

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT BOARD
SEPTEMBER 6, 2006

This was the first meeting of the commissioners after the summer recess and the first presided over by Bobbie Steele (D-2 Chicago) as president. Steele had been chosen to serve out the unexpired term of Pres. John Stroger following his resignation because of illness. Steele's place in the chair during consideration of the FPD Finance Agenda, where she had previously presided as chair of the FPD Finance Committee, was taken by Comr. Gregg Goslin (B-14, Glenview.) After some discussion as to whether Comr. Goslin should be thought of as chair or vice-chair of the Finance Committee, consideration of the FPD Finance Agenda was completed in about five minutes.

A representative of the Holocaust Museum in Skokie thanked the commissioners for the assistance of FPD personnel in preparing for the museum's gala opening. (The museum is on FPD land.) Comrs. Larry Suffredin (D-13, Evanston) and Mike Quigley (D-10, Chicago) added that the opening had been highly successful and served to show the FPD in a good light.

Steve Mayberry of the FPD distributed newly completed "explorer's packs," including new maps of the FPD, to the commissioners. Mayberry noted that they had been funded by the U.S. Forest Service at no cost to the County's taxpayers.

The first item on the regular FPD agenda was a report of the reimbursement of \$631,837.01 from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Open Land Trust Program for the acquisition of 71.5 acres in the Thorn Creek Greenway.

- Comr. Anthony Peraica (R-16, Riverside) asked several questions about this acquisition. He was especially concerned that the public have free access to the land and was assured that this would be the case.
- Discussion of this item moved Comr. Quigley to urge that all the commissioners be given detailed information on all such FPD acquisitions.
- Comr. Peraica also questioned a request from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for right of entry to perform preliminary assessments on a former Nike missile site near Wolf Lake. He was told that the Corps had regularly tested Nike sites after the missiles were removed. Very little contamination is left, but testing is continuing just in case.
- Comr. Carl Hanson (R-15 – Mount Prospect) was bothered by a request from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District for a five year right of entry agreement to implement a District-wide small stream maintenance program. MWRD had been designated by the state as the storm water regulatory agency for Cook County. This included implementation of a small stream maintenance program, and MWRD needed a right of entry to perform the work. Comr. Hansen suspected that this arrangement might be contrary to the American System of checks and balances, but the request was approved, and President Steele urged all the commissioners to attend a MWRD hearing on storm water.

The longest discussion concerned a request to authorize advertising for bids on six items involving vehicles of various types, four of which specified that the vehicles should be Fords (a seventh item concerned bids for the completion of picnic shelters and comfort stations in several districts.)

- Comr. Jerry Butler (D-3, Chicago) was bothered by the naming of a specific brand, since it shut out many prospective (and possibly better) providers. Several commissioners wanted to know why Fords were favored and were told that they had been used for many years,
 - had proved to be better for the District's purposes, than other makes,
 - had the most competitive prices,
 - and had been used for years, making it difficult to switch to another make.

Not all the commissioners were convinced, however. Someone mentioned that one way around the problem was to draw the specifications so narrowly that only the desired make would fit them, making use of the name unnecessary, but the legality of this was questioned. It was suggested that the item be deferred, but this would delay construction of the needed picnic shelters and comfort stations. Finally, a motion was made to separate the four items that mentioned Ford, defer them, and approve the others. After more discussion and some parliamentary maneuvering, this was approved on a roll call vote by 11 yeas to 4 nays and one present (Steele.)

Public speakers included

- the cycling director for the Gay Games, who thanked the FPD staffers in the Palos division for their help in arranging a race on short notice. Comr. Quigley echoed the praise and pronounced the Games a success.
- A representative of the Greater Chicago Jewish Federation reiterated the thanks to the FPD staff for their help with the Holocaust Museum opening,
- and President Steel thanked staff for their help with the meeting of the National Association of Counties.
- George Blakemore was annoyed that other speakers had been called first although he had signed up to speak a week earlier. He was disturbed by the practice of favoring one company when calling for bids, and he repeated his demand that more blacks be hired by the FPD.

The meeting was adjourned shortly before noon.

Observed and reported by Daphne Daume