

BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 18, 2019

Commissioners present: Conry, Hogan, Patterson, and Vincer (arrived at 7:10 pm).

Commissioners absent: Ludwig.

Staff present: Brunner, Gerke, Henkel, Herman, McCammond, Schlupp, Snodgrass, Tucker, and Whetsel.

Guests present: Pam Clark Reidenback, Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence; and Kris Baker, citizen.

The meeting was called to order at 7pm.

Director Tucker noted that Dwight Bond of Morton Buildings would not be attending the meeting so Agenda Item 5B was not needed. He also stated that Executive Session was not needed. President Hogan noted that the Board Secretary was absent so appointing a Secretary Pro Tem was added to the agenda.

CONRY MOVED AND PATTERSON SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. LUDWIG – ABSENT, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – ABSENT, CONRY – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

CONRY NOMINATED AND PATTERSON SECONDED THE NOMINATION OF PATTERSON AS SECRETARY PRO TEM. PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – ABSENT, CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – ABSENT, AND HOGAN – YES.

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President Hogan opened the floor to Kris Baker (citizen) to speak. He read the following statement into the minutes: *During last month's board meeting, discussion was held on the possible removal of certain board member and employee benefits currently available to those serving the Byron Forest Preserve—benefits such as playing the golf course, utilizing various BFP facilities, as well as participating in various educational programs. These benefits have for many years been provided by the Byron Forest Preserve to both its board members, its employees, and certain alliances outside of the Byron Forest Preserve, at little or no cost to them. With respect to those discussions, a recommendation was suggested and agreed to, based on that shared input, that the board would evaluate and assess the BFP Policy Book to better understand what benefits are currently provided. I fully understand and support the need for an organization such as the Byron Forest Preserve to continually audit its policies and practices to ensure fiscal responsibility. However, since we are only a few weeks away from an election, whereby there will be one and possibly two new members elected to this board, this particular issue is of major importance to any new member elected, in addition to those currently on the board. I respectfully pose this question to the board—Why has this particular issue been brought up so close to an election. Also, will this recommendation affect the benefits for all board members, employees, and agreements with members of the Byron Park District once decided, or will some sort of grandfathering clause be*

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recommended? As a tax payer and resident of this area, I would recommend the board continue its due diligence in researching this issue, while at the same time, caution them to not rush to a decision on a possible solution tonight. Should I be fortunate enough to be elected in April to serve this board, I would consider a final decision and vote on settling this issue at tonight's board meeting to be premature and not in the best interest of any views or thoughts held by candidates who are to be elected in a few short weeks. I feel strongly that either one of the candidates seeking election to this board in April can positively assist the current board in deciding on a solid decision in the best interest of the Byron Forest Preserve and the tax payers that help fund it. I want that opportunity to assist in this decision, should I be elected in two weeks, and I appreciate this board allowing me to express my view. Thank you.

President Hogan opened the floor to Pam Clark Reidenback of the Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence to present the results of the focus group meetings along with the recommendation of moving forward with a strategic plan for the District. She stated that generally you vision out about 10-15 years down the road but can only plan for about 3 years in a strategic plan since times change so rapidly. A SWOT analysis was completed (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), then focus groups were established, then meetings with the groups were conducted, and finally meetings with the staff and board to design a strategic plan based on all of the information gathered.

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Pam stated that the focus group meetings were held without any staff or board member present so the citizens were very candid about the questions being asked. In general, citizens are very proud and supportive of the Forest Preserve. All of the citizens were interested in seeing the final results of the focus group meetings.

Pam said that a vision was created, common themes were discovered, and 5 goals were developed. President Hogan stated that a common theme from the focus groups was the citizens wanted more information from the District. Pam noted that this plan is for the board to continually follow up on with the staff. It should be put on each month's agenda for board discussion. She suggested sharing the final goals with the public through the local media and developing a printed flier with the goals and mission statement for the District. She stated that the plan change at any time as long as decisions are made collectively.

She thanked the board and staff for their cooperation through the process and the board thanked her.

PATTERSON MOVED AND VINCER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 25, 2019. VINCER – YES, CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – ABSENT, PATTERSON – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

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CONRY MOVED AND VINCER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2019. CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – ABSENT, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

There was no President's Report.

President Hogan opened the floor for the Department Heads to present their Staff Reports. Todd Tucker, Administrative Services-7:35-7:40pm-He reminded the board of the District's Annual Staff/Volunteer Recognition Dinner on April 18th and the Byron Chamber Dinner on April 25th. He updated the board on the status of an injured volunteer. He informed the board that the Big Tree Event will be held on May 11th at Bald Hill from 10am-2pm. Mark Herman, Education Department-7:40-7:43pm-He informed the board that there were about 300 people at the Maple Syrup Festival. His department is working on the trail maps. The interpretive signs and the bird signs will be installed soon at Bald Hill. Russell Brunner, Restoration/Maintenance Department-7:43-7:49pm-He reviewed several photos with the board including one of skunk cabbage and stated that it's arrival is a sure sign of spring! Matt Henkel, Golf Operations Department-The golf course is opening Friday, March 22nd! He informed the board that the golf staff has been trained on GolfTrac the software used at the clubhouse. They've been organizing and cleaning up around the clubhouse and pavilion. He noted that his staff will be writing their portion of the operations report each month.

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The District's Strategic Plan was discussed. President Hogan stated that he would like for the plan documents to be put into each month's folder in Dropbox. The first goal discussed is expanding the District's boundaries. Director Tucker noted that it would take a referendum. President Hogan noted that there was a citizens' group that was attempting to make the District a county forest preserve. Director Tucker doesn't recommend that the District expand to be a county forest preserve. Further discussion followed.

Director Tucker informed the board that two of the District's Founding Fathers, Ben Barton and Chet Kobel, are meeting to discuss developing a written history of the steps taken to start the development of the Forest Preserve. The board will discuss recognition after that information is submitted to the board.

President Hogan opened the floor for discussion of Commissioner Ludwig's proposal to decrease the benefits for Board Commissioners. The recommended change in benefits is to require Commissioners to pay 50% of golf fees, facility rental fees, and program fees. Currently, all of these are free to the Commissioners with the exception of minimal fees for supplies and field trips for summer camp. Commissioner Patterson distributed documents to the board with his comments regarding this topic. President Hogan questioned the loss of revenue since the board and staff are always looking for ways to increase revenue and cut expenses. It's reasonable to discount the fees for commissioners instead of everything being free. Commissioner Vincer asked for

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usage statistics for the commissioners for the Forest Preserve and Byron Park District. Director Tucker noted that golfing isn't an obvious loss of revenue like it is for preschool and summer camp. There are only a certain number of spots available and if a commissioner's child(ren) are taking up spots from which the District is expecting revenue, then that's a direct loss of revenue. He also noted that this is not a new issue for board discussion. This topic has been discussed several times over the years. President Hogan stated that this will be on the agenda for the April meeting.

President Hogan opened the floor to Matt Henkel to discuss the Toptracer golf project. He reviewed the proposed expense report with the board, which came in higher than expected. The board discussed hiring an architect to handle the details but that's an added expense. Commissioner Patterson stated that since it's such a big project, we need an engineer to do it right the first time. Commissioner Conry noted that an advantage of the facility is that it would produce revenue all year. Director Tucker said that with Exelon's unsure future and the minimum wage law in place, the District needs to make money. Matt informed the board that we have the building specifications so we can get other quotes if we choose. President Hogan agreed with that statement.

CONRY MOVED AND PATTERSON SECONDED A MOTION
AUTHORIZING THE STAFF TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE TOPTRACER
GOLF PROJECT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,000,000 THROUGH THE MUNICIPAL

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LEASING PROGRAM. CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – ABSENT, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

The Board discussed the “Perks Exchange” which is the exchange of two pieces of property on and near the District’s Howard Colman Hall Creek Preserve. The District is exchanging 19 acres of tillable land for 20 acres of natural land. Commissioner Patterson stated that he would like to see some publicity on this exchange of land. Brief discussion followed.

PATTERSON MOVED AND CONRY SECONDED A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE ORDINANCE NO. 19-2 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A REAL ESTATE EXCHANGE AGREEMENT WITH DCP PROPERTIES, INC. LUDWIG – ABSENT, PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, CONRY – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

CONRY MOVED AND PATTERSON SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT TO LUDWIG AND VINCER AS PRESENTED. PATTERSON – YES, VINCER – YES, CONRY – YES, LUDWIG – ABSENT, AND HOGAN – YES.

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VINCER MOVED AND PATTERSON SECONDED A MOTION AT 8:49
PM TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. VINCER – YES, CONRY – YES, LUDWIG –
ABSENT, PATTERSON – YES, AND HOGAN – YES.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Patterson, Secretary Pro Tem
Byron Forest Preserve District

SP/mg