

Board of Directors Meeting
Sept. 24, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Headquarters, Board Room

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County board of directors will conduct its meeting in person at the Danada headquarters building, located at 3S580 Naperville Road in Wheaton.

Call Meeting to Order – *Bob Watt, Chair*

Roll Call – *Joe Suchecki, Secretary*

Public Comments – *Bob Watt, Chair*

Chair Comments – *Bob Watt, Chair*

Approval of Minutes– *Joe Suchecki, Secretary*

- *Action: A motion for approving and placing on file board meeting minutes from July 23*

Mission Moment – Natural Area Restoration with Nick Fuller, Natural Resource Project Coordinator

Old Business – *Bob Watt, Chair*

- *Duck Race and A Night for Nature Event Recap – Staff, FPDDC*
- *Action: A motion to approve proposed revisions to the Gift Acceptance Policy*
- *Action: A motion to approve proposed revisions to the Investment Policy*
- *Action: A motion to approve proposed revisions to the Operating Reserve Policy*

New Business – *Bob Watt, Chair*

- *Presentation of the recommended slate for 2025 Officers*
- *Action: A motion to approve a resolution in support of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County*
- *Action: A motion to approve a donation request from The Conservation Foundation*

Committee Reports

- *Development Committee – Dave Stang, Committee Chair*
 - *Discussion: fundraising ideas for 2025*
- *Finance Committee – Ashley Guest, Treasurer*
 - *Action: A motion to Accept Financial Dashboard Summary Report through July 31, 2024*
 - *Action: A motion to approve and authorize filing the 2023 990 as presented by Lauterbach and Amen*
 - *Information: Investment update*

Ex-Officios and Staff Liaison Reports

- *Jeff Gahrns – District Commissioner and Ex-Officio Liaison*
- *Jeannine Kannegiesser – Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer, FPDDC*

Adjournment – *Bob Watt, Chair*

Upcoming Events

- Election Day – November 5
- Friends' Annual Meeting – November 19
- Giving Tuesday – December 3

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Board of Directors Meeting Minutes September 24, 2024

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County met at the District Headquarters at 35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, on September 24, 2024.

Call to Order

Chairman Bob Watt called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

Secretary Joe Suchecki called the roll. In attendance were: Diane Addante, Mike Dyer, Ashley Guest, Larry Larson, Tom Murphy, Carl Schultz, Dave Stang, Joe Suchecki, and Chair Bob Watt. Absent were: Brian Battle and Jeanette Wells. Staff present were Nick Fuller, Jeannine Kannegiesser, and Audra Bonnet. Commissioner Jeff Gahrns was also present.

A quorum of the Board was present.

Chair's Welcome

Chair Watt welcomed board members, staff and guests to the meeting and thanked everyone for their time and efforts on behalf of the Friends. Chair Watt previewed the agenda for the meeting.

Approval of the July 23, 2024 Minutes: Secretary Suchecki asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the July 23rd meeting. Mr. Larson indicated that some spelling errors needed correction and that the reference to the Willowbrook Wildlife Center should be changed to its new name of DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center. Mr. Suchecki noted the changes and indicated they would be incorporated into the minutes. Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve and accept the amended meeting minutes. Motion by Mr. Dyer, second by Ms. Addante. The motion to approve the minutes was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment

Chair Watt asked if there were any public comments. Ms. Connie Schmidt, co-Chair of the DuPage County Sierra Club, provided public comment to the Board on the topic of the District's referendum in November. Ms. Schmidt indicated that she is a long-time supporter and volunteer with the District and is now serving as a co-chair along with Bob Schillerstrom and Kaaren Oldfield of a group of citizens supporting passage of the referendum. The DuPage Neighbors for Open Space, Clean Water, and Clean Air is a grassroots organization working to educate voters on the needs of the District and advocating for passage of the referendum.

Ms. Schmidt asked the Friends to consider endorsing the referendum and indicated that the Friends support would be an important endorsement. She also indicated that the DuPage Neighbors would appreciate financial support from the Friends as indicated in the recent letter to the Friends from Brook McDonald of The Conservation Foundation. Ms. Schmidt ended her remarks by thanking the Friends and Board Members for all that they do for our forest preserves.

Chair Watt thanked Ms. Schmidt for her comments.

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There were no additional public comments.

Mission Moment

The Chair introduced Mr. Nick Fuller, Natural Resources Project Coordinator for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. Mr. Fuller provided an informative presentation to the Board on the topic of natural areas restoration and efforts by District staff to better coordinate and maintain District lands under natural resources management.

Mr. Fuller talked about past and current restoration efforts and how the District is implementing a new approach to restoration that should help assure that restoration efforts include continuous maintenance and progress. Mr. then answered several questions about restoration efforts from Board Members.

Old Business

Events Recap

The Chair called on Ms. Kannegiesser to provide a summary of the Friends' recent events including the Duck Race and A Night for Nature. Ms. Kannegiesser reported that both events were a success. A Night For Nature was a wonderful evening with at St James Farm with over 200 guests in attendance. There were many positive comments on the event. The net proceeds from the events will likely be around \$25,000, accounting for the final expenses was still underway.

Ms. Kannegiesser indicated that A Night for Nature will move to the Danada Forest Preserve next year, with the event having access to the newly remodeled Danada House for 2025.

Approval of Revised Policies

The Chair recognized Mr. Suchecki to discuss the revision of three Friends policies and their potential approval by the Board.

Mr. Suchecki provided an overview of revisions to the Gift Acceptance, Investment, and Operating Reserves policies, and indicated that the revised policies were approved by the Finance Committee at their last meeting. The proposed policies were then reviewed by Friends legal staff.

Mr. Suchecki asked if there were any comments on the revised policies. Mr. Murphy provided several comments on the Gift Acceptance Policy that included some editorial comments as well as a suggestion to add digital assets to the list of acceptable gifts. There was a consensus from Board members and staff that digital assets should be added. Mr. Suchecki indicated that the final policy will include the editorial changes and addition of digital assets.

Mr. Suchecki then entertained a motion to approve the Gift Acceptance Policy. Motion to approve the revised Gift Acceptance Policy made by Mr. Larson, seconded by Ms. Ashely. No further discussion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve the Operating Reserves Policy. Motion to approve by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Stang. No further discussion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

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Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve the Investment Policy. Motion to approve made by Ms. Guest, seconded by Mr. Larson. Motion to approve passed by unanimous voice vote,

New Business

Slate of Officers

The Chair moved on to new business and recognized Ms. Kannegiesser to present a slate of officers for 2025. Ms. Kannegiesser recommended the following slate of officers for 2025 and thanked current and future officers for their service to the Friends.:

Chair, Mike Dyer
Vice Chair, Jeanette Wells
Treasury, Ashley Guest
Secretary, Joe Suchecki

The proposed slate of officers will be considered at the Friends annual meeting in November.

Resolution Regarding Friends Support for the November Referendum

The Chair initiated a discussion of a request by The Conservation Foundation for the Friends to support passage of the referendum question and financially support efforts to pass the referendum.

Ms. Kannegiesser explained the proposed resolution and the letter from The Conservation Foundation were both included in the Board Meeting packet. Ms. Kannegiesser explained that the Friends as a 501c (3) organization can legally support passage of a referendum or legislation and can complete a certain amount of lobbying activity. The Friends has submitted the paperwork to report any lobbying activity under Section 501h and the Conservation Foundation's request is within the 501h limits.

Mr. Larson explained that he is a member of the Neighbors for Open Space, Clean Water and Clean Air Committee that is working to pass the referendum. As such, Mr. Larson indicated that to avoid any potential conflicts of interest he will abstain from voting on the proposed resolutions.

The Chair then entertained a motion to approve a resolution indicating Friends support for passage of the referendum. Motion made by Mr. Dyer, seconded by Ms. Addante. Board members asked several questions regarding why the Board was considering this resolution and whether the proper forms have been submitted regarding potential lobbying activity. Ms. Kannegiesser clarified that while the District and its staff cannot take a position on the referendum, the Friends, as a nonprofit organization, is free to endorse the referendum and support efforts to assure its passage.

Mr. Suchecki expressed concerns that the language in Section I of the resolution is ambiguous as to whether the Section indicates that the Friends endorses passage of the referendum itself or putting the referendum on the ballot. He also questioned whether lobbying is an appropriate activity given the Friends' Mission. Mr. Murphy expressed interest in hearing how other Board members felt about the resolution.

After further discussion and input by Board members, Mr. Suchecki offered a clarifying amendment to Section I of the resolution adding the words "passage of" after "supports" and before "the referendum" explaining that this language clarifies that the Friends endorses passage of the referendum. There was a

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second by Mr. Dyer. The Chair called for a vote on the amendment to Section I, and it passed with eight yes votes and Mr. Larson abstaining.

The Chair called for a vote on passage of the amended resolution. The Secretary read the roll, and the resolution passed with eight yes votes and one abstention.

The Chair entertained a motion to consider making a Friends donation to support efforts to pass the referendum. Ms. Addante made a motion that the Friends donate \$50,000 to The Conservation Foundation. Motion seconded by Mr. Dyer. There was some discussion regarding the amount of the donation.

Following discussion, the Chair called for a vote. The Secretary called the roll, and the motion passed with eight yes votes and one abstention.

Committee Reports

Development Committee, Dave Stang, Committee Chair

Due to time constraints, the Development Committee report and discussions were tabled.

Finance Committee, Ashley Guest, Committee Chair

The Friends currently has \$64,454 in the Wintrust checking account and \$1,184,000 in the Wintrust Wealth Management accounts making the total assets of the Friends approximately \$1,257,000

The investments coming due will be re-invested in short-term instruments to have cash ready for the anticipated major transfer of funds to the District in November of 2024 related to the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center.

Ms. Guest reported other key numbers as follows:

Net Income = \$58,595

Total Unrestricted Funds = \$450,249

Total Restricted Funds = \$806,826

Total income for 2024 = \$333,736 compared to 2024 budget of \$875,000.

Ms. Guest entertained a motion to accept the September Financial Dashboard. Mr. Dyer so moved and seconded by Mr. Murphy. The motion to accept the Financial Dashboard was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Guest then brought the Friends' annual 990 Report to the attention of the Board. The report was prepared by Lauterbach and Amen and includes the required accounting information for the 2023 fiscal year. Ms. Guest entertained a motion to accept the report and authorize its filing. Motion to approve and authorize filing of the 990 Report for 2023 made by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mr. Stang. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Motion carried.

Chair Watt thanked the Committee chairs for their efforts and reports to the Board.

Ex-Officio and Staff Liaison Reports

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Commissioner Gahris reported on recent progress on a few District projects and that the District has been receiving many positive comments from the public. Several projects are nearing completion including the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center, the trail connection to the Main trail at Danada from Butterfield Road, the renovations to Danada House, and the Salt Creek restoration work. The commissioner indicated that there are many great things happening at the District.

Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer Kannegiesser indicated that staff was working on the year-end appeal. She identified some items coming up on the calendar including the Fall Festival at Danada on October 12-13th and the Friends annual meeting on November 19th at The Preserve at Oak Meadows.

Following the presentations, Chair Watt asked if anyone had any other items to bring up. There were none.

Adjournment

There not being any other business before the Board, Chair Watt asked for adjournment.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:08 pm.