

**Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
Board of Directors Meeting
May 19, 2026 • 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 35580 Naperville Road in Wheaton. For more information or if you plan to attend, please call 630-871-6400.

Call to Order and Welcome — Jeanette Wells, Chair

Roll Call

Public Comment

Audit Presentation — Ann Scales, Lauterbach and Amen

Mission Moment — Jessica Ortega, Manager of Strategic Plans and Initiatives

Update on District's Strategic Plan

Meeting Minutes Approval — Joe Suchecki, Secretary

Old Business

Motion to change date of Friends Annual Meeting 2026

New Business — Jeanette Wells, Chair

- Motion to Approve Funding Request from the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
- Motion to Nominate Carl Alston to serve as a Friends' board member

Reports

- Treasurer's Report
- Motion to Accept Financial Dashboard Summary through March 31, 2026
- Motion to accept and file 990
- Development Committee Report

Ex-Officio Reports

Adjournment

Next Board of Directors Meeting — July 21 at 5:30 p.m. at District HQ

Next Finance Committee Meeting — July 21 at 6:30 p.m. or immediately following board meeting

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Board of Directors Meeting Minutes May 19, 2026

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County met at the District Headquarters at 35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, on May 19, 2026.

Call to Order

Chair Jeanette Wells called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

Secretary Joe Suchecki called the roll. In attendance were Chair Jeanette Wells, Mike Dyer, Larry Larson, Carl Shultz, Dave Stang, Joe Suchecki, and Tom Murphy. Denise Krohn and Tom Williams were absent. Friends Executive Director Jeannine Kannegiesser, District Commissioner Jeff Gahrns and staff member Audra Bonnet also were present.

A quorum of the Board was present.

Chair's Welcome

Chair Wells welcomed the public, board members and staff to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending as well as for their time and efforts on behalf of the Friends.

Public Comment

Chair Wells asked those attending the meeting if there were any public comments. Former Commissioner for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Mary Lou Wehrli of Naperville asked to speak. Ms. Wehrli provided comments on the strength of the District programs and on the importance of the mission of the District to protect and restore natural resources in DuPage County. She further commented that historical and cultural resources have been a prominent component of District programs for many years.

Ms. Wehrli reminded the Board that cultural and historic resources in the County should continue to be a part of District programs. She cited a recent mailing from the Friends soliciting funds from the public and noted that cultural and historic resources were not mentioned in the donation information. There were no options for people to donate funds to District programs focused on cultural or historic resources. Ms. Wehrli concluded that the Friends need to include historic and cultural resources in future programs and mailings.

Chair Wells thanked Ms. Wehrli for her comments. There were no other speakers.

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Approval of Minutes.

Chair Wells recognized Secretary Suchecki to discuss approval of the meeting minutes from the March 17, 2026 Friends meeting. Secretary Suchecki asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the last meeting. There were no comments on the draft minutes. Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Motion to approve and second were made. Upon voting the motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Secretary Suchecki then presented the draft minutes of the April 14, 2026, meeting of the Development Committee. Mr. Suchecki asked if there were any comments or corrections. There were none. Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Motion to approve and second were made. Upon voting the motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Annual Financial Audit.

Chair Wells introduced Ann Scales representing the independent audit firm of Lauterbach and Amen. Ms. Scales provided a presentation to the Board on the recently completed financial audit of the Friends and preparation of the Friends 990 tax form for 2025.

Ms. Scales indicated that the audit of financial information for 2025 found no issues with the accounts and that the financial reporting met accounting standards. The auditor's opinion was that the financial reporting information accurately represented the Friends' financial status.

Ms. Scales then presented the annual Form 990 federal tax filing that Lauterbach and Amen prepared for the Friends. She asked if there were any questions or comments on the Form 990 submittal. There were none.

Chair Wells thanked Ms. Scales for their work and the presentation to the Board. Chair Wells then entertained a motion to accept the financial audit report. A motion to accept the 2025 annual audit report was made and seconded. Upon voting, the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Chair Wells then entertained a motion to approve the Form 990 tax filing. A motion to approve Form 990 was made and seconded. Upon voting, the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Mission Moment

Chair Wells recognized Ms. Jessica Ortega, Manager of Strategic Plans and Initiatives for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. Ms. Ortega provided a presentation on the status of the current review of the District's Strategic Plan. She outlined the changes in the draft plan that were made in response to District, Friends, and public comments,

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The revised strategic plan was presented with generally favorable comments from Board members. Several Board members indicated that the revised Strategic Plan was greatly improved and thanked Ms. Ortega for her efforts.

Chair Wells thanked Ms. Ortega for her presentation.

Old Business

Chair Wells introduced the subject of changing the date of the annual meeting discussed at the March Board Meeting. Discussion was suspended pending additional input from Friends staff.

Ms. Jeannine Kannegiesser indicated that upon further consideration, no changes to the date or agenda for the annual meeting in November were needed at this time. Accordingly, there was no need for the Board to vote to change the annual meeting date. Board members concurred with that decision, and the matter is considered closed.

New Business

Chair Wells recognized Ms. Kannegiesser to present information regarding the request by the Forest Preserve District for the transfer of \$181,797.90 from the Friends to the District. Ms. Kannegiesser indicated that the District submitted a request for money to support District projects in a letter dated May 12, 2026. The requested sum includes approximately \$95,000 to fund capital projects at the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center and to fund district projects in several other areas. The request is in line with the mission of the District. Chair Wells entertained a motion to approve the transfer of Friends funds to fulfill the May 12th request. A motion to transfer money to the District for the purposes stated in the May 12th letter was made and seconded. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote,

Chair Wells then introduced Carl Alston to the Board. Mr. Alston has indicated his interest in joining the Friends Board. His credentials were previously sent out for the Board's information. Chair Wells entertained a motion to nominate Mr. Alston for a seat on the Friends Board and to forward the nomination to the Board of Commissions for approval.

A motion to nominate Mr. Alston was made and seconded. There being no discussion, the motion to nominate Mr. Alston to serve as a Friends' Board Member was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tom Murphy presented the Treasurer's Report to the Board including the Financial Dashboard for the period ending March 31, 2026. He reported total assets of \$1,046,891 including \$737,545 in unrestricted funds and \$309,346 in restricted funds. The net revenue for the first quarter of 2026 was \$162,529. Mr. Murphy entertained a motion to accept the Financial Dashboard Summary through March 31, 2026. A motion to accept the Financial Dashboard was made and seconded. There being no further discussion, the motion to accept the March 31st Financial Dashboard was approved by unanimous voice vote.

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Development Committee Report

Mr. Tom Williams, Chair of the Development Committee, provided a summary of the initial meeting of the committee held on April 14, 2026. The goals of the committee were discussed, and several ideas and suggestions were made on how to enhance Friends' fundraising efforts. Some of the ideas are being researched, and information on those items will be discussed at the next Development Committee meeting.

Ex-Officio Reports

Chair Wells recognized Commissioner Gahrts to provide a report on recent activities by the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Gahrts indicated that several key projects were coming together including the construction of the final leg of the DuPage River Trail and the new natural resources facility on Mack Road. Some small land acquisitions are being discussed other projects are proceeding on pace.

Chair Wells recognized Executive Director Kannegiesser. Ms. Kannegiesser presented a short report on the status of staff activities. She reminded members of the upcoming major fundraisers for the Friends – The Duck Race at Fullersberg Woods on August 1st and A Night for Nature on September 17th at St James Farm. Board members were encouraged to solicit gifts for the silent auction.

Ms. Kannegeisser concluded her report by informing the Board that the Friends will receive a very significant gift from the estate of a woman who recently passed away. The bequest will be the single largest gift ever given to the Friends. More information will become available over the next month or two.

Chair Wells thanked the speakers for their presentations.

Adjournment

Chair Wells asked if there was any other business before the Board. There was none.

There being no other business before the Board, Chair Wells called for adjournment of the meeting. Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion for adjournment was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.