



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0463, **Version:** 2

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING AND THANKING WENDY PAULSON FOR HER SERVICE AS THE INAUGURAL CHAIR OF THE CONSERVATION AND POLICY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County Conservation and Policy Council (the “Council”) advises the Forest Preserves’ President, Board of Commissioners and General Superintendent; develops and annually updates a strategic plan to operationalize the Next Century Conservation Plan; and reviews and makes recommendations for the annual budget, conservation policies and practices, and long-term strategic issues; and

WHEREAS, the Next Century Conservation Plan lays out a set of bold actions to make Cook County a national leader in urban conservation. It highlights the Forest Preserves of Cook County as one of the region’s greatest assets for the environment, the economy, and quality of life, while suggesting that its fragile native ecosystems are at risk. The plan calls for Cook County to make a massive commitment to habitat restoration, expand protected lands by at least 30%, and make the preserves more accessible to the diverse people of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the Council was created by this body’s ordinance in 2014 and charged with developing and annually updating a five-year strategic and financial plan to operationalize the Next Century Conservation Plan; recommending annual adoption of updated implementation strategies; reviewing the Forest Preserves’ annual budget and making recommendations concerning its alignment with strategic and financial plans, conservation policies and practices, and opportunities to maximize public and private financial resources to accomplish conservation goals and initiatives; and providing public recommendations to improve the Forest Preserves’ operations and conservation leadership; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Paulson was appointed and approved as the inaugural Chair of the Conservation and Policy Council on November 18, 2014 and quickly established an operational culture within the Council to encourage frank and intelligent debate of complex and difficult public policy issues in order to develop sound strategies and processes whereby the Council would serve its charge; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Paulson holds and has held numerous other leadership positions within the local and international conservation communities, including Rare; the Student Conservation Association; the National Forum on Children and Nature, the American Bird Conservancy, BirdLife International; the National Audubon Society; and the New York and national boards of The Nature Conservancy. She currently serves as Chairman of the Bobolink Foundation, which supports conservation efforts. Locally, Ms. Paulson served as Co-Chair of the Next Century Plan Commission and Director of Education at Citizens for Conservation in Barrington, and currently serves on the board of Openlands and the Field Museum’s Science Action committee. A long-time educator, Ms. Paulson has taught public school in Boston, New York, and Barrington, Illinois, and at the Potomac School in Virginia. She serves as an educational associate of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, has written a nature activity series for children, and edited a conservation newsletter for many years. She is a longtime participant in prairie and savanna restoration, and has been leading bird walks for more than thirty years; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, the Council embarked on the development of four historic position papers to be submitted to the Board of Commissioners and the residents of Cook County to set clear guidelines for the actions and direction of Forest Preserves staff, its Board of Commissioners, and partners and supporters; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as Chair, the Council completed, and the Board approved, two of the four historic papers;

namely, *Moving Towards Racial Equity in the Forest Preserves of Cook County* and *Acquisition and Disposition of Land by the Forest Preserves of Cook County*, which set the direction of these topics for decades to come and which will positively impact millions of people.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Toni Preckwinkle, President, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby honor and thank Ms. Paulson for her service to, and on behalf of, the more than 5 million residents of Cook County and the millions of visitors to the Forest Preserves each year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that suitable copies of this Resolution be presented to Wendy Paulson and be spread upon the proceedings of this body.