

GREENE BARN AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: May 13, 2019

PLACE: DuPage County Forest Preserve Headquarters

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rachel Jenness, Chairperson, Troy Cooper, Diane Sellinger, Britney Toussaint, Jim Hill

FPDDC PERSONNEL PRESENT: Mary Lou Wehrli, District 5 Commissioner, Wayne Zaininger, St. James Farm site manager

NON COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Cari and Ramon Szczesniak, Carol Parik, Lorraine Carlton, Robert Sellinger, Shamus Conneely

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS:

Welcome

Approved Minutes from the April 29 meeting

Introduction of Shamus Conneely

Shamus Conneely: His comments included...

Background experience, education and success. He spoke about restaurants wanting to come out to Naperville, the surrounding suburbs. He stated that there is interest in the Greene Barn. The barn provides a strong pull with a strong brand image. He felt confident that he could pull a client base from all over Chicago. Three different types of venues...banquet space, restaurant space and farm to table space...for all three the interest level is there. The lease would be beneficial to both the preserve and the private entity. The front end build out would be the responsibility of the forest preserve. The brand build out would be determined by the private entity and the cost would be the responsibility of the owner of the restaurant. The restaurant owner would want manageable rent so they could invest deeper into the property. Shamus discussed failure rate for restaurants...8 out of 10. Intensive vetting process to attempt to ensure success. Service is

crucial in the restaurant industry. There would be seating for 230 inside of the barn. Outside seating was discussed but a limit was unknown.

Other than the restaurant concept, Shamus brought banquet hall and indoor activity/experiential opportunity (skyzone, wall climbing, escape room) to light, offering those ideas as other potential uses of the barn. He stated that suburban office space is oversaturated and the suburbs are not ready for collaborative offices when discussing this additional option.

COMMITTEE MEMBER REMARKS:

- Even if we could have a restaurant, why would we? A restaurant can be in any building, we only have one Greene barn. The committee discussed various issues including traffic concerns, parking limitations, a drastic change from the current rural ambiance, failure rate of restaurants, financial complexities and the law prohibiting private enterprises operating on public land.
- General Counsel Elsner provided a response to the committee's inquiry regarding private enterprises operating on public land.
- "It is clear to me that the operation of a bistro by a private party on forest preserve property would violate Article 8 of the Illinois constitution, 1970. It is clearly the use of public land for a private purpose." – General Counsel Elsner
- Five different entities came together to form a bike program at Naperville North High-School...the first in the country. Private, public, non for profit all working together in Naperville.
- What would it cost to do an initial "vanilla box" build out?
- The committee decided on ONE public use to present to the board.
- A committee member has a professional contact who can help us with an indoor/outdoor rendering for our final proposal to the board.
- A committee member asked Commissioner Wehrli for follow up on her May 9, 2019 meeting with the FPDDC financial and landfill managers regarding landfill monies that were promised to residents years ago for Greene Valley upgrades unrelated to the landfill footprint.

- Commissioner Wehrli talked about several funds established for Greene Valley management/enhancement that were highlighted during a financial review at the April 2, 2019 board meeting as well as in an October 14, 2014 board meeting. She recounted that monies from some of these funds were spent on the dog park, trails, scout camp upgrades, trails near the landfill.
- Discussion ensued about The Greene Valley landfill monies and the discrepancy/inconsistency between what the DuPage County Forest Preserve told community members years ago and what some are now calling a “myth.”
- One committee member asked for clarification on the above during the April 2, 2019 FPDDC board meeting and still awaits a direct response.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- One local Greene Rd. resident who represents his community of 102 homes expressed strong concern about any proposal that would detract from the rural nature of the corner of Hobson and Greene Rds. and would increase traffic flow to the immediate area.
- Let’s not put 1.2 million into JUST a feature on the landscape.
- Let’s not waste all that money just for a stabilized photograph.

Adjourn: 9:10 pm

