

**Lake County Forest Preserve District  
Diversity and Cultural Awareness Committee  
January 25, 2021**

On Monday, January 25, 2021, pursuant to Section 7(e) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act, the January 8, 2021 Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation, the Governor’s Executive Order No. 2021-1, and the Written Determination of the Lake County Forest Preserve District President attached to the Agenda, the Diversity and Cultural Awareness Committee met via Audio and Video conference and at the Lake County Forest Preserve District’s General Offices.

**1.0 Call to Order** - Chair Mary Ross Cunningham called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2.0 Roll Call** - Committee Secretary Gragnani call the roll and all five committee members responded: Mary Ross Cunningham, Chair; Marah Altenberg, Vice Chair; Carissa Casbon, Gina Roberts, Jessica Vealitzek.

**Other Commissioners Present:**

Angelo Kyle, President

Julie Simpson

Terry Wilke

**Also Present:**

Alex Ty Kovach, Executive Director

Matt Norton, Corporate Counsel

Rachel Bossard, Corporate Counsel

**Also Present:**

Mike Tully

John Nelson

Mary Kann

Nan Buckardt

Jim Anderson

Debbie Boness

Julie Gragnani

**3.0 Pledge of Allegiance** – Member Casbon led the pledge of allegiance.

**4.0 Addenda to the Agenda** – None

**5.0 Approve Minutes** – Motion by member Vealitzek, second by member Roberts to approve the Minutes of August 31, 2020. Roll call vote being had, the motion passed by a vote of: AYES: 5, NAYS: 0.

**6.0 Public Comment** – None

**7.0 Correspondence** - None

**8.0 Unfinished Business** – None

**9.0 New Business**

**9.1 Review of February 2020 Resolution Affirming that the District Embraces Diversity** – Executive Director Kovach explained that the Resolution would be reviewed for the benefit of the new Commissioners. Administration Director Mary Kann then reviewed and explained each Whereas paragraph of the Resolution. Mr. Kovach added that he had worked with President Kyle to develop this Resolution to follow the County’s similar Resolution. Director Kovach and Director Kann responded to questions and a general discussion ensued.

**9.2 February 1, 2021 Board Diversity Training and on-going staff Diversity Training** – Director Kovach noted that Board diversity training will take place on February 1, 2021 on the topic of unconscious bias, and explained that prior to the Covid pandemic, bi-annual diversity training for staff was increased to quarterly training at all staff levels with an emphasis on managers, then on to all-staff training. During Covid, training has had to be held virtually via Zoom. Mr. Kovach and Administration Director Mary Kann responded to questions and a general discussion ensued regarding measurable results and new

recruitment procedures that due to Covid, are just now being implemented. Staff anticipates having some data on this for the next meeting now that recruitment has resumed. Mr. Kovach explained measures in addition to training that are being taken to change the culture, including the Best Places to Work survey, anonymous suggestion box, and a culture study used to develop the District's core values in conjunction with the strategic planning process. During discussion member Casbon asked to see survey results and recommended an intercultural development inventory questionnaire. Director Kann summarized and explained the training program pre-Covid, and what has been planned during the pandemic. The unconscious bias training was conducted remotely with supervisors but conducting all-staff training is a challenge to do remotely; staff is currently looking into having a webinar. Chair Cunningham noted that she would like to see diverse trainers being used. Mr. Kovach noted that a one-year package was initially necessary to do the training needed. Results will hopefully show in the next survey results. Once the current contract is up, the District can go out for an RFP for different trainers.

Questions and discussion continued including minorities and protected classes on staff at the District. President Kyle noted that the diversity and inclusion initiative also includes the Purchasing and procurement program. Member Vealitzek added that she would send staff a link to a racial equity impact assessment tool for government organizations.

9.3 Review and discussion of Personnel Policy on Diversity, Inclusion and Equity approved by the Board in September 2020 – Director Kovach made opening remarks and Director Kann reviewed the policy for the benefit of the new Commissioners. The policy contains four initiatives which she explained, as well as the specific procedures. She reviewed the responsibilities of the staff Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which is appointed by the Executive Director. Education Director Nan Buckardt reviewed her department's community and school outreach activities including the Gateway Grants program and virtual field trips. Human Resource Manager Laurel Diver updated the committee on the new staff Diversity Committee, which held their first meeting a week ago. Their two primary areas of focus will be developing print materials with Public Affairs for use at career fairs, and working on the mentoring program. The committee will be meeting monthly to get their initiatives implemented. Staff responded to questions and a general discussion ensued, including the Social Media Policy. Attorney Bossard noted that social media comments made on a private page need to be handled on a case by case basis.

**10.0 Miscellaneous Business - None**

**11.0 Closed Session** – Motion by member Altenberg, second by member Roberts to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees. Roll call vote being had, the motion passed by a vote of: AYES: 5, NAYS: 0. The committee went into closed session at 10:22 a.m. and returned to open session at 12:06 p.m.

**12.0 Potential Action following Closed Session - None**

**13.0 Adjournment** – With no further business, Chair Cunningham declared the meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

**Diversity and Cultural Awareness Committee  
January 25, 2021**

**APPROVED:**

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>
<hr/> Mary Ross Cunningham, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/> Marah Altenberg, Vice Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/> Carissa Casbon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/> Gina Roberts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/> Jessica Vealitzek	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Secretary's Note:** Pursuant to Section 7(e) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act, the January 7, 2022 Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation, and Written Determination of the Lake County Forest Preserve District President, the Diversity and Cultural Awareness Committee met via audio and video conference on Monday, January 31, 2022. These Minutes were approved by a Roll Call vote at that meeting:

AYES: 5 (Casbon, Danforth, Frank, Hunter, Simpson, Wasik)  
NAYS: 0  
ABSENT: 0

*Lilii Gaglianini* 1-31-2022  

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Committee Secretary