

Week of Sept. 22

**Board of Directors Meeting Sept. 23, 2025, 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 3S580 Naperville Road in Wheaton.

**Call Meeting to Order** – *Mike Dyer, Chair*

**Roll Call** – *Joe Suchecki, Secretary*

**Public Comments** – *Mike Dyer, Chair*

**Chair Comments** – *Mike Dyer, Chair*

**Approval of Minutes**– *Joe Suchecki, Secretary*

- *Action: A motion to approve and place on file board meeting minutes from July 15*
- *Action: A motion to approve and place on file finance committee minutes from July 15*

**Mission Moment** – Andres Ortega, Aquatic Resources Supervisor presentation about Hine's Emerald Dragonflies

**Old Business** – *Mike Dyer, Chair*

- *Events Recap – Duck Race, Turtles & Tacos, A Night for Nature*

**New Business** – *Mike Dyer, Chair*

- *2026 Budget Plan*
- *Presentation of slate for 2026 Officers*
- *Proposed 2026 Board Meeting Dates*
- *Volunteer of Distinction Award Plan*

**Committees**

- *Finance – Ashley Guest, Treasurer*
  - *Action: A motion to Accept Financial Dashboard Summary Report through July 31*
  - *Information: Investment update*

**Ex-Officios and Staff Liaison Reports**

- *Jeff Gahrns – District Commissioner and Ex-Officio Liaison*
- *Jeannine Kannegiesser – Chief Partnership and Philanthropy Officer, Ex. Officio Liaison*

**Adjournment** – *Mike Dyer, Chair*

**Dates to Remember**

- *Friends Annual Meeting at The Preserve at Oak Meadows on November 18 at 5:30 p.m.*
- *Giving Tuesday December 2*

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

### **Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Board of Directors Meeting Minutes September 23, 2025**

The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County met at the District Headquarters at 35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, on September 23, 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, Denise Krohn, Larry Larson, Tom Murphy, Carl Shultz, Dave Stang, Joe Suchecki, Jeannette Wells, and Tom Williams. Staff present were Audra Bonnet, Lulu Hertenstein, Jeannine Kannegiesser and Brian Kuszewski. Commissioner Jeff Gahrts also was 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.

#### **Public Comment**

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

#### **Approval of the July 15, 2025 Minutes**

Secretary Suchecki asked if there were any corrections or edits to the draft Board meeting minutes of the last meeting held on July 15, 2025. There were no comments on the draft minutes. Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Motion by Chair Dyer. Second by Ms. Guest. The motion to approve the July 15, 2025, minutes was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Secretary Suchecki asked if there were any edits or corrections to the draft Finance Committee meeting minutes held on July 15, 2025. Board members had no comments. Mr. Suchecki entertained a motion to approve the Finance committee meeting minutes. Motion by Chair Dyer. Second by Mr. Williams. The motion to approve the July 15, 2025, Finance Committee meeting minutes was approved by unanimous voice vote.

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### **Mission Moment**

Chair Dyer introduced District staff member Andres Ortega to provide the Board with some information on the Hines Emerald Dragonfly program. Mr. Ortega is the Natural Resources Supervisor and oversees District programs to protect and manage populations of this federally endangered dragonfly.

Mr. Ortega provided an overview of the status of the Hines Emerald Dragonfly and the research and captive breeding program at the Urban Stream Research Center. He explained that populations of the species are very low and there is a continuing effort to boost the population in Illinois and on District preserves where it occurs. Mr. Ortega then spoke about the need to continue the breeding and release program as part of the species recovery efforts in the face of the loss of federal money due to budget cuts in Washington, D.C. The District has proposed to keep the program going by funding needed efforts by a team of researchers from the University of South Dakota. The District will seek funds from the Friends for approximately \$25,000 for these efforts. The request will be part of the District's requests to the Friends in 2026 and will be included in the Friends' 2026 budget.

Chair Dyer thanked Mr. Ortega for the interesting and informative update. Board members had several questions regarding the programs which were answered by staff present.

### **Old Business**

The Chair asked Ms. Kannegiesser to provide a summary of some recent Friends events including the Turtles and Tacos reception, the Duck Race, and A Night for Nature. Ms. Kannegiesser indicated that all three events were very successful and raised additional funds for the Friends. The Turtles and Tacos event brought together staff and supporters of the Blanding Turtle program for an informative and enjoyable evening.

The Duck Race was held in August and took place at Fullersberg Woods which turned out to be a good location for the race. The preliminary revenue estimate for the Duck Race was about \$6000.

A Night for Nature also was a very successful event which was held this year at the newly renovated Danada House. Over 250 guests attended the event, and comments from participants were very positive. District staff and volunteers worked together to provide a great experience for all the guests. Preliminary gross revenue from the event was around \$31,000.

Board members provided some comments on the evening and thanked staff including Ms. Kannegiesser, Ms. Hertenstein, and Ms. Bonnet for all their work to make the event a success.

### **New Business**

Chair Dyer moved on to new business. Friends staff presented a draft budget for 2026 to the Board. The draft budget was discussed, and Board members were generally in agreement with the overall proposal. Ms. Kannegiesser asked Board members to provide her with any specific

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comments. The 2026 budget will be brought to the Board for approval at the Friends' annual meeting in November.

Chair Dyer then presented a proposed slate of officers for 2026. They include Ms. Wells for President, Mr. Stang for Vice-President, Mr. Murphy for Treasurer, and Mr. Suchecki for Secretary. The slate of officers will be brought to the Board for approval at the annual meeting in November.

Ms. Kannegiesser presented a list of proposed meeting dates for 2026. Board members were in general agreement with the proposed dates.

Ms. Kannegieser then reported on a plan to establish an award to recognize an outstanding District volunteer. The Friends award will be called the Hoger Award in honor of former staff member at the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center (then known as the Willowbrook Wildlife Haven). The annual award will recognize a volunteer who exemplifies a long-term commitment for the District and dedication to volunteering for the District. Nominations for the award will be made by other volunteers and evaluated by Friends Board members. Larry Larson and Jeannette Wells agreed to review the applications and determine the inaugural awardee

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Guest presented the Financial Dashboard Summary through July 2025. The Friends total assets at the end of the July were \$777,456 including \$595,218 in unrestricted funds and \$182,237 in restricted funds. Net income for the first seven months of 2025 was \$(108,210) reflecting a large disbursement to the District of \$257,614.

Chair Dyer made a motion to accept the financial dashboard through July 2025. Second by Mr. Suchecki. The motion to accept the Financial Dashboard was approved by unanimous voice vote.

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

Commissioner Gahrts reported on recent Commission activities and indicated a major and long-desired project to connect the West Branch trail system is moving forward. This project will include a trail bridge over Roosevelt Road. Commissioner Gahrts also reported that progress is being made on additional solar facilities throughout the District. He reiterated the key role that the Friends play in engaging the public and getting people involved with District activities. He commented that he enjoyed a very pleasant experience at A Night for Nature this year and congratulated everyone on a great job.

The Chair thanked Commissioner Gahrts for his presentation.

The Chair recognized Ms. Kannegiesser to give a report on current staff activities. Ms. Kannegiesser took the opportunity to remind Board members that the upcoming election

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includes races for District Commissioners as well as the President of the District. Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office.

After several successful events throughout the year, staff is preparing for the end of year fundraiser and Giving Tuesday. Appeals will be sent out to donors asking for their support.

She closed her comments reminding Board members of the Friends Annual Meeting to be held on November 18<sup>th</sup> at the Preserve at Oak Meadows. Donors and the public will be invited to the meeting and refreshments will be served. She urged all Board members to attend this important meeting, which includes our end of year board meeting and a recap of Friends' impact in 2025

### **Adjournment**

There being no other business before the Board, Chair Dyer asked for adjournment.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:50 pm.