



From: Toni Preckwinkle, President
To: Forest Preserves Board of Commissioners
Date: November 4, 2021
Re: Re-appointments for the Conservation & Policy Council

On August 26, 2021, the Nominating Committee met and recommended re-appointment of Alan Bell, Mike DeSantiago, Maria Pesquiera and Shelley Spencer to an additional term on the Conservation and Policy Council. I concur with the committee's recommendation and seek the Board's advice and consent related to the re-appointments.

Short bios for the candidates follow.

Candidates for Re-Appointment to the Conservation & Policy Council

Alan M. Bell (Council Chair)

- Partner, Charity & Associates, P.C.
- **Expertise:** Government, Finance, Nature-oriented Development

Alan M. Bell is a partner at the law firm of Charity & Associates, P.C., focusing on municipal finance and real estate finance. He is also the founder and president of The Elements Group, which focuses on nature-oriented development projects. Alan serves on the boards of Openlands, the Land Trust Alliance, the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance and the Black Ensemble Theater, and is a member of the National Association of Bond Lawyers. He enjoys bike riding along Chicago's lakefront and hiking trails throughout the Forest Preserves.

Michael DeSantiago

- Former President, Primera Engineers
- **Expertise:** Conservation; Management/Business; Working Knowledge of the CBG, Brookfield Zoo, and Other Culturally Significant Institutions

Michael DeSantiago has more than 30 years of experience in the practice of sustainable design and energy management and has a life-long interest in conservation and sustainability. He is also a LEED Accredited Professional. In addition to designing environmentally responsible and budget-compliant solutions, he is also actively engaged with local and national code-writing bodies and regularly contributes to the industry's professional organizations. Through his involvement with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago and other programs, he promotes engineering as a profession to children and young adults from communities that are under-represented in the profession. Michael is a trustee of the Conservation and Education Committee and a member of the Planning and Facilities committee at the Chicago Zoological Society. He is the past President of the American Council of Mechanical & Electrical engineers and has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards related to engineering design, community development, and diversity leadership.

Maria Pesqueira

- President, Health Communities Foundation
- **Expertise:** Health/Human Services, Cultural Awareness

Maria Pesqueira was appointed President of the Healthy Communities Foundation in May 2017. The Healthy Communities Foundation (HCF) aims to achieve health equity across its 27 zip-code region in Chicago and west suburban Cook County. Maria is a sought-after speaker addressing local, national, and hemispheric audiences on a wide variety of topics ranging from the future of philanthropy, health disparities, gender, and racial/ethnic equity. Previous to her role at HCF, Maria served as President & CEO to Mujeres Latinas en Accion and formerly led The National Museum of Mexican Art's Marketing and Development team. Her civic and community involvement is extensive and includes appointments to the Congressional Commission for a National Women's History Museum and the Lincoln Academy of Illinois. She has held leadership roles in various national and local boards including UNIDOS US (formerly National Council of La Raza), Hispanics in Philanthropy, Illinois Partners for Human Services and The Chicago Network.

Shelley Spencer (Council Secretary)

- Executive Producer, Media Consultant
- **Expertise:** Communications, Mass Media, Message and Brand Strategy

Shelley Spencer is a four-time Emmy Award winning producer/writer specializing in documentary and public affairs programming. One of those Emmy's was for *Chicago's True Nature*, a documentary film on the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Shelley developed that documentary while serving as Supervising Producer at WYCC TV. She has a passion for public media having also served as Executive Producer for WTTW. Her broadcast work has been seen nationally and internationally. As a media consultant, Shelley draws on twenty+ years of experience in broadcast television production and promotion to create and lead communication strategies across media platforms for corporate and non-profit organizations. Her corporate clients have included Citibank, Chase, The United Way, The Red Cross, McGraw-Hill Education and Pearson educational publishing. She is a board member of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Chicago/Midwest.