BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

MINUTES OF MEETING

JANUARY 23, 2023

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

Commissioners absent: None

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

Guests present: Trevor Hogan, Ogle Natural Areas Alliance.

The meeting was called to order at 6pm.

Director Tucker suggested removing Agenda Items 14A-14C - Executive Session.

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

BREEN MOVED AND BAKER SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING AND EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2022. PATTERSON – YES, REMHOF – YES, BAKER – YES, BREEN – YES, AND VINCER – YES.

The correspondence was noted and discussed briefly.

President Vincer opened the floor to Shawn McCammond to discuss the Financial Reports. Commissioner Patterson asked about the profit that PrairieFire made in 2022. Shawn stated that the Golf Fund made $185,000 profit. Before PrairieFire was built, the golf course only made a profit two years out of the last ten. PrairieFire had an $8500 day recently which is great. The scrambles scheduled for mornings are going over well. Food and drink sales are going well too.

BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

MINUTES OF MEETING – JANUARY 23, 2023

PAGE 2

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

There was no President’s Report.

Commissioner Remhof reported that he will be following up with Cade Bushnell soon regarding the bike path project. Discussion followed regarding grants and the possibility of trading farm land for bike path property. A video history blog of the railroad system that goes through Byron was also discussed.

President Vincer opened the floor to District Department Heads to present their Staff Reports. Todd Tucker, Administrative Services Department-6:19-6:27pm-He informed the board of the upcoming Board of Review meeting and will report the results to them after the meeting. He talked about the Illinois Route 2 construction between Byron and Rockford. He noted that they could do the bike path at that time as well. It could be 6-8 years before this construction happens. Discussion followed regarding the re-routing of traffic during construction and busyness it will cause at the German Church Road and River Road intersection. We should be able to capitalize on so many people being routed by our facilities.

Janet Dahlberg, Education Department-6:27-6:33pm-She reported that she had over 200 visitors in two weeks in January due to field trips and programs. She reviewed photos with the board. President Vincer stated that it’s great to see so many people enjoying the outdoors.

BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

MINUTES OF MEETING – JANUARY 23, 2023

PAGE 3

Russell Brunner, Restoration/Maintenance Department-6:33-6:52pm-He reviewed photos with the board. He noted that skunk cabbage has started sprouting due to the warmer weather. It usually comes up in February. Director Tucker informed the board that the Ogle County board has inquired about the usage of Weld Park. Commissioner Remhof asked about developing a formal agreement regarding the runners doing trail maintenance to include a plan of action to fix the area around the Wilson Shelter. Discussion followed regarding running groups using two miles of trails in March.

At this time, Trevor Hogan of the Ogle Natural Areas Alliance arrived. President Vincer opened the floor to him for his presentation.

Mr. Hogan stated that he wanted to introduce the board to the Ogle Natural Areas Alliance, a 501(c)3 organization. It began in 2020. The board members are Sandy Brooks, Caleb Hardy, Pete Oliver, Dierdre Nardi, and Trevor. He reported that they had a kickoff event on the Jarrett Prairie Center deck to raise funds and introduce the new organization to the community. He stated that ONAA will help facilitate donations to land preserving agencies like the Byron Forest Preserve. He noted that Joe Jonakin (a long-time volunteer at BFPD) donated funds towards purchase mapping software.

Mr. Hogan stated that he will be presenting at other government agency boards to introduce ONAA. He distributed a promotional information card to the board.

Commissioner Remhof suggested that Mr. Hogan visit attorney offices and churches in Ogle County as well. He also noted that some companies will match donations if their employees make donations so presenting to companies could be beneficial.

BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

MINUTES OF MEETING – JANUARY 23, 2023

PAGE 4

Discussions followed regarding targeted donations and potential properties to be purchased by the Byron Forest Preserve. Clean Energy grant eligibility was discussed.

Mr. Hogan presented a $10,000 donation/grant to the Byron Forest Preserve Board to be used for prairie development. The Board thanked Mr. Hogan and ONAA for the generous gift.

President Vincer opened the floor to Department Heads to finish presenting Staff Reports. Scott deOliveira, Golf Operations-7:17-7:30pm-He reported that scramble events are going well. They are simple to organize and growing in popularity. They bring in new golfers. The customers like the breakfast menu and there have been many positive comments about the events. President Vincer commended Scott and Jason on what they are doing. They are continually progressing with demands which is what is making PrairieFire successful. Commissioner Breen suggested offering a golf club swap similar to the ski swap events. Jason stated that golfers can’t really do that but we do offer demo days for golfers to get the equipment they need.

Mike Brown, Golf Maintenance Department-7:30-7:37pm-He reviewed photos with the board. He stated that he wants to get the leaking pond fixed. He discussed getting a liner for it. He informed the board that he wants to get PrairieView Audubon certified again and Tyler will be heading up that project.

The City of Byron proposal for building a facility on leased or purchased Forest Preserve property was discussed. Director Tucker distributed the most recent draft of the agreement. He stated that he thinks it looks good. It was suggested that Brian Brooks, the new City Administrator, review the agreement before the board takes any action. The board decided to table the approval of the City of

BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

MINUTES OF MEETING – JANUARY 23, 2023

PAGE 5

Byron agreement until the February board meeting. Discussion followed regarding the location of the septic field for the new City building. Director Tucker prefers that the septic field be put in the front yard vs. in the existing prairie. Discussion followed regarding the legalities of easements and putting septic fields on neighboring properties. President Vincer reported that the power plant’s sewer line project has been put on hold due to rising costs since the original projected costs in 2017.

The 815 Outside request was discussed. Janet explained that she has partnered with 815 Outside to do some programming. They have requested that we put a Land Acknowledgement Statement on the District’s website stating that we understand that we are using ancestral lands of Indigenous Peoples for recreation and stewardship, agreeing to educate people to ensure a better future for everyone.

REMHOF MOVED AND BREEN SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE THE REQUEST OF 815 OUTSIDE TO PUBLISH THE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT ON THE DISTRICT’S WEBSITE AS PRESENTED. BAKER – YES, BREEN – YES, PATTERSON – YES, REMHOF – YES, AND VINCER – YES.

REMHOF MOVED AND BAKER SECONDED A MOTION AT 7:54PM TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. BREEN – YES, PATTERSON – YES, REMHOF – YES, BAKER – YES, AND VINCER – YES.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Remhof, Secretary

Board of Commissioners

CR/mg