BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

MINUTES OF MEETING

FEBRUARY 28, 2022

Commissioners present: Baker, Breen, Patterson, and Remhof.

Commissioners absent: Vincer.

Staff present: Brown, Brunner, Dahlberg, Gerke, McCammond, Schlupp, and Tucker.

Guests present: Ron Steenken, Byron/Stillman Rec Path Representative

In President Vincer’s absence, Vice President Patterson resided over the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.

Director Tucker suggested deleting Agenda Items 13A-13C, Executive Session.

REMHOF MOVED AND BREEN SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. BREEN – YES, REMHOF, VINCER – ABSENT, BAKER –YES, AND PATTERSON – YES.

Vice President Patterson opened the floor to Rob Steenken, Stillman Valley Economic Development Committee and Byron/Stillman Rec Path Representative. He would like to resurrect the Recreation Path Committee in hopes to fund and build the bike path between Byron and Stillman Valley. Director Tucker and Mr. Steenken reviewed the bike path committee history with the board. At one time, the District along with the Byron Park District, City of Byron, Village of Stillman Valley, and the Snowmobile Club were working together to extend the path between Byron and Stillman along the railroad from Noridic Woods to Stillman. All but one of the landowners between Byron and Stillman were on board with the path going through their property. One of the landowners wanted payment for their portion of land to be used by the path. It wouldn’t have been fair to the other landowners to pay one and not all of them. The cost of building the path at that time was about $300,000. Commissioner

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Remhof stated that there is currently grant funding available for this type of project. Vice President Patterson stated that the mayor of Davis Junction was interested in extending the path from Stillman to Davis Junction. Commissioner Remhof stated that this is something that we should maybe pursue especially since it would potentially benefit three communities. Director Tucker stated that since there is so many costs involved in pursuing this project like attorney and engineering fees. The board would need to decide the extent of the District’s involvement, financially and the amount of time spent on the project. It was agreed that a committee should be formed to approach the current landowners to see if there would be interest in donating their land for the path. The board generally agreed to move forward.

BREEN MOVED AND REMHOF SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 24, 2022. REMHOF – YES, VINCER – ABSENT, BAKER – YES, BREEN – YES, AND PATTERSON – YES.

The correspondence was noted.

REMHOF MOVED AND BAKER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR JANUARY 2022. VINCER – ABSENT, BAKER – YES, BREEN – YES, REMHOF – YES, AND PATTERSON – YES.

Commissioner Remhof informed the board that he thoroughly enjoyed attending the Soaring to New Heights State Conference in Chicago. He had some handouts to be copied and distributed to the board. The handouts include current laws regarding the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Michelle will have them for the board at the March meeting.

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Vice President Patterson opened the floor to District Department Heads to present their Staff Reports. Todd Tucker, Administrative Services Department-7:48-8pm-He reported that he is working on the asphalt bid and reviewed areas to be paved. Commissioner Breen noted that a set amount should be budgeted every year to maintain the various paved areas in the District. Todd agreed that about $125,000 will be budgeted each year. He informed the board that he was contacted by the Greater Rockford Airport regarding the Bell Bowl Prairie situation. Commissioner Breen stated that the District should probably leave that situation to Winnebago County agencies. Todd reminded the board of their invitation to the Byron Chamber of Commerce’s Annual Awards Ceremony on April 28th and to let him know if they want to attend.

Janet Dahlberg, Education Department-8-8:04pm-She reported that the video in the theater and the interactive plow exhibit are being upgraded so they are more user friendly. She reviewed photos of preschool and homeschool programs and the sled shed.

Russell Brunner, Restoration/Maintenance Department-8:04-8:17pm-He informed the board that they will start tapping trees on March 1st for a couple weeks and then get ready for burn season. He noted that he and his crew have helped a lot with the Jarrett Prairie Center lower level remodel project. He reviewed his photos with the board.

Andrew Schlupp (for Scott deOliveira), Golf Course Operations-8:17-8:24-He reported that the delivery of the new golf carts has been delayed. Mike and his crew will work on getting some running well enough to use until the new ones are delivered. Commissioner Remhof asked if there has been static about the increased fees. Andrew said that he hasn’t heard any negative comments yet.

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Mike Brown, Golf Course Maintenance Department-8:24-8:32pm-He reported that he ordered chemicals for the course in bulk to avoid any supply chain issues over the summer. He informed the board that his assistant, Trent Snodgrass, is moving on to a new position elsewhere. Mike thanked Russ and his crew for helping with clearing the honeysuckle overgrowth on hole 13. He reviewed his photos with the board.

BREEN MOVED AND BAKER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE GOLF MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT LEASE AND RESOLUTION AS PRESENTED. BAKER – YES, BREEN – YES, REMHOF – YES, VINCER – ABSENT, AND PATTERSON – YES.

Director Tucker informed the board that he was approached by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requesting to sharp shoot deer on District property due to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) being found in some deer near our property. Commissioner Breen stated that Illinois has the best control over CWD. He went on to say that 30-35 deer per square mile is sustainable. He noted that the District’s Ripplinger/Gouker Preserve has about 20-30 deer. Director Tucker requested CWD testing kits from the DNR to give to the hunters who are allowed to hunt on District property but the DNR hasn’t responded. He went on to say the hunting program that the District has in place keeps the deer population under control. Commissioner Breen noted that the DNR only shoots does because they are the only ones that are infected with CWD and hunters usually shoot bucks. Director Tucker stated that maybe the DNR could sharp shoot if the deer were damaging the preserves but they’re not. Commissioner Breen noted that the DNR wouldn’t make a request unless they thought there was a problem. Director Tucker stated that the DNR will request access to the property where the infected

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deer was found and if that landowner refuses access to shoot on their property, the DNR keeps asking neighbors until someone will allow them on their property. The negative publicity that could occur if the District allowed the DNR to shoot on District property was discussed. Further discussion followed and the board generally agreed that it was not a good idea to allow the DNR to sharp shoot on District property at this time.

BREEN MOVED AND BAKER SECONDED A MOTION TO REIMBURSE REMHOF IN THE AMOUNT OF $205.97 FOR EXPENSES INCURRED WHILE ATTENDING THE IPRA/IAPD SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO. BREEN – YES, REMHOF – ABSTAIN, VINCER – ABSENT, BAKER – YES, AND PATTERSON – YES.

Commissioner Remhof reported that he participated in a race that was held overnight at Bald Hill. He received a lot of good feedback from the other participants about the preserve and trails.

REMHOF MOVED AND BAKER SECONDED A MOTION AT 8:55PM TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. REMHOF – YES, VINCER – ABSENT, BAKER – YES, BREEN – YES, AND PATTERSON – YES.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Baker, Secretary

Board of Commissioners

KB/mg