

**Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County  
Board of Directors Meeting  
March 17, 2026 • 5:30 p.m.  
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Headquarters, Board Room**

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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 and Meeting Minutes Approval** — Joe Suchecki, Secretary

Motion for Approving and Placing on file Board Meeting Minutes for Board Meeting held Jan. 20, 2026

**Public Comment**

**Mission Moment**

DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center Campaign Wrap-Up and NWRA Video

**Reports**

**Treasurer's Report** — Tom Murphy, Treasurer

Audit Process Update

Action: Motion to Accept Financial Dashboard Summary through Jan. 31, 2025

**Development Committee**

Development Committee Planning Discussion

Action: Motion for Approving an Adjustment to the November Board Meeting Date

**Old Business** — Jeanette Wells, Chair

**New Business** — Jeanette Wells, Chair

**Ex-Officios** — Jeff Gahrns, District Commissioner and Jeannine Kannegiesser, Friends Executive Director

**Adjournment** — Jeanette Wells, Chair

**Next Board of Directors Meeting** — May 19, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at District HQ

To be followed by Finance Committee Meeting at 6:45 p.m.

## **Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County**

### **Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Board of Directors Meeting Minutes March 17, 2026**

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County met at the District Headquarters at 3S580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, on March 17, 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, Ashley Guest, Denise Krohn, Larry Larson, Carl Shultz, Dave Stang, Joe Suchecki, and Tom Williams. Tom Murphy was absent. Friends Executive Director Jeannine Kannegiesser and District Commissioner Jeff Gahris also were present.

A quorum of the Board was present.

#### **Chair's Welcome**

Chair Wells welcomed 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.

#### **Approval of March 17, 2026 Minutes.**

Chair Wells recognized Secretary Suchecki to discuss approval of the meeting minutes from the January 20, 2026 Friends meetings. 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 by Mr. Williams. Second by Mr. Dyer. The motion to approve the January 20, 2026 meeting minutes was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

#### **Public Comment**

Chair Wells asked if there were any public comments. There were no public comments.

#### **Mission Moment**

Chair Wells recognized Ms. Jeannine Kannegiesser, Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer, to discuss the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center campaign and the completion and opening of the center. Ms. Kannegiesser reported that the center is essentially complete and is now operational and open to the public. The long campaign to achieve this milestone was ultimately successful with approximately 350 organizations and individuals donating \$590,288 through the

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Friends in support of the center. The Friends made a significant contribution to the success of the project.

Ms. Kannegiesser then shared a video announcing that the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center and staff will host the annual meeting of the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association in February 2027. The event will highlight the state-of-the-art facility to wildlife rehabilitators from across the country.

Finally, the District will hold an official ribbon cutting ceremony to formally open the center on April 30, 2026. Friends board members will be invited to the ceremony and are urged to attend.

Chair Wells thanked Ms. Kannegiesser for her presentation and all of the staff efforts to make the campaign a success.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business before the Board.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Chair Wells called on Ms. Kannegiesser to present the Treasurer's report on the absence of Treasurer Tom Murphy. Ms. Kannegiesser presented the Financial Dashboard Summary through January 31, 2025. The Friends total assets at the end of the January were \$1,039,810 including \$748,604 in unrestricted funds and \$291,206 in restricted funds. Net income for the first month of 2026 was \$44,825.

Ms. Kannegiesser also reported that the 2025 financial audit is under way and that a draft audit report and IRS tax form are near completion. The audit report and tax form will be shared with the Board at the next meeting.

Ms. Guest made a motion to accept the Financial Dashboard as presented. Second by Mr. Larson. Chair Wells asked if there were any questions or discussion. There were none. Upon vote, the motion to accept the Financial Dashboard was passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Development Committee**

Mr. Williams has accepted the role of the Development Committee Chair. Mr. Williams indicated that the work of the Development Committee is key to the success of the Friends, and that he looks forward to working with all Board members to increase the number of sponsors and partners as well as donations to the Friends in 2026. He hopes to establish measurable objectives for the Friends during the year.

Mr. Williams indicated that the Development Committee will meet on April 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss plans and objectives for the year. In the meantime, he asked members to help find new sponsors and partners for upcoming events such as the Duck Race and A Night for Nature. He also indicated that Board members can help secure donations for the silent auction at A Night

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for Nature event in the fall. Ms. Kannegiesser reported that input from attendees at the 2025 event indicated that they missed the opportunity to bid on silent auction items and baskets. Based on that feedback, the silent action items will return for the 2026 event.

Mr. Williams and Ms. Kannegiesser indicated that another important role of the Development Committee is the identification of potential new Board members. They reminded members to work to identify some candidates who would expand the capabilities of the Friends Board.

### **New Business**

Chair Wells recognized Ms. Kannegiesser to discuss the need to revise the date of the November Board meeting. Ms. Kannegiesser indicated that in the past the Friends has invited donors and the public to the November meeting and that a reception for donors and Board members was held to foster communication. Typically, the Board tried to keep the business meeting short so that the following reception was not delayed. Staff suggested the idea of having the board meeting at a separate time from the donor reception, moving the business meeting to November 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Larson made a motion to change the date of the November Friends meeting to November 10<sup>th</sup>. Second by Mr. Stang. During discussion on the motion, some Board members had questions regarding the proposed change. Mr. Shultz commented that the November meeting is also the annual business meeting of the Friends and the public/donor reception has been a traditional part of the meeting. He also indicated that there may be certain requirements for the annual business meeting that should be reviewed. Mr. Suchecki indicated that the annual business meeting might be a requirement for charitable organizations and is likely included in the Bylaws or other governing Friends documents.

During discussion, Ms. Kannegiesser offered to research the board's questions before the next meeting to provide clarity. Chair Wells agreed that further discussion and a vote on changing the November meeting date could be postponed until the next meeting. Board members generally agreed to delay further consideration until staff had an opportunity to research the issue. Hearing no objections, the Chair moved on to the next agenda item.<sup>1</sup>

### **Ex-Officio Reports**

Chair Wells recognized Commissioner Gahrns to provide a report on recent activity by the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Gahrns indicated that recent Commission activities have been related to District improvement projects such as the new Mack Road building, the entrance road to Green Valley Forest Preserve, the closure of Mayslake building for infrastructure improvements, and review of the Master Plan for Herrick Lake. They have also been working on some minor land acquisitions. The Commission is also looking forward to the official opening of the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center in April.

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<sup>1</sup> Although members agreed to postpone this issue to the next meeting, since there was an open motion on the floor there should have been a formal motion and vote to postpone action on the existing motion to change the date. A motion to discuss and consider this issue will have to be reintroduced at the next meeting.

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Ms. Kannegiesser then updated the Board on various staff activities and provided a summary of donor activity in 2025. She indicated that she and District staff will be coordinating requests to the Friends for 2027. Finally, she emphasized that most of the Friends revenue comes from contributions and grants from loyal donors. She indicated that making and building relationships with potential donors is an important task for the Board.

Chair Wells thanked Commissioner Gahrns and Ms. Kannegiesser for their reports.

### **Adjournment**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 pm.