



**FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Virtual Meeting**

**New Items Agenda**

**Tuesday, May 11, 2021, 10:00 AM**

[21-0284](#)

**Sponsored by:** LARRY SUFFREDIN, TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), FRANK J. AGUILAR, ALMA E. ANAYA, LUIS ARROYO JR., SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, DENNIS DEER, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BRANDON JOHNSON, BILL LOWRY, DONNA MILLER, STANLEY MOORE and PETER N. SILVESTRI, Forest Preserve District of Cook County Board of Commissioners

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

**REQUESTING A HEARING INTO THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT TO PROTECT THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS AND BIPOC RESIDENTS AND VISITORS WITHIN COOK COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, Cook County has always been home to people from many racial and ethnic backgrounds, and the Cook County Forest Preserve District has been a public space and place to visit nature for these residents and visitors. With over one million immigrants, Cook County has the largest concentration of foreign-born residents in the State of Illinois. Many of these individuals and families visits our preserves and are among the over 60 million visits that the Forest Preserve District experiences each year over its almost 70,000 acres; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cook County Forest Preserve District has benefitted and continues to benefit culturally, socially, and economically from the diversity of its residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cook County Forest Preserve District and its partners, the Brookfield Zoo and Chicago Botanic Garden, are committed to being a Fair and Equal place for all immigrants, refugees, and their families, and for people of color; and are committed to energetically advance equity and inclusion, and to oppose any efforts that conflict with those values or reverse critical protections to immigrants, refugees, and their families, and to people of color; and

**WHEREAS**, the national political climate over the past four years has produced fear and anxiety among many Cook County residents, particularly among people of color, immigrants, Muslims, Jews, and members of the LGBTQ community. Recent events within Cook County and the Forest Preserve District have demonstrated that there is increased violence against diverse communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic has also perpetrated xenophobia towards the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Over the course of approximately a year during the pandemic, 3,800 anti-Asian racist incidents such as verbal harassment, shunning, physical assault, and civil rights violations were reported across the country. Out of those incidents, nearly 68% were towards AAPI women; and

**WHEREAS**, the Forest Preserve District remains committed to protecting the civil rights of all residents and immigrant groups, to work toward equity and inclusion, and to ensure that all residents of Cook County and visitors feel welcome and safe in the Forest Preserves.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Legislative and Intergovernmental Relations

Committee hold a hearing for Forest Preserve District officials to report on current policies and practices and for input from our residents concerning both current policies and practices as well as best practices for protecting civil rights and welcoming all immigrant groups and people of color who visit the Cook County Forest Preserves into the future.

[21-0285](#)

**Sponsored by:** DENNIS DEER, LARRY SUFFREDIN, JOHN P. DALEY, BILL LOWRY, STANLEY MOORE, PETER N. SILVESTRI and DEBORAH SIMS, Forest Preserve District of Cook County Board of Commissioners

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

**RECOGNIZING MAY AS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH IN THE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year. 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year. 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year, 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, 75% by age 24 and suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34; and

**WHEREAS**, all Americans face challenges in life that can impact their mental health, whether it is due to the loss of a loved one, socioeconomic circumstances and especially during a pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, mental health conditions are real and prevalent in our nation according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA), for adults aged 18 or older, the percentage who had any mental illness (AMI) in the past year increased from 17.7 percent (or 39.8 million people) in 2008 to 20.6 percent (or 51.5 million people) in 2019. Over that same period, the percentage who had serious mental illness (SMI) in the past year increased from 3.7 percent (or 8.3 million people) to 5.2 percent (or 13.1 million people); and

**WHEREAS**, prevention is an effective way to reduce the burden of mental health conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, there are practical tools that all people can use to improve their mental health and increase resiliency, which include exercise, increase sleep, positive thinking and healthy diet; and

**WHEREAS**, with effective treatment, those individuals with mental health conditions can recover and lead full, productive lives; and

**WHEREAS**, each business, school, government agency, health care provider, organization and citizen share the burden of mental health problems and has a responsibility to promote mental wellness and support prevention and treatment efforts; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that Cook County will: Led by the Cook County Board President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners (County Board), in collaboration with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to commit to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health issues, the steps our citizens can take to protect their mental health, and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental health conditions; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, We established May as Mental health Awareness Month in the Forest Preserve District of Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, We establish May, 19th as Mental Health Awareness Day in the Forest Preserve District of Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the County Board hereby supports the efforts of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to raise awareness of mental health issues and the importance of maintaining ones mental health; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Forest Preserve District of Cook County Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee meet to discuss the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's outreach in regards to mental health awareness.