

**Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County  
Board of Directors Meeting  
AGENDA**

**March 26, 2024**

**5:30 p.m.**

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**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](mailto:fundraising@dupageforest.org) or 630-871-6400,**

**Call to Order and Welcome – Bob Watt, Chair**

**Roll Call – Joe Suchecki, Secretary**

**Public Comment**

**Mission Moment**

**Brook McDonald, President and CEO, The Conservation Foundation**

Presentation about consultant's research conducted in February

**Motion for Approving and Placing on file Board Minutes for Board Meeting held January 23, 2024 – Joe Suchecki, Secretary**

**Motion for Approving and Placing on file Development Committee Minutes from March 6, 2024 – Joe Suchecki, Secretary**

**Reports**

***Finance Committee*** - Ashley Guest, Treasurer

**Action Item: Motion to Accept Financial Dashboard Summary through January 31, 2024**

**Information Items:** Report on activity since January and Audit 2023 progress update

***Development Committee Report*** – Dave Stang, Development Committee Chair

***Ex-Officios and Staff Liaisons Report***

**Commissioner Jeff Gahris – Liaison from the Board of Commissioners, Ex-Officio**

**Jeannine Kannegiesser – Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer, FPDDC, Ex-Officio**

**Old Business – Bob Watt, Chair**

**New Business – Bob Watt, Chair**

*February/March Events Recap and April/May/June Events Pre-View with– Lulu Hertenstein, Corporate and Community Giving Officer, Audra Bonnet, Donor Services Coordinator*

**Adjournment – Bob Watt, Chair**

**Next Board of Directors Meeting – May 21, 2024, 5:30 p.m. at District HQ**

**Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, March 26, 2024**

The Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County was held at the Headquarters of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, 35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, Illinois, on March 26, 2024.

**Call to Order**

Chair Bob Watt called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

**Roll Call**

The secretary called the roll, and the following board members were Present: Diane Addante, Ashley Guest, Larry Larson, David Stang, Joseph Suchecki, Bob Watt, and Jeanette Wells. Brian Battle, Mike Dyer, and Carl Shultz were absent. The seven members present constituted a quorum for the meeting.

**Chair's Welcome**

Chair Bob Watt welcomed everyone to the meeting including District staff members and Brook McDonald, President and CEO of The Conservation Foundation. Chair Watt expressed his appreciation to Board members for their service on the Board and all of their work to advocate for the forest preserves. He mentioned the upcoming event featuring Geoffery Baer at Mayslake and thanked Board Member Larry Larson for making the initial connection as well as Friends staff for all their work in making the upcoming event a success. The Chair also commented that April is Earth Month and Volunteer Appreciation Month and that the District has many scheduled opportunities to engage the public through activities at the preserves.

**Mission Moment**

Chair Watt introduced Brook McDonald of The Conservation Foundation of Naperville. Mr. McDonald provided a summary of their recent project to collect polling information about a potential November ballot initiative regarding the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. The polling research was completed in February 2024 and contacted likely voters in DuPage County to gauge voter support for changing the tax levy that funds District programs.

Mr. McDonald reported that the likely voters had a favorable opinion of the District and its preserves and that a majority of those polled would support passage of a ballot initiative to provide additional funding for District programs. The poll identified some key voter issues as well as key voter groups and suggested that passage of a ballot initiative in November 2024 was possible with the implementation of a good public information campaign. The polling results

have been shared with the District, and the Commissioners will decide whether to proceed with placing an initiative on the ballot in the fall.

Board members asked several questions regarding the polling results and a potential ballot initiative in the fall. Following the questions and answers, Chair Watt thanked Mr. McDonald for his informative presentation.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The Secretary of the Board entertained a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Board Meeting held on January 23, 2024. Motion to accept by Chair Watt and second By Mr. Stang. There were no comments or revisions, and the motion to accept the minutes passed by a unanimous voice vote.

The Secretary of the Board entertained a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Development Committee Meeting held on March 6, 2024. Motion to accept by Mr. Stang and second by Ms. Guest. There were no comments or revisions, and the motion to accept the minutes passed by a unanimous voice vote.

### **Financial Dashboard**

Treasurer Guest provided a summary of the Financial Dashboard through January 31, 2024 to the Board.

**Total Assets as of January 31, 2024: \$1,251,239**

**Total Income in January, 2024: \$53,725**

**Total Expenses in January: \$2,498.30**

There were clarifying questions on a donation amount to Mayslake and an expense item regarding bank fees, as well as a question and comment on the Friends policy and practice regarding checking account balances. After adequately addressing the questions, Treasurer Guest entertained a motion to accept the Financial Dashboard Summary through January 31, 2024. Motion to accept by Ms. Addante, second by Mr. Larson. The motion to accept the Financial Dashboard Summary passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Reports**

#### **Finance Committee**

Treasurer Guest reported that the financial audit is ongoing and that the auditors are on track to present their report to the Board in May. Expenses have been minimal to date, but expenses related to the Geoffrey Baer event are expected in April or May.

Some current investments are maturing in April, and Treasurer Guest will reinvest that money in T-bills to maximize earnings until an expected fall disbursement to the District. We will keep an appropriate amount of cash in the checking account and invest any excess cash that will not be needed in the immediate future.

The total investment amounts with Wintrust Wealth Management and their maturity dates are as follows:

April 4, 2024	\$306,000
July 4, 2024	\$375,000
September 5, 2024	\$500,000

The Finance Committee will meet directly following the Board meeting to discuss investments and a plan to review and revise the Friends policies and procedures in 2024.

### **Development Committee**

Ms. Kannegiesser identified three goals for the Development Committee: Engaging donors through events, coordinating corporate outreach among staff and Board members, and developing a planned giving and recognition program. Ms. Kannegiesser then provided an overview of past donor activities.

The Development Committee discussed the need to prioritize and contact past donors to maintain a continuing relationship and to seek support for the Friends in 2024. The Committee decided to ask Board members to augment staff efforts to contact donors. It was agreed that Board members would be assigned several donors and that an updated donor list and initial assignments would be available through Teams. Board members can view the information and update contact information and progress on the Teams document. Members will report on progress at the May Development Committee Meeting.

Discussion of a planned giving program was deferred to a later date.

Mr. Larson nominated Mr. Stang to serve as Chair of the Development Committee. Second by Mr. Suchecki. The motion pass by a unanimous voice vote.

### **Ex-Officio and Staff Liaison Reports**

Commissioner Jeff Gahris reported on issues and items addressed by the Board of Commissioners. He indicated the commissioners will be working to improve the operation and management of the District's closed landfills including how to better manage those spaces. There may be some discussion regarding adding raccoons to the list of mammals that Willowbrook does not accept, and there will be improvements to many preserves by installing flush restroom facilities. The Board of Commissioners also accepted a \$2 million grant from the United States Department of Energy for energy efficiency measures at Willowbrook.

Ms. Kannegeisser, Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer, reported that Friends Board member Penny Chanez submitted her resignation from the Board citing family and work commitments. The resignation was submitted on March 24<sup>th</sup> and is effective immediately. The Friends will officially thank Ms. Chanez for her service.

Ms. Audra Bonnet, Donor Services Coordinator, provided a recap of Friends events held in February and March and reminded the Board of materials available for their use in speaking with potential donors and sponsors.

Ms. Lulu Hertenstein, Corporate and Community Giving Officer, provided a summary of proposed events and indicated that Board member involvement and engagement is important to making all of the events a success. She also informed the Board that the Friends will be part of the Target Circle of Giving and that Target shoppers can designate the Friends as a recipient of a portion of sales.

## **Old Business**

Chair Watt indicated that there was no old business before the Board.

## **New Business**

Chair Watt asked if there was any new business. No one sought to bring any new business before the Board.

## **Adjournment**

There being no new business, Chair Watt entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Addante made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Larson. The motion to adjourn was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.