



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

Forest Preserve District Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

President Christopher Kious, President Pro Tem Mavis Bates, Treasurer Bill Lenert, Secretary Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe

Thursday, March 9, 2023

8:30 AM

3rd Floor Board Room

I. Call to Order

The Forest Preserve District Executive Committee meeting was held Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 8:30 AM at the Administration Offices located at 1996 S. Kirk Road, Suite 320, Geneva, IL 60134. President Chris Kious opened the meeting at 8:30 AM.

Members Present:

Attendee Name:

Status:

President Chris Kious	Present
Commissioner Dale Berman	Present
Commissioner Michael Kenyon	Present
Commissioner Mavis Bates	Present
Commissioner Anita Lewis	Present
Commissioner Cherryl Strathmann	Present (Remote)
Commissioner Myrna Molina	Present (Remote)
Commissioner Jarett Sanchez	Present
Commissioner Vern Tepe	Present

Others Present:

Commissioners: Daugherty (Remote), Gumz, Juby (Remote), Lenert, Roth; Exec. Dir. Habarthur; CFO Petschke & staff Marano, Carrano; Chief of Plan. & Land Mgmt. Rooks-Lopez; Ops. Dir. Pentecost; Dir. of NRM Chess; Dir. of Comm. Affairs Metanchuk & staff Kovach; HR staff Misner, Cleave, Kouzes; Chief of Police & Dir. of Public Safety Burger; Exec. Assist. Figliozzi & staff Rafferty and Attorney Hodge

II. Approval of Minutes from February 9, 2023

RESULT: ADOPTED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

MOVER: Michael Kenyon

AYE: Mavis Bates, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Myrna Molina, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann and Vern Tepe

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

None.

IV. Presentation and Approval of Bills and Commissioners' Per Diem from February 2023

RESULT: **MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Dale Berman
SECONDER: Vern Tepe
AYE: Mavis Bates, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Myrna Molina,
Jarett Sanchez, Cheryl Strathmann and Vern Tepe

V. Finance and Administration

A. Resolution Approving the Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve Wetland and Stream Mitigation Bank Contract for Engineering and Permitting Services for Phase II and Phase III

Chief of Planning and Land Management Rooks-Lopez presented the Muirhead Mitigation Bank project. In early 2022, the District completed the initial regulatory establishment of our first wetland mitigation bank. The formal agreement between the District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) that established the “Muirhead Springs” wetland mitigation bank is known as a Mitigation Bank Instrument (MBI). Our MBI permits 182.91 (acres) of wetland mitigation credits and 6,041 (linear feet) of stream mitigation credits. The MBI further stipulates the amount and type of credits that can be sold and are tied to strict performance standards. Prior to construction, the District has been permitted to sell 20% of the total amount of mitigation credits to fund initial construction. Additional credits will be authorized for sale once the site has successfully met the hydrology standard.

The MBI’s construction commencement requirement stipulates that we must begin the project within the growing season following the sale of pre-construction mitigation credits. Because we began selling stream mitigation credits in August of 2021, we must begin construction of the stream mitigation phase of the project in the 2023 growing season.

In tandem with our design consultant, V3 Companies, LTD, the District developed a construction plan that meets all the requirements of the MBI. The resulting plan partitions the site into geographic portions based on the site’s hydrologic goals and permitting requirements. Funds totaling \$1,645,226.00 approved in July 2022 for Phase 1 construction, monitoring and reporting of the Muirhead Springs Wetland Mitigation Bank. Currently, insufficient funds are available in the Mitigation Account for the total multi-year project expenditures totaling \$2,033,070.00 (base bid, alternate, 10% contingency and wetland monitoring & reporting). However, upon District request, a Schedule of Values was provided by, V3 Companies, LTD. Based on that schedule, sufficient funds totaling \$1,645,226.00 are available for fiscal year 2022/23 and expenditures totaling \$1,520,352.00 (\$1,480,982 phase 1 construction cost and 10% contingency, \$18,370 for wetland monitoring & reporting and \$21,000.00 for engineering costs & contingency). Total estimated contracts for construction cost and monitoring for FY 2022/23 is \$1,520,352.00.

DISCUSSION: None. (Commissioner Gumz arrived in person @ 8:36 AM)

RESULT: **MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Cheryl Strathmann
SECONDER: Anita Lewis
AYE: Mavis Bates, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Myrna Molina,
Jarett Sanchez, Cheryl Strathmann and Vern Tepe

VI. Planning & Utilization

A. Resolution Approving Bids for Pond Management at Burnidge and Bowes Creek Greenway Forest Preserves

Exec. Dir. Haberthur presented the bid for pond management. The Burnidge Forest Preserve encompasses 705 acres and is located along Big Timber and Coombs Roads, west of Elgin, IL. Along with the Paul Wolff Campground, the most notable natural features of the preserve are the

large tallgrass prairie recreations, wetland and woodland restorations. The site also contains two artificially created ponds north of the campground. The larger of the two ponds is a popular spot for campers to fish and recreate. Currently, aquatic weeds such as elodea and Eurasian water milfoil invade this pond. The pond also experiences annual algal blooms despite some limited attempts at mechanical aeration. The algae and aquatic vegetation can make recreational fishing at this site challenging to impractical and multiple preserve users have reported that the condition of the pond is aesthetically unsatisfactory.

The Bowes Creek Greenway Forest Preserve is approximately 32 acres situated south of Bowes Road in the Bowes Creek Country Club subdivision. The site contains three large artificial ponds (totaling approximately 8 acres). There are also three smaller degraded ponds at the site (approx. 0.6 acres). The 3 larger ponds experience periodic algal blooms and invasion by aquatic weeds. The residents of Bowes Creek find the algae and aquatic vegetation unsightly, and have requested that the portion of their HOA dues that come to the District for the management of this site be used for pond management.

Bids were sought from qualified firms for three years of consecutive growing season (Apr-Oct) ecological health monitoring and aquatic vegetation management of the Burnidge pond (Project 1) and the six ponds at Bowes Creek Greenway (Project 2). The contract performance standard is to maintain 70% open water within the pond throughout the growing season. Additionally, the aquatic vegetation present within the pond must be comprised of 30% or less exotic species. The bid was distributed to 11 vendors and advertised with 1 contractor responding. The lowest, qualified bids for both Project 1 (Burnidge) and Project 2 (Bowes Creek Greenway) were received from McCloud Aquatics of Elburn, IL in the amount of \$8,490 (\$2,830/year) and \$23,370 (\$7,790/year).

DISCUSSION: *Commissioner Kenyon asked what would happen to the fish if the ponds were not maintained. Exec. Dir. Haberthur explained that the algae would take over and not allow the fish to reproduce, as it would be too crowded. Commissioner Bates asked if the HOA for Bowes Creek has been responsible for the management and if they could provide a presentation for what they use in the water. Dir. Haberthur responded that staff typically meets with the HOA and discuss the water treatment to improve the pond. There was discussion regarding native plants around the ponds and fertilization to see continued improvement in the waters.*

RESULT:	MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE
MOVER:	Michael Kenyon
SECONDER:	Dale Berman
AYE:	Mavis Bates, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Myrna Molina, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann and Vern Tepe

B. Resolution Approving a Request to Submit an IDNR Recreational Trails Program Grant Application for the Development and Improvement of the Limestone Trails at Big Rock Forest Preserve

Chief of Planning and Land Mgmt. Rooks- Lopez presented the following request to submit for a grant for the Big Rock Forest Preserve project. The District was awarded an RTP grant in 2012 to build the limestone trails that now allow users to explore Big Rock Forest Preserve. Since then, various sections of the limestone trails have suffered major erosional damage. This has caused problems for hikers, equestrians and staff vehicles that either maintain the trails or police it. The District wishes to address these failed sections with a combination of drainage solutions and gravel base repair or build-up. A new section of limestone trail has been planned for installation through the lands that used to make up the Deer Valley Golf Course. This will link users from the lake parking lot out west to the existing mowed trails. This project is estimated to cost \$300,000 and the RTP grant will 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.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Bates commented that the area is well known for bird watchers, she asked if there were any bluebird houses or habitats. Exec. Dir. Haberthur responded that there are nesting bald eagles to the north. The area is full of bird diversity including an endangered species, and waterfowl as well; it is a unique area in Kane County. Dir. Haberthur noted that past Deer Valley golf course area is ideal for blue bird habitats; staff does not have boxes yet. Dir. Haberthur noted, burn season has begun, specifically in this area and that will promote habitats for the endangered species as well. Commissioner Lenert asked about the need for Commission approval to submit for federal grants. Dir. Rooks-Lopez responded that most grants require a resolution to provide support for the projects.

RESULT: **MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Mavis Bates
SECONDER: Anita Lewis
AYE: Mavis Bates, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Myrna Molina, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann and Vern Tepe

VII. New or Unfinished Business

A. Resolution Approving the Purchase of a Parcel Approximately 88.11 Acres Adjacent to Lake Run Forest Preserve in Blackberry Township

Exec. Dir. Haberthur presented the purchase of a parcel adjacent to Lake Run Forest Preserve. He provided background history of the property including an image from 1837 where the property was mapped for the first time after the Blackhawk War. The Norris family was listed in the atlas as the original owners. There is an area that the family stated it had never been plowed since 1840; various native species have remained intact. An interpretive sign with the family name history will be provided in the future. The total purchase price was just over \$1.1M.

DISCUSSION: None.

RESULT: **MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE**
MOVER: Michael Kenyon
SECONDER: Dale Berman
AYE: Mavis Bates, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Myrna Molina, Jarett Sanchez, Cherryl Strathmann and Vern Tepe

B. Resolution Authorizing Application for Kane County Grand Victoria Riverboat Funds and Execution of all Necessary Documents for the Burlington Prairie Bison Reintroduction Project

Exec. Dir. Haberthur presented grant request for the Burlington Prairie Bison Re-introduction project. He provided a PowerPoint presentation not included in the agenda packet that was shared by Brenna Ness, Agricultural Ecologist of McHenry County. Dir. Haberthur noted a new District position has been created for an agricultural coordinator. This person will oversee the bison program in addition to the 6,200 acres of the District's farm program. Haberthur explained how bison is a keystone prairie species, noting that prairie plant species evolved with the bison due to the grazing patterns and their wallowing behavior. Dir. Haberthur stated that the key to successful prairie restoration is to have a light stocking rate to mitigate the grasses. Additionally, something that has been missing in the soil health is the ecological practices of fertilization with manure specific insects.

Exec. Dir. Haberthur explained the details of the McHenry County bison project and what the District would propose. The project would also include viewing for the public immediately. The awarded vendor from the McHenry County Request for Proposal (RFP) for bison farmers is the

current vendor that sells to one of our licensees, Cliff McConville owner of All Grass Farms. There was discussion regarding female bison only, or if one male would be included. The fencing would be specific to the sex of the bison. Lastly, Dir. Haberthur stated that PDRMA provides the insurance coverage to McHenry County for the bison project, allowing the District to easily follow suit and obtain the required permits and signage. The Kane Forest Foundation will be purchasing viewing scopes from the native plant sale proceeds this year, it would be ideal to mount one of the viewing scopes for the bison if feasible.

Exec. Dir. Haberthur stated that Burlington Prairie Forest Preserve would be the ideal setting with 70 acres. Funds are being requested to move from cattle to bison with the purchase and installation of fencing necessary to keep the bison contained at Burlington Prairie Forest Preserve. If approved, funds from the Riverboat Grant could cover up to \$100,000 of the fencing, educational signage and water source improvements costs estimated to be \$120,000. The Burlington Prairie Bison Re-Introduction Project is estimated to cost \$120,000. Funding for this project will be included in the 2023/24 Fiscal Year Budget.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Bates asked what the prescribed acre per bison would be. Exec. Dir. Haberthur stated that it would be an estimated four acres per bison. The planned area is a total of 70 acres, and the plan is to be significantly under the limit for a successful trial. There was discussion regarding a male bison, or the possibility of bringing in a male for a short time only. If the idea of male would be entertained, it would require an 8-foot fence rather than a 6-foot fence. Commissioner Gumz commented that the Commission should consider requesting the taller fence initially to have the possibility of a male in the future. Exec. Dir. Haberthur responded that would be included in the bid amounts for price comparison. President Kious asked who would maintain the fence, if it would be the bison farmer or District staff. Haberthur stated that the fence maintenance would potentially be included with the farmer contract. Further discussion regarding the commercial farming and specifics continued. Commissioner Strathmann expressed her enthusiasm for the project.

RESULT:	MOVED FORWARD BY ROLL CALL VOTE
MOVER:	Michael Kenyon
SECONDER:	Jarett Sanchez
AYE:	Mavis Bates, Dale Berman, Michael Kenyon, Anita Lewis, Myrna Molina, Jarett Sanchez, Cheryl Strathmann and Vern Tepe

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

None.

IX. Communications

Community Affairs Dir. Metanchuk reported the Conservation Foundation Earth Day Benefit dinner will be on April 27, 2023. The District will have a table reserved for Commissioners and staff. Dir. Metanchuk reported over 1,800 people attended the Maple Sugaring event this year with 65 volunteers. It was a record attendance. The Annual Native Plant sale is open for online sales, this year there will be a live sale on April 29, 2023. The proceeds this year will go towards the purchase of viewing scopes. More information can be found on the District's website. www.kaneforest.com

Commissioner Gumz asked if the increase attendance is a reflection of social media advertisement. Metanchuk responded that all sources of media is used to advertise. Commissioner Roth noted the Maple Sugaring event made the Daily Herald news. Commissioner Bates promoted an event called the Aurora Green Fest held May 13, 2023.

X. President's Comments

None.

XI. Financial Reports

Reports A-C were moved together by unanimous consent requested by Commissioner Berman.

A. Revenue & Expense Report through January 2023

B. Cash & Investment Report: January 2023

C. Bond Investment Report: January 2023

XII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 AM.

RESULT:	APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Michael Kenyon
SECONDER:	Dale Berman
AYE:	Myrna Molina, Dale Berman, Anita Lewis, Mavis Bates, Michael Kenyon, Cheryl Strathmann, Vern Tepe, and Jarett Sanchez

Chris Kious, Chairman
Forest Preserve District Executive Committee
Forest Preserve District of Kane County

Respectfully Submitted,

Gabriella Figliozzi

Gabriella Figliozzi
Recording Secretary