Government Center
719 S. Batavia Ave., Bldg. A
Geneva, IL 60134

Forest Preserve District Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 14, 2026 8:30 AM Auditorium

I. Call to Order

The Forest Preserve District Full Commission meeting was held Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at the Kane County Government Center located at 719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva, IL 60134. President Lenert called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

II. Roll Call

Remote Attendance Approval

None.

PRESENT
President Forest Preserve District Bill Lenert
Secretary Forest Preserve District Mo Iqbal
Commissioner Jennifer Abbatacola
Commissioner Deborah Allan
Commissioner Alex Arroyo
Commissioner Mavis Bates (Arrived in person at 8:32AM)
Commissioner Sonia Garcia
Commissioner Jon Gripe
Commissioner Michelle Gumz (Arrived in person at 8:34AM)
Commissioner Leslie Juby
Commissioner Chris Kious
Commissioner Anita Lewis (Arrived in person at 8:33AM)
Commissioner Michael Linder
Commissioner Myrna Molina
Commissioner Bill Roth
Commissioner Jarett Sanchez
Commissioner Cherryl Strathmann
Commissioner Vern Tepe
Commissioner David Young
Commissioner Kim Young (Arrived in person at 8:32AM)

ABSENT:
Commissioner Ted Penesis
Commissioner Clifford Surges
Commissioner Bill Tarver
Commissioner Rick Williams

Also Present: Exec. Dir. Haberthur, CFAO Petschke; Dir. of Planning and Land Protection Rooks-Lopez; HR Dir Clough; NRM Dir. Chess; Ops. Staff Sparks; Dir. of Comm. Engagement Metanchuk & staff Kovach; Chief of Police Burger; Attorney Price; Exec. Assist. Figliozzi, KCIT staff Peters and members of the public.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

President Lenert asked Commissioner Arroyo to lead the pledge.

IV. Public Comment (Each Speaker is limited to 3 minutes)

None.

V. Presentation and Approval of the Minutes of June 9th, 2026

RESULT: **APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**
MOVER: Chris Kious
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Sonia Garcia Jon Gripe, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, David Young
ABSENT: Mavis Bates, Michelle Gumz, Anita Lewis, Ted Penesis, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Rick Williams, Kim Young

VI. Presentation and Approval of the Bills and Commissioners' Per Diem from June 2026 *(Commissioners Bates, Young arrived in person at 8:32AM)*

RESULT: **ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Deborah Allan
SECONDER: Jon Gripe
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Sonia Garcia Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young, Kim Young
ABSENT: Michelle Gumz, Anita Lewis, Ted Penesis, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Rick Williams

VII. Presentations

None.

VIII. Consent Agenda

President Lenert asked if any Commissioner wished to remove any resolutions from the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Abbatacola requested resolution FP-R-26-07-3236 be removed from the consent agenda.

----------CONSENT AGENDA----------

Finance and Administration

FP-R-26-07-3229 Resolution Approving the Surplus Vehicle, Equipment and Furniture Disposal

FP-R-26-07-3230 Resolution Approving the Purchase of One (1) ASV RT-135 Forestry Compact Track Loader for the Natural Resource Management Department

FP-R-26-07-3231 Resolution Approving the Purchase of One (1) John Deere 6M 115 Cab Tractor for the Natural Resource Management Department

FP-R-26-07-3232 Resolution Approving the Purchase of Four (4) Zero Turn Mowers for the Operations Department

FP-R-26-07-3233 Resolution Approving the Purchase of Three (3) Ford F-250 Pickup Trucks for the Operations Department and Two (2) Ford F-150 Police Responder Pickup Trucks for the Public Safety Department

Land Acquisition

FP-R-26-07-3234 Resolution Authorizing a Right of Way Acquisition Agreement Between the County of Kane and The Forest Preserve District of Kane County for

Improvements to Fabyan Parkway at the Settlers Hill Golf Course Entrance

Planning and Utilization

FP-R-26-07-3235 Resolution Approving a Bid for Cattail and Common Reed Control at Eight Forest Preserves

FP-R-26-07-3237 Resolution Approving a Contract with Wight & Company for Final Design & Engineering Professional Services for the Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve Wildlife Overlook

FP-R-26-07-3238 Resolution Approving a Contract with Engineering Resource Associates for Preliminary Engineering and Permitting Services for Deer Valley & Big Rock Creek Restoration at Big Rock Forest Preserve

Executive

FP-R-26-07-3239 Resolution Approving the Purchase of Parcels Totaling Approximately 33.95 Acres in Sugar Grove Township

----------END OF CONSENT AGENDA----------

RESULT:	**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER:	Bill Roth
SECONDER:	Cherryl Strathmann
AYE:	Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Sonia Garcia Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Ted Penesis, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Vern Tepe, Rick Williams, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT:	Michelle Gumz, Anita Lewis, Ted Penesis, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Rick Williams

FP-R-26-07-3236 Resolution Approving Amendments to the Agricultural Land Use Policy

The District currently protects over 24,000 acres of land in Kane County, of which, approximately 5,230 acres is being farmed (primarily row crops and hay) as an interim land management practice until these fields can be ecologically restored. The majority of the District's farmed acres are under annual Farm License Agreements. Over 35 local farmers have annual license agreements with the District. The District has the responsibility of implementing best management practices and sound stewardship on all its holdings, including farmland. Accordingly, the District implemented an Agricultural Land Use policy in April of 2024 to establish governing rules for the stewardship and licensing of the District's agricultural lands. Along with clerical and grammatical updates, three substantive modifications to the current policy are being recommended as follows:

1) Modification in rental rate calculation
2) Neonicotinoid soybean seed treatment prohibition
3) Multi-year license provision

Rental Rate Calculation Modification
Current rental rates are based on average yields of non-irrigated corn crops based on the soils present within the field. Changes are proposed to better align with the District's soil assessment and to set rates for fields not yet a part of the closed bid procurement process to a market rate. New rates would be based on the soil productivity index for Illinois to classify land as Class, A, B, C, or "not prime" soils. The average soil productivity index is then modified by the Illinois Agricultural District Cash Rent Adjustment Factor as produced by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service to reach a cash rent rate for each class as follows:

Land Class	SPI	Rent
Excellent (Class A)	133-147 (Ave 140)	$312.00
Good (Class B)	117-132 (Ave 125)	$264.00
Average (Class C)	100-116 (Ave 108)	$210.00
Fair (Not Prime)	<100	$190.00

Neonicotinoid Seed Treatment Ban for Soybeans
Neonicotinoid pesticides, aka "Neonics," are a class of broad-spectrum insecticides that farmers can purchase as a seed-coating on their soybean seed that distributes throughout the plant as it grows. This method of delivery distributes neonics throughout the soil and adjacent waterways and has deleterious impacts to our local pollinators and wildlife. Other methods of insecticide control that are more environmentally sensitive are both readily available and effective. For these reasons, staff are recommending an additional amendment that would prohibit the use of neonicotinoid treated soybean seeds on District property.

Multi-year Licenses
Currently, all District agricultural licenses, excepting organic operations, are operated under approximately annual licenses. The proposed amendment would allow for the District to utilize multi-year licenses in place of annual licenses. Multi-year licenses offer more economic security to District farmers as well as encourage more sustainable agricultural practices while reducing administrative burden on staff.
DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Abbatacola stated that she requested to pull this item off of the consent agenda to discuss the item in detail, she noted she spoke to a few farmers and felt that more research was needed in regards to banning "neonics" and the implications to soy bean yields. Dir. Chess provided an explanation of the amendments presented. He indicated that the neonic soy bean seed coat ban should not have any negative implications to the farmers as untreated seeds are readily available and produce comparable yields, additionally, non-treated seed greatly reduces negative impacts to the environment. There was further discussion regarding evidence of impacts of the insecticides. Commissioner Abbatacola asked if the water and native plants in Kane County specifically had been tested. Dir. Chess explained that there was Kane-specific evidence within our local kestrel population; namely that these birds are testing positive for neonics, which indicates non-target movement of this insecticide throughout the food chain. Dir. Chess also highlighted more regional and national data to support the negative impacts of neonicitinoid insecticides on the landscape. Best management practice is to eliminate pesticides that are found to be harmful to local pollinators and wildlife. Commissioner Kious spoke regarding this issue, he stated that these pesticides effect the pollinators, it is difficult to test however it is proven that they do cause harm to the pollinators and wildlife. Studies have shown a serious problem with this specific pesticide. Kious asked if any farmer would not lease our land with this new implication? Exec. Dir. Haberthur responded that there were no concerns with the current tenants, and that he was confident we would likely retain all of our current tenants even with these changes. Commissioner Abbatacola felt that the farmers had not been consulted with the new changes. She requested to push the item for 30 days to consult the farmers. Commissioner Kious asked Exec. Dir. Haberthur if it was time sensitive. Exec. Dir. Haberthur responded that ideally not delaying would provide enough time for the farmers to agree upon the changes and provide the contract. The lease is yearly and they have the right to first refusal. He felt confident that the farmers would move forward with the new policy change recommendations. Commissioner Abbatacola moved to postpone the item for one month. Commissioner David Young second the motion. Commissioner Bates spoke as an advocator to reduce the use of pesticides. She*

felt that the District was being a responsible steward to the land and to protect the pollinators and the wildlife. She added that it has been scientifically proven that these pesticides are harming the environment. Commissioner Gumz asked if postponing for 30 days would negatively impact anything. Dir. Chess explained that the goal is to give enough advanced notice to the famers so they can prepare accordingly. Commissioner Cherryl stated that we are providing restrictions to our land.

Vote was called to Postpone: **FP-R-26-07-3236 Resolution Approving Amendments to the Agricultural Land Use Policy**

RESULT:	**ROLL CALL VOTE FAILED [8-12]**
MOVER:	Jennifer Abbatacola
SECONDER:	David Young
AYE:	Jennifer Abbatacola, Alex Arroyo, Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Bill Roth, David Young, Kim Young
NAYS:	Deborah Allan, Mavis Bates, Sonia Garcia, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe
ABSENT:	Ted Penesis, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Rick Williams

Vote was called on the original motion to adopt **FP-R-26-07-3236 Resolution Approving Amendments to the Agricultural Land Use Policy**

RESULT:	**ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE [17-3]**
MOVER:	Myrna Molina
SECONDER:	Leslie Juby
AYE:	Alex Arroyo, Deborah Allan, Mavis Bates, Sonia Garcia, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, Bill Roth, Kim Young
NAYS:	Jennifer Abbatacola, Jon Gripe, David Young
ABSENT:	Ted Penesis, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Rick Williams

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

None.

X. New or Unfinished Business

None.

XI. Communications

Dir. of Community Engagement Metanchuk shared images and status reports of social media traffic specifically due to the sharing of a protected marshland bird that was discovered recently in Kane County that has nested and had babies.

XII. President's Comments

None.

Commissioner Allan promoted the Kane Foundation annual Golf Outing that will be held on September 10, 2026 this year. Commissioner Surges arrived via remote at 9:14AM and asked to send the information for donation options as well.

XIII. Department Reports

RESULT:	**PLACED ON FILE BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**
MOVER:	Cherryl Strathmann
AYE:	Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Sonia Garcia Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina,

Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Clifford Surges, Vern Tepe, David Young**,** Kim Young

ABSENT: Ted Penesis, Bill Tarver, Rick Williams

XIV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 AM.

RESULT: **APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE**
MOVER: Bill Roth
SECONDER: Jon Gripe
AYE: Jennifer Abbatacola, Deborah Allan, Alex Arroyo, Mavis Bates, Sonia Garcia Jon Gripe, Michelle Gumz, Mo Iqbal, Leslie Juby, Chris Kious, Bill Lenert, Anita Lewis, Michael Linder, Myrna Molina, Bill Roth, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, David Young**,** Kim Young
ABSENT: Ted Penesis, Clifford Surges, Bill Tarver, Rick Williams

Bill Lenert, Chairman
Forest Preserve District Commission
Forest Preserve District of Kane County

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriella Figliozzi _____