

**The Forest Preserve District of Cook County
Conservation & Policy Advisory Council**

January 20, 2015

Call to Order. Council chair Wendy Paulson called the meeting to order at 3 pm. The following council members and others attended:

Advisory Council Members

Wendy Paulson, chair
Commissioner Robert Steele
Dr. Sylvia Jenkins
Falona Joy
Laurel Ross
Linda Mastandrea
Mark Templeton
Michael De Santiago
Peter Ellis
Robert Castaneda
Terry Guen

Forest Preserve Staff

Amanda Grant
Anthony Tindall
Arnold Randall
Cathy Geraghty
Cynthia Moreno
Daniel Betts
Dennis White
Eileen Figel
Erik Varela
John McCabe
Lisa Lee
Lydia Uhler
Mary Pat Cross
Stephen Hughes

Partners

Benjamin Cox (FOTFP)
Daniel Saurez (Volunteer)
Emily Harris (Harris Strategies)
Ginny Hotaling (CBG)
Gregory Mueller (CBG)
Lenore Beyer-Clow
(Openlands)
Rebecca Sanders (Audubon)
Richard Gamble (CZS)
Shelley Davis (FP Foundation)

Public Comments. There were no comments from the public.

Overview of the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Next Century Conservation Plan (NCCP). General Superintendent Arnold Randall presented an overview of the district and the NCCP.

Testimonial. Daniel Suarez of Audubon Chicago and a long-time volunteer with the forest preserves discussed how and why he got involved as a volunteer. He stated, “Growing up, nature was not on my radar. Nature seemed to be an “other” place—not something accessible to me.” As a teenager, Suarez volunteered for a workday along the North Branch and has been deeply committed to restoration efforts ever since.

Implementation Strategy and Council Responsibilities. Deputy Superintendent Eileen Figel provided an overview of the process and strategy which is being used to implement the plan and the role of the council in guiding these efforts.

Challenges and Opportunities. Wendy Paulson asked members of the council to share what they see as challenges and opportunities related to the plan. These include:

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Don't get stuck on dollars needed; we have lots of other resources (people, partners, etc.)	Thousands of volunteers.
We need to look at the forest preserves as a whole; don't allow one site to compete against another.	Council members have lots of connections; we can pull in more partners.
What is the message and who do we need to get it to? How will we use technology to connect to urbanites and get them out here?	We must get the house in order and protect the preserves, but also think about how we reach back and bring the model of conservation into the city.
What will kids get excited about? Land restoration is a primary goal, but will these kids respond to that? How do we get to under-represented communities?	How will you track the improved accessibility for people with disabilities?
Need to retain sense of urgency.	The council can help with the "call to action." What are we asking partners to do? What are we asking the public to do? We have very specific ideas under each of the four pillars which we can measure against.
Is the County Board behind this? Commissioner Steele stated that many of them are users of the Forest Preserves and indicated he will be an advocate within the board AND will be a national advocate to get more resources here. Ginny Hotaling suggested a regular update at the Cook County Board meeting.	Setting the bar high is important; if you don't set it high, you will never get there. What makes it realistic is that we have 25 years to get it done and people want to be part of the winning team that gets it done.
Cynthia explained to the People Committee how we got here; that might be helpful to council.	The plan is grand; we must look for synergies. Think about who is taking on responsibility for getting this done.

Council Operations & Resources. Cathy Geraghty presented the operating guidelines for the council and provided an overview of the resources included in their binder.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.