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant project to restore Monarch butterfly habitat. The grant, if awarded, would provide \$15,000 of support funding for cropland conversion plans at Henneberry Forest Preserve.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the restoration plans for Henneberry and Fox River Bluffs Forest Preserves. Director Guritz stated that bid packets will be developed in May for bidding in June. 45-acres at Henneberry Forest Preserve will be converted to prairie habitat, with seed from this project applied at Fox River Bluffs to restore a 100-acre prairie-savanna area.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the status of Monarch butterfly populations.

Commissioner Davidson expressed concerns over the status of Monarch populations, as well as concerns over the dispersal of milkweed seed to adjacent property owners. Director Guritz stated that milkweed species will be planted with a high diversity of flowering prairie plants to support pollinators including Monarchs.

The Board provided direction to extend a letter of support confirming the District's participation in the grant program in partnership with The Conservation Foundation and other regional conservation agencies.

VII. The Conservation Foundation – Earth Day Benefit Dinner Request

Director Guritz presented a request from The Conservation Foundation for the contribution of rental opportunities for the Foundation's silent auction. Director Guritz requested that the Board extend a free event rental at Ellis House or Meadowhawk Lodge, plus an overnight rental of a District bunkhouse to support their Spring Benefit dinner.

Director Guritz asked the Board to consider The Conservation Foundation's recent support of restoration efforts at Baker Woods Forest Preserve and Schessler's Fen totaling over \$12,000.00 of support in this past year.

The Board of Commissioners discussed and provided direction to extend the facility use contributions, and provided direction to extend the invitation to attend for three District staff members.

VIII. Ellis House & Meadowhawk Lodge Event Venue Marketing Opportunity

Director Guritz reported on the Programming and Events Committee's direction to research online platforms for promotion of the District's event rental venues. Costs for a one-year subscription to "The Knot" was presented to the Finance Committee, with the recommendation that the District purchase a one-year subscription beginning in June at a cost of \$250.00 per month. As an incentive, the District will receive a premier featuring option for the first three months of the subscription. Promotional funds are available within the current budget, but it will be tight, and deplete all promotional funds available in the budget for the fiscal year.

Commissioner Flowers asked if the staff will be able to meet the anticipated increase in phone calls and tours of the Ellis House. Director Guritz stated that the District should be able to extend the additional time for tours, and other staff may also extend time for support of tours in the event that the District's Event Coordinator is unavailable to meet a particular schedule request.

President Wehrli stated that this is one of the reasons the District is looking at a new Facility Attendant position description.

Commissioner Prochaska suggested that the District contact "The Knot" at the end of the premier listing period to insure cancellation of this additional service as needed to avoid assignment of upcharges.

The Committee of the Whole provided direction to present "The Knot" proposal at the next Commission meeting for approval.

IX. IDOT Correspondence – US 30 Phase I Improvement Project (Illinois Route 47 to Illinois Route 31 Trail Project)

President Wehrli provided an update on this project. In November 2014, the District was approached by IDOT requesting the purchase of a small section of District property along Route 30 just west of Orchard Road. The District suggested that IDOT purchase an additional five feet in order to install a bike trail along this section of property within their expanded right-of-way. IDOT agreed, and is moving forward with the public hearing, and will be requesting confirmation of findings of de minimis impacts to District lands later this spring. The sale of land will be less than 1-acre, which is allowable under the Illinois Downstate Forest Preserve Act.

X. Facility and Event Attendant Position Description

Director Guritz presented a draft description for a Facility and Event Attendant position.

Director Guritz stated that he is not looking to increase District headcount at this time, but does want to formalize the role(s) of part-time staff members at Ellis House and Equestrian Center currently extending support for the District's rental functions. Part time staff members assigned to serve as a Facility and Event Attendant will be paid their current hourly salary, with total hours monitored in order to insure that total hours do not average more than 30 within the District's measurement periods that would impact position benefits.

Director Guritz stated that in current practice, if the Events Coordinator is not available to staff an event, requests are made from other part-time staff members to fill the schedule gaps to support house and wedding events.

In meeting with Ellis staff earlier this week, Michelle Salato was recruited to extend rental event assistance in April, and expressed an interest in extending support on an as needed basis. Director Guritz stated that at this time, he does not anticipate needing to hire additional staff to take on this role.

Commissioner Koukol asked if the extended hours will be tracked in addition to current assigned hours in order to properly track total hours worked.

President Wehrli confirmed that as part of this effort, combined staff hours will be closely monitored to insure that they do not exceed an average of 30 hours per week over a six month period.

Director Guritz stated that there should not be any concern with this, and that all staff time is carefully monitored.

Commissioner Purcell asked about the rate of pay for staff extending hours to this role. Director Guritz stated that Ellis staff extending rental support would be paid their current assigned hourly salary. The District budgeted for support of rental events at the Event Coordinator's current salary.

The Committee of the Whole provided direction to present the position description to Commission for approval following completion of review of the description through the State's Attorney's Office.

XI. Citizens to Be Heard

None.

XII. Executive Session

None.

XIII. Other Items of Business

None.

XIV. Adjournment

Commissioner Gryder made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Cullick. Aye, all. Opposed, none. Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District