

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
Board of Directors Meeting
AGENDA
January 21, 2025
5:30 p.m.

Friends Board meets at The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Headquarters located at 35580, Naperville Road, Wheaton, IL 60189. For more information or questions, please contact fundraising@dupageforest.org or 630-871-6400.

Call to Order and Welcome – Mike Dyer, Chair

Roll Call and Meeting Minutes Approval – Joe Suchecki, Secretary

Motion for Approving and Placing on file Board Meeting Minutes for Board Meeting held November 19, 2024

Public Comment

Mission Moment

Brook McDonald, President and CEO, The Conservation Foundation

Jeannine Kannegiesser, Executive Director, Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Reports

Treasurer's Report - Ashley Guest, Treasurer

Motion to Accept Financial Dashboard Summary through December 31, 2024

Motion to Approve 2025 Friends' Budget

Investment Activities

Ex-Officios - Jeff Gahris – District Commissioner and Jeannine Kannegiesser – Friends Executive Director

Old Business– Mike Dyer, Chair

New Business – Mike Dyer, Chair

Adjournment – Mike Dyer, Chair

Next Board of Directors Meeting – March 18, 2024, 5:30 p.m. at District HQ

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Board of Directors Meeting Minutes January 21, 2025

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County met at the District Headquarters at 35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, on January 21, 2025

Call to Order

Chair Mike Dyer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

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

A quorum of the Board was present.

Chair's Welcome

Chair Dyer welcomed board members, staff and guests to the meeting and thanked everyone for their time and efforts on behalf of the Friends. Chair Dyer indicated he was enthusiastic about leading Friends this year and looked forward to working with everyone in the coming year.

Approval of the November 19, 2024 Minutes:

Secretary Suchecki asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the annual meeting held on November 19th. There were no comments on the draft minutes. Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve and accept the meeting minutes. Motion by Mr. Watt, second by Mr. Schultz. The motion to approve the minutes was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment

Chair Dyer asked if there were any public comments. No one provided any public comments

Mission Moment

The Chair introduced Mr. Brook McDonald, CEO of The Conservations Foundation. Mr. McDonald provided a summary of efforts leading up to the successful passage of the November referendum to increase funding for the District. The voters of DuPage County indicated strong support for the District by passing the referendum with 63% voter approval. Mr. McDonald thanked the Friends for their support of the effort.

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The Chair recognized Ms. Kannegiesser who provided a summary of the activities in 2024. Ms. Kannegiesser indicated that the Friends and the District had another successful year, and that the Friends transferred about \$750,000 to the District to support approved programs and projects including the new DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center.

Ms. Kannegiesser also stressed that passage of the November referendum was an important milestone that will allow the District to continue and expand existing program for the public. She reported that the District restored about 1,350 acres of habitat and volunteers provided 57,000 hours of service to the District in 2024.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Guest presented the Financial Dashboard Summary through December 2024. The Friends total assets at the end of the year were \$888,177 including \$509,444 in unrestricted funds and \$378,733 in restricted funds. Total income for 2024 was \$858,255 and disbursements to the District totaled \$750,155.

Ms. Guest proposed a motion to accept the financial dashboard. Second by Ms. Wells. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Ms. Guest then introduced the Friends 2025 budget. The budget was previously reviewed and distributed to the Board at the November meeting. Ms. Guest asked if Board members had any questions or discussion on the budget. There were none. Mr. Watt made a motion to approve the 2025 budget. Second by Mr. Dyer. The motion passed by unanimous consent, and the 2025 Friends budget was approved.

Ms. Guest concluded her report by indicating that after transfer of the funds to the District in November, the remaining funds, except for \$50,000 kept in the checking account, were reinvested in accordance with the Friends investment policies.

Ex-Officio and Staff Liaison Reports

Commissioner Gahrns reported on recent Commission activities and indicated that passage of the referendum will have a very positive effect on the District's ability to fulfill its mission. Additionally, the District recently issued \$85 million in bonds at low interest rate. He further indicated that construction of the new DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center is about 90% complete but some delays in delivery of windows will push back completion of the project.

The Commissioner also reported that the District is pursuing some key land acquisition plans that will unfold soon.

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Ms. Kannegiesser, Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer, provided a report on staff activities and plans for 2025. Staff members continue to prepare for the activities planned for 2025.

A total of 1,076 donors provided gifts of \$571,829 to the Friends in 2024. In 2025 the Friends plan to expand corporate and foundation outreach and hope to grow the community partners program.

Old Business

Chair Dyer indicated that there was only one item under old business. He reminded Board members that with the new year Board members need to submit their Conflict-of-Interest Statements and Board Agreements. Completed documents should be submitted to Ms. Kannegiesser as soon as possible.

New Business

Chair Dyer indicated that the Friends needs to form the Development and Finance committees for 2025. Mr. Stang agreed to chair the Development Committee and Ms. Guest agreed to chair the Finance Committee. Various Board members expressed their interest in joining either one or both committees.

Mr. Stang proposed a meeting of the Development Committee for February 19th. Ms. Guest will work with Ms. Kannegiesser in set up a Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Kannegiesser indicated that the Financial Committee will likely take up revisions to the Financial Policy and Procedures starting in the second quarter.

Ms. Guest brought up the need for the Board to approve an engagement letter with the accounting firm Lauterbach and Amen for preparation of the Friends 2024 financial audit and Form 990. The annual audit will begin in February. It is preferable to have the Board's concurrence prior to the start of the work. Lauterbach and Amen is the same firm that has completed the audit in previous years and is the auditor for the District.

Ms. Guest made a motion to approve the letter engaging Lauterbach and Amen to complete the financial audit and Form 990. Seconded by Mr. Watt. Chair Dyer asked if there was any discussion. There was none. The Motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Chair Dyer asked if there was any additional new business. There was none.

Adjournment

As there was no other business before the Board, Chair Dyer asked for adjournment.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:34 pm