

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
BOARD MEETING
Preserves Headquarters
April 19, 2023

PRESENT

Judy Barnard
Mike Eickman
Audrey Johnson
Gloria Lind
Cheryl Maggio
Jerry Paulson
Jeff Tilly

STAFF

Mike Holan, Executive Director
Steve Chapman, Director of Finance
Vaughn Stamm, Director of Operations
Mike Brien, Director of Natural Resources
Sherry Winebaugh, Human Resources Manager
Renee Pixler, Communications Coordinator

FPWC ATTORNEY

Roxanne Sosnowski

GUESTS

Alex Mills
Patty Oliveri
Dan Kasten
Ann Wasser
Steve Vee
Joy Vee
Jillian Neece
Ginnie Watson

Debbie Hamilton
Alex Marshall
Liz Wiener
Cathy Ott
Brendan Noble
Andrea Wallace-Noble
Catherine Povalitis
Sue Miller

Don Miller
Jim Roberts
Lora McClelland
Michael O. Simmons
Jeff Bailey
K. Haas
Chris Samuelson

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM, by President Tilly. Recording secretary Kristy Knapp called the roll.

PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE Judy Barnard led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL of AGENDA and MINUTES Gloria Lind made a motion, Audrey Johnson second to approve the minutes for March 15, 2023. **Motion passed unanimously.**

PRESENTATIONS and PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Baker Tilly Audit Results – John Rader from Baker Tilly presented the audit results for the year ending October 31, 2022. All Commissioners were provided a Financial Results document, Annual Financial Report and Reporting and Insights from 2022 Audit Report. John reviewed the Financial Results document, which included the general fund, general fund balance history, other governmental funds, legal debt margin and debt service compared to governmental expenditures. Steve Chapman mentioned the expenditures were down due to certain capital equipment we could not get in 2022. Those items were budgeted again in 2023. The Board of Commissioners thanked John.

David Rogers' Big Bugs: The Pollinators Exhibit – Alex Mills showed images of the pollinator sculptures that will be Klehm's summer exhibit this season. The exhibit consists of 10 oversized sculptures that will be placed throughout the grounds and gardens. Each sculpture will have a sign that talks about the pollinator and about the piece of art. The exhibit will be there from June 10th through September 10th. There will be an opening reception on June 9th with David Rogers, the artist of the sculptures, present. The sponsors are Collins Aerospace, Illinois Bank & Trust, and additional community support.

Chris Samuelson – Chris Samuelson the Board Chair for Severson Dells Education Foundation made a statement regarding the agreement between the Forest Preserve of Winnebago County and Severson Dell Education Foundation. Chris mentioned the Severson Dells’ Board unanimously approved to eliminate the operating agreement and approve a lease only agreement with the Forest Preserve.

Steve Vee – 5228 Regents Park Rd, Rockford. Steve addressed the Board and made a statement in hopes that there is still time to repair the relationship between the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County and Severson Dells Education Foundation. He implores the Board to not take any further action severing the relationship and restart the negotiations so an agreement can be made that works for everyone.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS / DISCUSSION

Severson Dells Agreement Committee Report and Update – Cheryl Maggio mentioned a new lease agreement is being brought to the Board tonight because Severson has told us they have no intention of a partnership agreement.

NEW BUSINESS

Steve Chapman wanted to bring two items to the Board’s attention. The first item is the deferred compensation program with Empower. With limited participation and poor performance from Empower to come and talk with our employees, we are looking to move away from Empower to another company. The process will take a while and nothing will be done until July or August. The second item is the current agreement with the County for accounting services and other administrative services they provide. In the current agreement the Forest Preserve pays \$108,000. After meeting with an individual from the County, the proposal presented was \$170,000. In the process of reviewing their numbers, we will be further negotiating the amount. Something will be brought to the Board in May or June.

Audrey Johnson addressed an email that was sent to her from a Macktown Living History Board member. The email was regarding the plumbing issues the Visitor Center has during the winter months and if anything can be done to fix the issue. Mike Holan updated the Board on how the plumbing system works and the cost to fix the issue. At this time the building does not see enough use during the winter months to spend the money to fix the issue.

ACTION ITEMS

Bills for March – Mike Eickman made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to authorize the payment of the bills for March in the amount of \$673,713.82. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Construct a Shade Structure at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden – Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. (Klehm) has made and continues to propose improvements to property owned by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC), to the mutual benefit of both parties. Klehm proposes the construction of a Shade Structure upon the property, to be located within the Nancy Olson Children’s Garden, in order to provide additional recreational benefit and protection from harmful ultraviolet rays for visitors of all ages. Klehm believes in good faith that the ultimate cost of this improvement shall be over \$10,000. Section 10 of the operating agreement in effect between Klehm and FPWC states that Klehm will seek the District’s written approval for any capital improvement project which is anticipated to cost in excess of \$10,000, and the District agrees that such approval will not be unreasonably withheld. Audrey Johnson made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to approve Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc.’s construction of a Shade Structure that will cost in excess of \$10,000. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Construct a Dwarf Conifer Garden at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden – Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc. (Klehm) has made and continues to propose improvements to property owned by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC), to the mutual benefit of both parties. Klehm proposes the construction of a Dwarf Conifer Garden upon the property to provide additional educational benefit and enhanced botanic interest to visitors. Klehm has invested a total of \$7,259.75 in donor restricted funds upon

the project to-date, and believes in good faith that the ultimate cost of this improvement shall be over \$10,000. Section 10 of the operating agreement in effect between Klehm and FPWC states that Klehm will seek the District's written approval for any capital improvement project which is anticipated to cost in excess of \$10,000, and the District agrees that such approval will not be unreasonably withheld. Jerry Paulson made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to approve Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc.'s construction of a Dwarf Conifer Garden that will cost in excess of \$10,000. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bids for Klehm Arboretum, Trask Bridge and Macktown Asphalt Paving – Vaughn Stamm addressed the Board regarding the asphalt paving bid for Klehm Arboretum, Trask Bridge and Macktown Forest Preserves. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners approved the replacement of asphalt on portions of existing paths at Klehm Arboretum, roadway and parking lot at Trask Bridge, and parking lots and driveways at Macktown Golf Maintenance as part of the 2023 capital budget. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held for each asphalt project with three companies providing project bids. The qualified low bid was Norwest Construction, Inc. for the replacement of asphalt pathways at Klehm Arboretum, parking lots and roadways at Trask Bridge, and parking lots and driveways at Macktown Golf Maintenance Shop area. The total cost as specified is \$295,000.00, which the staff budgeted \$305,000.00 for these projects in the 2023 budget. Staff recommends for an additional 10% contingency provision in case of additional substrate or asphalt is required beyond what was specified. Judy Barnard made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to approve the project for \$295,000.00 from Norwest Construction, Inc. for the replacement of asphalt pathways at Klehm Arboretum, parking lots and roadways Trask Bridge, and parking lots and driveways Macktown Golf Maintenance Shop area with an additional 10% (\$29,500.00) project contingency to be provided. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Acceptance of Bids for Blackhawk Springs, Espenscheid, and Deer Run Asphalt Paving – Vaughn Stamm addressed the Board regarding the asphalt paving bid for Blackhawk Springs, Espenscheid and Deer Run Forest Preserves. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County Board of Commissioners approved the replacement of asphalt on portions of existing roadways and parking lots at Blackhawk Springs, Espenscheid, and Deer Run Forest Preserves as part of the 2023 capital budget. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held for each asphalt project with four companies providing project bids. The qualified low bid was Bel Rock Asphalt Paving, Inc. for the replacement of asphalt roadways and parking lots at Blackhawk Springs, Espenscheid, and Deer Run Forest Preserves. The total cost as specified is \$73,550.43, which the staff budgeted \$133,000.00 for these projects in the 2023 budget. Staff recommends for an additional 10% contingency provision in case of additional substrate or asphalt is required beyond what was specified. Mike Eickman made a motion, Audrey Johnson seconded to approve the project for \$73,550.43 from Bel Rock Asphalt Paving, Inc. for the replacement of asphalt roadways and parking lots at Blackhawk Springs, Espenscheid, and Deer Run Forest Preserves with an additional 10% (\$7,355.00) project contingency to be provided. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Budget Amendment – Land Acquisition – Mike Holan addressed the Board regarding the budget amendment for the Leslie Oswald Property. The Forest Preserve will inherit 96+/- acres of land as part of a trust dispersal from the Estate of Leslie Oswald of Cherry Valley. There is an outstanding mortgage of approximately \$72,000.00 on one of the parcels and unpaid back taxes of \$22,575.40 on two other parcels totaling approximately \$94,575.40, which the 96+/- acres have been appraised at \$1,412,000. The Forest Preserve has \$56,332 in the Land Acquisition Fund to expend on part of the outstanding mortgage and sufficient funds in the Corporate Fund Balance to appropriate \$50,000 in the Corporate Fund account to cover the remaining balance on the outstanding mortgage as well as the unpaid back taxes. Jerry Paulson made a motion, Mike Eickman seconded to approve the budget amendment. Roll Call vote taken. **Motion passes 6-0**

Discuss and Approve Lease and Bill of Sale with Severson Dells Education Foundation – Roxanne Sosnowski addressed the Board of Commissioners regarding the updated Lease Agreement and Bill of Sale for Severson Dells Nature Center. Roxanne mentioned that on March 28th, she received communication

from Attorney Mezny indicating that Severson Dells Education Foundation no longer wish to pursue a services agreement with the Forest Preserve and prefer a lease only and a bill of sale. Roxanne reviewed the changes with the Commissioner and has drafted a revised lease agreement between Severson Dells Education Foundation and the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County for a period of two (2) years, with provision for lease termination should the need arise. The complete bill of sale has not been turned over to the forest preserve at this point. The golf cart and canoes were struck from the bill of sale. Judy Barnard made a motion, Cheryl Maggio seconded to approve the lease and bill of sale with Severson Dells Education Foundation. Audrey Johnson made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to strike “Effective June 1, 2023 and thereafter” from paragraph 6 under utilities and replace it with “Upon execution of the lease agreement and thereafter”. Roll call vote taken. **Motion passes 7-0.** Judy Barnard made a motion, Gloria Lind seconded to strike “Effective May 1, 2023 and thereafter” from paragraph 7 under Custodial Services and Supplies and replace it with “Within thirty days following execution of the lease agreement and thereafter”. Roll call vote taken. **Motion passes 7-0.** Gloria Lind made a motion, Jerry Paulson seconded to strike “will need to” from paragraph 10 under The Brick Walkway and replace it with “may”. Roll call vote taken. **Motion passes 7-0.** Jerry Paulson made a motion, Mike Eickman seconded to remove the first sentence in paragraph 11 under Program Support and Premises Security. Roll call vote taken. **Motion does not pass 3-4. (Judy Barnard, Gloria Lind, Cheryl Maggio, and Jeff Tilly voted no).** Judy Barnard made a motion, Mike Eickman seconded to approve the resolution as amended. Roll call vote taken. **Motion passes 7-0.**

Jerry Paulson asked if the granting agency for the canoes could be contacted to see if the canoes can be transferred. Mike Holan stated he will contact NRPA.

Cease Services for Severson Dells Education Foundation at the Nature Center – Severson Dells Education Foundation (SDEF) and the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County (FPWC) have operated under a mutually beneficial agreement to work together to provide educational and nature-related opportunities for the citizens of Winnebago County. The agreement was terminated by the FPWC on March 19, 2023 while a new agreement was being discussed by representatives of both SDEF and FPWC. The revised agreement negotiated between the parties included returning oversight of SDNC staff to the Severson Dells Education Foundation. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County agreed to continue to provide and maintain the Severson Dells Nature Center to be used by the SDEF for educating the public about the natural environment until a new agreement was adopted by both organizations. SDEF has now decided not to enter into another partnership agreement with FPWC. The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County recognizes that SDEF no longer wishes to be in partnership with FPWC and FPWC will therefore cease to provide those services that were continued after the March 19, 2023 agreement termination. The services agreement previously approved by Resolution No. 23-0307 by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, at its meeting on March 15, 2023, is hereby rescinded. Those services will cease effective May 1, 2023, and that any future use of the building and care of the building and grounds will be defined in the Lease Agreement that is in the process negotiation by both organizations. Jerry Paulson made a motion, Audrey Johnson seconded to table the resolution indefinitely. Roll Call vote taken. **Motion passes 6-1, (Cheryl Maggio voted no).**

STAFF REPORTS

Preserve Operations - Vaughn Stamm, Scott Stewart, Scott Wallace, and Bryan Helmold submitted a written report. Vaughn mentioned that all three campground and the equestrian trails are open.

Land and Development – Mike Brien, Mike Groves and Keith Krey submitted a written report. Mike Brien mentioned approximately 150 cubic yards of topsoil and sod was removed from the Bell Bowl Prairie and taken to Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve to be used in the restoration areas. A workday at the greenhouse was also done the same day. A letter was sent from Rock River Valley food pantry thanking the Forest Preserve for the 2,750lbs of deer meat.

Golf Operations – Vaughn Stamm, Rich Rosenstiel, Tyler Knapp, and Mark Freiman submitted a written report. Vaughn mentioned all three golf courses are open.

Marketing – Renee Pixler submitted a written report. Renee announced multiple events coming up this month and next month. On Earth Day there will be a self-guided QR code hike on the paved paths at Hononegah and Blackhawk Springs. On May 4, there's a Howl at the moon hike with Deputy Tim Speer. On May 10, the second Forest Preserve guided hike with the Natural Resource staff will be at Deer Run and May 13, there will be a guided hike hosted by UW Health at Oak Ridge. All events are posted on the Forest Preserves' website.

Human Resources/Volunteer Program Report – Sherry Winebaugh submitted a written report.

Law Enforcement – Sheriff's Department submitted a written report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and COMMUNICATIONS

May 4 - Howl at the Moon Hike with Deputy Tim Speer at Sugar River Alder Forest Preserve at 6:30pm

CLOSED SESSION

Audrey Johnson made a motion, Gloria Lind second to go into closed session at 7:19pm for personnel. Roll call vote taken. **Motion passes 7-0**. At 8:04pm, the meeting returned to open session. No action was taken while in closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Mike Eickman made a motion, Gloria Lind second to adjourn the meeting at 8:08PM. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Next board meeting 5:30 PM, Wednesday, May 17, 2023, Preserve Headquarters

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristy Knapp
Recording Secretary