

**FOREST PRESERVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES  
MAY 13, 2025**

**PRESENT:** Committee members –L. Moreno, K. Swanson, R. Simmer, J. Woods, E. Sowards, D. Mielke.

**ABSENT:** C. Layer.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeff Craver, District Director; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; April Palmer, Auditor; Nick Camlin, Treasurer.

President Swanson called the monthly meeting of the Forest Preserve Executive Committee to order at 9:32 AM on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, in the second floor conference room of the County Building in Rock Island, Illinois.

E. Sowards, K. Swanson, J. Woods, R. Simmer, D. Mielke, L. Moreno.

**TOTAL PRESENT 6**

C. Layer.

**TOTAL ABSENT 1**

President Swanson called for a motion approving the April Committee meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Dr. Moreno moved to approve the April Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$774,876.97.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to approve the claims and treasurer's disbursements in the amount of \$774,876.97. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the transfers of appropriation.

**MOTION:** Ms. Woods moved to approve the transfers of appropriation. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the resolutions regarding the Niabi Zoo Improvements, and Bike Path Grant Improvements.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to approve the resolution regarding the Niabi Zoo Improvements, and Bike Path Grant Improvements. Dr. Simmer seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson made three calls for public comment. There were no requests for public comment.

President Swanson called for a motion to lay on display for thirty days the fiscal year 2026 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Preserve Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, FISSA Fund, Audit Fund, and Development of Forests and Construction of Improvement Fund.

**MOTION:** Mr. Mielke moved to lay on display for thirty days the fiscal year 2026 Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinances for the General Fund, Niabi Zoological Preserve Fund, IMRF Retirement Fund, FISSA Fund, Audit Fund, and Development of Forests and Construction of Improvement Fund. Ms. Sowards seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called for a motion to approve the New Investment Policy.

**MOTION:** Dr. Simmer moved to approve the New Investment Policy. Dr. Moreno seconded the motion.

Mr. Camlin stated that, unlike the County where the Treasurer can just set the investment policies, the Forest Preserve District must have on record an ordinance for investment policies. The major changes are that there are sections being added on benchmarking and a few details on financial institutions. The District doesn't really use financial institutions outside Illinois, but there are more standards that have to be met for those.

Motion carried.

President Swanson asked if there were any questions from the Committee on the routine reports.

There were no questions.

President Swanson asked Mr. Camlin if there was anything he'd like to bring to the Committee's attention.

Mr. Camlin stated that tax bills had just been mailed out and the pie chart was ready for viewing.

President Swanson asked Ms. Palmer if there was anything she wanted to bring to the Committee's attention.

Ms. Palmer stated that the budget is looking as expected. The District is getting close to the end of its fiscal year. Niabi hasn't had to dip into the TAW money, which is great to see.

President Swanson asked Mr. Jackson if there was anything he wanted to bring to the Committee's attention.

Mr. Jackson stated that staff recently applied for a grant from the AZA's Wildlife Confiscation Network. Should hear about that in August.

President Swanson stated that it looked like the zoo had a great May 4<sup>th</sup> Star Wars weekend.

Mr. Jackson stated that Mother's Day weekend was also a great weekend.

Dr. Simmer asked if the big cat house was back up and going.

Mr. Jackson stated that it was not. The materials did finally come in, and getting the mesh up has started. Unfortunately, due to the delay in receiving the materials, completion of the project will be later than originally scheduled. That project will be completed this season. Otters will be on display the end of this week.

President Swanson stated that the District has great momentum going on at Niabi, so we want to keep that going as long as we can. The Committee should always be supporting the District's preserves and trying to spread word of what's going on at the preserves. There's a new Colobus Monkey out there. Guinea Pigs this year?

Mr. Jackson stated that, yes, the Guinea Pigs will be added to the encounters on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

President Swanson asked Mr. Craver if there was anything he wanted to bring the Committee's attention to from the report this month.

Mr. Craver stated that the camping season had gotten off to a good start this year. The preserves are busy. Staff is busy. The District has had a great volunteer group out at Illiniwek this spring. The group is called "The Year to Volunteer". They go around to different parks and do volunteer work at those parks. Volunteers did almost 11,000 hours in about ten days, and paid for the camping spots that they used. They also donated around \$1,000.00 to the District's Endowment Fund. Blackhawk College has done some work out at Niabi and Loud Thunder recently. Things have been going well at the golf course. Mother's Day weekend was a great turn out. Even with mothers getting in for free, Niabi brought in close to \$30,000.00 in credit card sales. An average weekend is anywhere between eight and eleven thousand. The news for the Bike Path Project Bids is not as good. Was hoping to have the bids for the Committee. The right of ways along the bike path are on IDOT's property, and they have to approve the bid documents before we can put it out to bid. IDOT is wanting the District to redo all the approaches off of Route 84 in which the trail intercepts the right of ways. That would increase the District's cost estimate for this project significantly, so we are exploring options for how to move forward.

President Swanson reminded the Committee that in the coming months the Executive Committee meetings would be out at the preserves, then called for a motion to approve all routine reports from the Director and Department Heads as presented.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sowards moved to approve all routine reports from the Director and Department Heads as presented. Ms. Woods seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

President Swanson called the meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Submitted by: Cassie Sullivan  
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant