

**The Nature Foundation of Will County
Minutes of the October 28, 2020 Meeting
Conducted by Zoom Conferencing and Conference Call**

Vice Chair Flax called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

Flax led the pledge to the flag.

Roll was called and a total of eleven Directors were present. A quorum of seven voting Directors was present.

Voting Directors Present:

- Marcy DeMauro
- Ann Dralle
- Rachel Feil
- Jim Flax
- Ed Garner
- Donna Theimer
- Jeff Tuminello

Non-voting Directors Present:

- Don Gould
- Meta Mueller
- Ralph Schultz
- Rachael Ventura

Others Present:

- Cindy Harn, Executive Director
- Henry Yowell, Boy Scout Troop 13, Plainfield

Approval of Minutes

Dralle moved to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2020 meeting, seconded by Garner. The motion was approved unanimously.

Presentations

Henry Yowell, Boy Scout with Troop 13 in Plainfield, gave a presentation on his Eagle Scout project, which involved the construction of archery 5 target holders, 5 arrow quivers, 10 bow drill sets, and a fishing rod holder at the Isle a la Cache Museum. These items will be used for on-site fishing and archery programs. The Foundation provided funding for the project through the Serve Will County Youth Service Grant Program. Mr. Yowell's presentation was well received. The Board congratulated him on successfully completing the project and in meeting the requirements of Eagle rank in the Boy Scouts.

Reports of Officers

Chairperson's Report

There was no Chairperson's report.

Treasurer's Report

- Financial Report and Balance Sheet

Harn reviewed the Balance Sheet Financial Report dated September 30, 2020. Total assets are \$222,801 and include \$40,260 in the Checking Account, \$105,625 in the Money Market Account, \$1,100 in Petty Cash, and \$75,817 invested in a CD. Of the total assets, \$84,073 is donor restricted and \$138,728 is unrestricted. Liabilities are \$49,715 in Accounts Payable that are presented later for payment. Harn noted that the disbursement (\$38,615) to the Forest Preserve District for the wetland restoration project at Goodenow Grove is the final payment for the project. Upon approval of outstanding bills tonight, the Foundation's Total Net Assets are \$173,087.

Harn presented the Quarterly Statement Report for the period January – October 21, 2020. The Foundation received \$3,624.50 in revenue in October that includes proceeds from the plant sale and unrestricted donations. Harn reviewed the 2020 Budget vs. Actual Report dated October 21, 2020. Total revenues are \$33,636.66 and total expenditures are \$87,376.06. The operational deficit was expected as most of the expenditures (\$67,779.76), including disbursement of \$48,610 to be approved tonight, are payouts to the Forest Preserve District for capital projects that the Foundation previously committed to funding. When interest income of \$1,143.56 to date is included, the net revenue is -\$52,595.84.

DeMauro moved to accept the Balance Sheet and Budget Reports as presented, seconded by Dralle. The motion was approved unanimously.

- Schedule of Bills

Harn presented the schedule of bills totaling \$49,714.84 for the period September 17 – October 21, 2020. Included are Harn's September consulting fee (\$1,000), and credit card charges totaling \$104.84 for the September Mailchimp Email and Adobe Creative Cloud service fees, and for Facebook ads for our summer campaign promotion. There are two payments to the Forest Preserve District totaling \$48,610 for the wetland restoration and campground welcome station projects at Goodenow Grove Preserve. These are the final contributions to the District in 2020 and will be presented virtually to the Forest Preserve Board at their November 12th meeting. The Money Market Account earned \$2.60 in interest for September.

Dralle moved to approve the Schedule of Bills as presented in the amount of \$49,714.84, seconded by Tuminello. The motion was approved unanimously.

Committee Reports

Fundraising and Projects Committee - There was no Committee report.

Finance Committee Report - There was no Committee report.

Board Development Committee - There was no Committee report.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Approve the Re-Appointment of Two Existing Directors

DeMauro stated that two current Directors have terms expiring in November 2020. Jeff Tuminello has a one year term and Jim Flax has a three year term. The Board Development Committee contacted both individuals about their interest in serving another term. Both individuals have agreed to serve another term. Upon approval, Tuminello's term is set to expire in November 2021 and Flax's is set to expire in November 2023. DeMauro noted that these dates will change as a new appointment schedule will be presented to the Board at the annual meeting on December 2, 2020 that will propose the re-alignment of all Director's terms.

Dralle motioned to approve the re-appointment of Jeff Tuminello for a one-year term and Jim Flax to a three-year term, to expire in November 2021 and 2023, respectively. The motion was seconded by Theimer and approved unanimously.

Approve Resolution No. 20-02 Formalizing a Planned Giving Program for the Nature Foundation and Establishing the Foundation's Legacy Society and Program Guidelines

Harn stated that has received several inquiries from individuals naming the Foundation in their will or estate, or designating the Foundation as a beneficiary in their life insurance policy. To meet this need and expand, Harn researched legacy societies as a way to create the structure and process for accepting these planned gifts and provide for more marketing opportunities.

Harn reviewed and discussed the information at a joint meeting of the Fundraising and Projects and the Finance Committees on September 15, 2020. The group agreed that this was a logical step for the Foundation to take in diversifying ways for donors to support us and in diversifying our revenue streams. Harn noted the resolution establishing The Nature Foundation Legacy Society and accompanying program guidelines were included in the packet, as well as the Foundation's Gift Acceptance Policy and Guidelines which guide the acceptance of any and all gifts. Also provided is a draft rack card that would be placed in brochure racks and self-standing racks on donation boxes in visitor facilities, and as a mailer. Harn gave a summary of the Legacy Society Program Guidelines, touching on the types of gifts and requirements for accepting gifts, Legacy Society benefits, how to become a founding member, and use of legal counsel.

Theimer motioned to approve Resolution No. 20-02 formalizing a planned giving program for the Foundation, and establishing The Nature Foundation's Legacy Society and its associated program guidelines, seconded by Feil. Motion was unanimously approved.

Annual Planning Session for 2021

Harn led the Board in a presentation and discussion of the Board's annual strategic planning. A brief summary of the presentation is below. Harn will provide a more detailed report to the Board at a later date.

- Highlights from five separate surveys of Board members, Forest Preserve Commissioners, Donor Satisfaction and Customer Satisfaction during 2020.
- 2021 Annual Plan of Work
 - Re-affirming the Foundation's two long range planning goals.
 - Review priorities and initiatives from the three standing Committees: Fundraising and Projects; Finance; and Board Development.

- Review priorities and initiatives in the Foundation’s program areas of Governance, Communications and Marketing, and Volunteerism.
- Capital Projects in 2021, broken down by quarter to strategically time the check presentations over the year and maximize promotional benefits.
- Financial Position in 2021
- Foundation Calendar in 2021
- Review of December 2, 2020 Annual Meeting Agenda Items

Analysis and Recommendations Concerning the Foundation’s Native Plant Sale Events in 2021

Harn gave the Board a summary of how the Foundation’s Native Plant Sale and the informal partnership with Possibility Place Nursery began, how that relationship and event have evolved, and the effectiveness of the informal partnership. Harn highlighted specific concerns with customer service complaints and issues that resulted from the on-line plant sale this year. Harn then detailed the reasons for dissolving the Foundation’s informal partnership with Possibility Place Nursery. These reasons include: the increased cost for wholesale plant materials that has and will impact the Foundation’s profit margin going forward; the nursery’s changing business model and how that has affected its ability to meet our increasing demands, especially with plant species that are rare or preferred by customers; past communication and coordination issues that have resulted in Harn eliminating the native plant seminars ██████████ in 2020 and instead utilizing Foundation Board members and volunteers (did not happen due the pandemic); and the lack of planning and follow-through by ██████ on the Oaktober! Native Tree and Shrub sale that had a direct financial impact on the Foundation. Harn concluded that there is little benefit to staying in this informal partnership. The Foundation is in a position to transition to a customer/wholesaler relationship and pursue the purchase of plant materials from different wholesalers.

Harn and Schultz met with Pizzo & Associates, a wholesale nursery. She believes the Foundation can transition to purchasing plant material from Pizzo at wholesale cost, and provided a detailed financial analysis as Pizzo sells their plants as plugs, not pints. Harn also discussed the size and growth differences between plugs and pints. Harn recommended the Foundation offer three plant sales with pickup events in 2021 (spring, summer, fall), ordering plugs from Pizzo & Associates for the spring and summer plant sales, and ordering trees and shrubs from Possibility Place for the fall plant sale.

The Board concurred with Harn’s analysis and authorized her to proceed with the planning efforts and inform Possibility Place of the Foundation’s need to restructure its native plant sales and operate its events under a different model.

Reports

Reports of Various Surveys with Results and Recommendations

Harn stated that the results of the five satisfaction surveys from Foundation Directors, Forest Preserve Commissioners, Donors and Plant Sale Customers referenced during the strategic planning workshop were provided in full and included in the agenda packet.

Comments by Directors - None

Comments by the Public - None

Comments by the Executive Director

Harn stated that there will be a virtual check presentation to the Forest Preserve Board of Commissioners at their meeting on November 12, 2020. The funds are for the solar powered welcome center at the Goodenow Grove camp grounds (\$10,000) and reimbursement for the wetland restoration (\$38,500) at Goodenow Grove. Harn also reminded Board members to complete their annual ethics training (module accessed through the Board Member portal), and sign and return the Annual Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest for 2020 (previously mailed with a self-addressed, stamped envelope).

Next Meeting Dates

The next scheduled meeting of The Nature Foundation of Will County Board of Directors is the annual meeting on Wednesday, December 2nd.

Adjournment

Theimer moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m., seconded by DeMauro. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcella M. DeMauro

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Secretary