

**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES – January 9, 2023**

On Monday, January 9, 2023, a Committee of the Whole of the Lake County Forest Preserve District convened at the District's General Offices, 1899 West Winchester Road, Libertyville, Illinois.

1.0 Call to order- President Angelo Kyle called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Requests for electronic attendance due to County business were received in advance from Commissioners Jennifer Clark and Jessica Vealitzek, who were present via Zoom. Commissioner Carissa Casbon was on Zoom and requested to attend remotely. There were no objections from Commissioners.

2.0 Roll call – Board Secretary Gragnani called the roll and 14 Commissioners responded present: Altenberg, Casbon (on Zoom), Clark (on Zoom), Cunningham, Frank, Hewitt, Hunter, Knizhnik, Kyle, Maine, Parekh, Schlick, Vealitzek (on Zoom), and Wasik. Absent: Campos, Danforth, Hart, Pedersen, and Roberts.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance – President Kyle led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4.0 Public Comment- None (for any matters not on the agenda).

5.0 Approve Minutes from August 29, 2022 - Motion by Commissioner Hewitt, second by Commissioner Altenberg to approve the Minutes of August 29, 2022. Voice vote being had, the motion passed unanimously.

6.0 Waukegan Airport Update – Executive Director Alex Kovach noted that the District was awaiting the environmental assessment when it was determined that first, a biological assessment was needed for the rusty patch bumble bee and northern long-eared bat. The biological assessment is nearing completion, and the environmental assessment may be ready by late February. Language for a non-binding Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the FAA, Waukegan Port District (WPD), and the Forest Preserve District is still being worked on.

Skip Goss, Waukegan National Airport General Manager, introduced Kevin Considine, President and CEO of Lake County Partners, and Craig Loudon of CMT Engineering. They gave a presentation updating the status the airport safety improvement project to replace the runway with a new runway that is up to FAA safety standards. The project calls for construction of a new 7,000-ft. runway shifted 400 feet from the existing runway, allowing construction without closing the airport. The project would require acquisition of three parcels of forest preserve land within Waukegan Savanna totaling 52 acres, which would be maintained as open space as part of the runway safety area, except for a small corner of the taxiway. WPD would construct a multi-use trail from the east side of Delaney Road to just west of Green Bay Road. There will be no commercial passenger or cargo operations, no significant increase in daily flights, and no change to the type of aircraft using the airport. Mr. Loudon reviewed the next steps, including completion of the environmental assessment and biological assessment, Forest Preserve Board voting on the non-binding MOA, distribution of the preliminary environmental assessment, the FAA conducts public hearings, and then issues a decision on the project.

Mr. Loudon gave an overview of the MOA, noting that it's a non-binding agreement between the WPD, the FAA, and the Forest Preserve District. It outlines WPD public land mitigation commitments due to the project impacts on Forest Preserve property. The MOA is a requirement of the FAA in order to advance the project to public hearing. A future agreement between WPD and the Forest Preserve District would be required for the acquisition of forest preserve property.

Mr. Considine continued with an overview of community benefits including the widening of Green Bay Road that will run under the new runway, and a new multi-use trail that would link Waukegan and North Chicago to the Forest Preserve trail network. He then reviewed the project funding, currently estimated at \$186 million, which would largely come from federal and state grants, as well as airport users. He added that the state has committed \$25 million. No local taxes would be required. Mr. Loudon reviewed the project timeline, noting that a public hearing on the environmental assessment would be anticipated for the 3rd quarter of 2023, with the FAA issuing a decision document by the end of 2023.

Executive Director Kovach then showed some slides focusing on Forest Preserve property including earlier concepts that were rejected by the District. With the current concept, out of the 52 acres of forest preserve land needed, only 7.8 acres would have a grade-change impact. The remainder of the property is already under height restrictions which the District has never had an issue with because the trees in the area are not that tall. The land would be managed as open space as it is now, but the District would not own it. He added that the trail would connect the Forest Preserve trail sections as shown on the map, and would include a tunnel under Yorkhouse Road. He showed how the finished trail system would give access to the local municipalities.

President Kyle then called for questions and comments from Commissioners and a general discussion ensued. Mr. Loudon noted that they have requested February 28, 2023 as the date that the environmental assessment is available for cooperating agency review. Mr. Kovach clarified that the District, as a cooperating agency, will have 30 days to review the document before its release. The next step will be to have the MOA in place, which is a requirement to proceed to the next step for federal funding.

7.0 Addenda to the Agenda – None

8.0 Adjournment - President Kyle declared the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Julie Gragnani, Board Secretary

Date Approved: 7-12-2023

