

**Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
Development Committee Meeting
April 14, 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 — Tom Williams, Committee Chair

Roll Call

Public Comment

Friends Mission, Board Duties, and Development Responsibilities

Discussion of Recent Development Efforts

- Campaigns
- Events
- Board Development

Future Strategy Discussion

- Tools needed
- Multi-year planning input
- Events
- Potential partnerships

Commitment to Action Items and Assignments

- Outreach and engagement
- Events:
 - Native Plant Presale on May 14, 3:30 – 7:00 p.m. (hospitality table)
 - Duck Race on Aug. 1
 - Sponsor deadline: April 24 (for ticket sales beginning May 1)
 - Prize sponsor: Hey and Associates
 - Night for Nature on Sept. 17
 - Sponsor deadline: June 24 (for marketing beginning July 1)
 - Auction items/in-kind donations forms due: July 30

Adjournment

Next Board Meeting — May 19 at 5:30 p.m.

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Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Development Committee Meeting Minutes April 14, 2026

The Development Committee of the Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County met at the District Headquarters at 35580 Naperville Road, Wheaton, on April 14, 2026

Call to Order

Chair Tom Williams called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

The following Committee members were present: Chair Tom Williams, Larry Larson, Carl Schultz, Dave Stang, and Joe Suchecki. Staff present were Friends Executive Director Jeannine Kannegiesser, Lulu Hertenstein, and Audra Bonnet. Commissioner Jeff Gahrns also was present.

A quorum of the Committee was present.

Chair's Welcome

Chair Williams welcomed committee members and staff to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He commented that the role of the Development Committee is an important one for the Friends and welcomed everyone's active participation and efforts as he takes on the responsibilities as the new chair of the committee.

Public Comments

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

Chair's Introduction

Chair Williams began the meeting with some introductory comments on the duties and responsibilities of the Development Committee. He stated that the overall mission of Friends is to support the mission of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County in the care, management, and improvement of the forest preserves as well as providing services to the residents of DuPage County. To support the Friends mission, the Development Committee is responsible for identifying and engaging with existing and new supporters and donors; engaging Friends Board members, in coordination with Friends staff, in planning Friends programs and activities; and identifying new efforts to raise funds for District projects and priorities.

Past Friends fund raising focused on certain projects such as the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center, natural resources restoration activities, and public improvement and recreation activities in the preserves. Fundraising for priority projects included specific campaigns to Friends supporters and events to secure donations. The Development Committee needs to

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consider and identify new and innovative programs that focus on fund-raising activities with District needs.

Ms. Kannegiesser and Ms. Hertenstein then provided information on donors and fund-raising campaigns as well as the three upcoming events intended to serve as donor engagement events and fundraising activities. They are the Native Plant Sale pre-sale event in May, the Duck Race at Fullersburg Woods in August, and A Night for Nature at St. James Farm in September. Board member support and promotion are needed for all these events.

There was some discussion on the silent auction at A Night for Nature and the fact that we will return to offering auction items for attendees to bid on during the evening. Staff then provided information on the master list of items donated by local businesses in the past. The list is available in the Friends Teams document folder on-line. This list will serve as a central site to manage auction items. Board members were urged to review the items and sign-up to solicit items on the list, but also to make an effort to solicit and obtain additional donated items for the auction this year. Information regarding in-kind donation forms and the auction description are available from Friends staff.

Committee Discussion

Chair Williams then opened the meeting to solicit thoughts and ideas from committee members on ways to support the Friends' fundraising objectives and the role of the Development Committee. A wide-ranging discussion ensued with members bringing up a number of ideas during the discussion. Among the items mentioned were the following:

- A recommendation that the Friends should strategically identify and align future fund-raising activities and goals with District objectives and plans. This effort should identify some long-term goals to set the scope and size of Friends support needed for District programs. The effort should identify some specific high-priority projects that need funding. Once identified, the Friends can then develop plans and programs to meet those fund-raising goals.
- The need for the Friends to have both focused fund-raising campaigns to generate interest and enthusiasm among donors as well as some general, non-restricted fund raising that the Friends can utilize to fund smaller requests from the District.
- Members brought up several suggestions to expand the fund-raising efforts. These included activities such as co-sponsoring fundraising events with local businesses, retail stores or dining establishments; investigating the use of companies that serve as intermediaries/consignment agents to secure some "big ticket" auction items; using information collected on participants on the Friends Tour Hikes to expand the donor list; partnerships with local business entities or groups on mutually beneficial activities or programs within forest preserves; and identifying and targeting DuPage County based companies for partnership and sponsorship opportunities.

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- The topic of Friends Board members getting together with the District Commissioners was brought up as well as a suggestion that it may be useful for the Friends Board to get together with our counterparts from other counties.

Chair Williams thanked everyone for their participation and indicated that the discussion created a list of several good ideas to pursue. The meeting minutes will be distributed to Board members who were not present at the meeting for their information and to solicit additional input.

Ms. Kannegiesser reminded members that everyone should be working on identifying and recruiting donors and sponsors for the upcoming Duck Race and A Night for Nature events. Members also should be working on securing donations for the auction at A Night for Nature. Finally, Ms., Kannegiesser reminded members to sign-up to attend the official opening of the DuPage Wildlife Conservation Center on April 30th as well as the Native Plant Pre-sale on May 14th.

Adjournment

Chair Williams once again thanked everyone for their participation. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.