



1996 S. Kirk Rd. Suite 320
Geneva, IL 60134

Forest Preserve District, Planning and Utilization Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair Cherryl Strathmann, President Christopher Kious, President Pro Tem, Mavis Bates,
Ron Ford, Michelle Gumz, Mike Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Mike Linder, Vern Tepe

Thursday, February 29, 2024

9:30 AM

3rd Floor Board Room

I. Call to Order

The Forest Preserve District Planning and Utilization Committee meeting was held Thursday, February 29, 2024 at the Administration Offices located at 1996 S. Kirk Road, Suite 320, Geneva, IL 60134. Chair Strathmann called the meeting to order at 9:30AM.

- PRESENT** Board Member Ron Ford
Board Member Michelle Gumz
Board Member Michael Kenyon
President Chris Kious
Board Member Anita Lewis
Chair Cherryl Strathmann
- ABSENT** Board Member Vern Tepe
Board Member Mavis Bates
Board Member Michael Linder

Also Present: Commissioners Allan (Remote), Molina (Remote), Roth, Juby; Exec. Dir. Haberthur; CFO Petschke & staff Carrano, Marano; NRM Dir. Chess & staff Blackburn; Chief of Planning & Land Mgmt. Rooks-Lopez; HR Dir. Clough; Chief of Police Burger; Dir. of Community Affairs Metanchuk; Admin staff Rafferty and Attorney Hodge.

II. Approval of Minutes from November 16, 2023

- RESULT:** APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT
- MOVER:** Michael Kenyon
- AYE:** Ron Ford, Michael Kenyon, Chris Kious, Anita Lewis, and Cherryl Strathmann
- ABSENT:** Mavis Bates, Michelle Gumz, Michael Linder, and Vern Tepe

III. Public Comment (Each Speaker is limited to three minutes)

None.

IV. Bids and Proposals

None.

V. New or Unfinished Business

TMP-24-1960 Resolution Approving a Request to Submit an IDNR Recreational Trails Program Grant Application for the Development and Improvement of the Limestone Trails at Fitchie Creek Forest Preserve

Chief of Planning and Land Mgmt. Rooks-Lopez presented the request to apply for an RTP grant.

Fitchie Creek Forest Preserve is a popular preserve for hiking and horseback riding. The limestone and asphalt trails meander through woodlands, prairie, and wetlands along Fitchie Creek. Due to the topography, wetlands, and active creek areas, sections of the limestone trail experience significant wash out during heavy rains. This project if awarded would address drainage with solutions for problem areas as well as restore sections of the limestone trail. This project is estimated to cost \$300,000 and the Receptions Trails Program (RTP) grant would reimburse the District a maximum of \$200,000 for the project costs. This project aligns with one of the grant's eligibility factors; trail maintenance or restoration, including trail damage by unauthorized users. Funding for the project will be included in the 2024/25 Fiscal Year Budget.

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Kenyon stated that he was pleased to hear about the project moving forward noting that a number of constituents are unhappy with the current flooding situation on the trails. There was brief discussion regarding the location of flooding on the trails. Commissioner Allan asked if the District continues to be involved with the nearby school. Exec. Dir. Haberthur responded that an estimated 20 years ago middle school students were involved in the original establishment of the prairie led by a science teacher who was active in the Forest Preserve.*

RESULT: **MOVED FORWARD BY VOICE VOTE**
TO: Forest Preserve District Executive Committee
MOVER: Michael Kenyon
SECONDER: Ron Ford
AYE: Ron Ford, Michael Kenyon, Chris Kious, Anita Lewis, and Cherryl Strathmann
ABSENT: Mavis Bates, Michelle Gumz, Michael Linder, and Vern Tepe

TMP-24-2002 Authorization to Apply for and Enter into Grant Agreements

Exec. Dir. Haberthur presented the resolution to apply for grants. The one-year authorization would help expedite administrative procedures.

The District has a long history of successfully leveraging capital funds as match for large state and federal grant programs. This practice has allowed us to install more miles of trail, create more acres of habitat, and build more interactive nature exhibits than we could have managed without the assistance of these programs. However, Requests for Proposals (RFP) are often only posted for short time durations and deadlines for applications often require quick turnaround for full project consideration. Additionally, most applications are not considered complete without a board resolution from the applying organization. These short postings and quick turnarounds often do not synchronize with the District's commission cycle. This results in either missed opportunities or the need for retroactive ratification by the board after a grant's deadline has passed.

In order to ensure future grant deadlines are not missed, and to minimize the amount of ratification asked of the board, broader authorization is being sought for senior District staff to apply for any grant (private, state, federal or other) that will help offset the cost of any upcoming capital project. These projects are enumerated in the 2024 Update to the Comprehensive Master Plan.

DISCUSSION: *None.*

RESULT: **MOVED FORWARD BY VOICE VOTE**
TO: Forest Preserve District Executive Committee
MOVER: Ron Ford
SECONDER: Michael Kenyon
AYE: Ron Ford, Michael Kenyon, Chris Kious, Anita Lewis, and Cherryl Strathmann
ABSENT: Mavis Bates, Michelle Gumz, Michael Linder, and Vern Tepe

Chief of Planning and Land Mgmt. Rooks-Lopez presented items for discussion.

TMP-24-1995 Discussion Items

- Rookies Patio
- Fox Valley Park District - Fox River Bridge
- Schweitzer House ADA Remodel
- Lily Lake Solar Farm Sign/Bench

Rookies Patio

Dir. Rooks-Lopez provided a brief presentation regarding the container that was placed in the patio. The container details were not included in the original drawings in 2022-2023. Rookies has since provided drawings to the District with the full patio details. The container would be utilized as an open bar area adjacent to the open pergola structure that will be a stage for outdoor live music. Dir. Rooks-Lopez provided photos, opened the floor for discussion.

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Ford noted that since the pandemic, there has been a large movement of restaurants providing outdoor seating. He felt this is an essential amenity for the public.*

Fox Valley Park District – Fox River Bridge

Dir. Rooks-Lopez reported Fox Valley Park District received a federal grant to construct a new bridge over the Fox River. The Park District needs approval from Kane County for construction and the Forest Preserve District as it lands on our property. There are four different locations under consideration. Dir. Rooks-Lopez stated the preferred location is the south end of the Fox Valley Red Oak Nature Center and referenced a map. FVPD is requesting permission to land on the Les Arends Forest Preserve as a pedestrian crossing bridge.

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Roth asked if FVPD would be responsible for the maintenance of the bridge. Dir. Rooks-Lopez responded yes; the Park District would be responsible for all the maintenance needs.*

Schweitzer House ADA Remodel

Dir. Rooks-Lopez reported that Friends of the Fox River have been working on renovations to the Schweitzer House to comply with ADA standards. The renovation plan includes a removal of an interior wall and removal of a stepdown in-between two rooms to create a flat seamless transition.

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Kenyon commented that the Schweitzer House is a unique home with custom fixtures. Dir. Rooks-Lopez stated that Friends of the Fox received a grant from Kane County River Boat Fund to help with renovation expenses. Commissioner Roth asked about the use and rental of the home. Exec. Dir. Haberthur explained that the agreement with Friends of the Fox includes maintenance and use of the facility. They are not to rent out the space to a third party. President Kious noted history of the home and Schweitzer family. There was brief discussion regarding tenant agreement and requirements of the property. Exec. Dir, Haberthur responded that the District has had a long-term positive relationship with Friends of the Fox and they are very active.*

Lily Lake Solar Farm Sign/Bench

Dir. Rooks-Lopez provided information regarding a solar farm company that purchased property just north of the Great Western Trail and plan to build a solar farm. Part of the purchase stipulated informational signage. They are requesting an informational sign and bench. Dir. Rooks-Lopez stated an informational sign would be feasible however, staff would not recommend construction of a bench as it is not an ideal location. There was discussion regarding size and shape. Staff would install the standard sign utilized at other preserves. Commissioner Williams spoke on this item as it was brought forth at the Kane County Development Committee. The company is to pay for the sign, the sign would be maintained, however the District would not replace it in the future. Commissioner Williams stated that this

was not a requirement from the Kane County Development Committee, merely a recommendation to consider. There was discussion regarding signs versus benches. Exec. Dir. Haberthur noted that benches have been installed along the Great Western Trail; however, it becomes a cost rather than a gift due to vandalism and maintenance. A sign would be better suited for this area. Staff is currently working on a bench policy for the District to mitigate cost and placement throughout the preserves.

President Kious discussed a Kane County project that was in the final stages of completion. The Kane County Department of Transportation (KDOT) connected a bike path along their property and the Fox River Trail. Exec. Dir. Haberthur noted that the District does not own the property this is owned by KDOT. Commissioner Ford noted that this County project would be a positive addition to the High School nearby and their cross-country team.

VI. Closed Session to Discuss Land Acquisition, License Agreements, Potential Litigation and Personnel

None.

VII. Communications

Community Affairs Dir. Metanchuk promoted the Maple Sugaring event held March 2 and 3rd. Dir. Metanchuk promoted the Earth Day tree-planting event on April 20th at Elburn Forest Preserve. The annual Native Plant sale is currently live for online purchase. The proceeds from the foundation funds things like the Osprey Tower that was installed by ComEd recently. Photos were shared. Staff created a platform specific for Ospreys. Former Executive Director Jon J. Duerr passed and the memorial service will be held Saturday, March 2nd at Yurs funeral home in St. Charles.

VIII. Chairman's Comments

None.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:17AM.

RESULT:	APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE
MOVER:	Michael Kenyon
SECONDER:	Ron Ford
AYE:	Ron Ford, Michael Kenyon, Chris Kious, Anita Lewis, Cheryl Strathmann,
ABSENT:	Mavis Bates, Michelle Gumz, Michael Linder, and Vern Tepe

Cheryl Strathmann, Chair
Forest Preserve District Planning and Utilization Committee
Forest Preserve District of Kane County

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriella Figliozzi

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Recording Secretary