



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES
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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

DATE: February 5, 2018

MEMO TO: Carol Calabresa, Chair
Planning Committee

FROM: Randall L. Seebach
Director of Planning and Land Preservation

REQUEST: Provide policy direction regarding a potential amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Highland Park and the Park District of Highland Park regarding the Skokie River Woods.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Public Access and Connections; Leadership; Conservation

FINANCIAL DATA: There is no financial impact at this time.

BACKGROUND: In April 2002, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (District) entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Park District of Highland Park (Park District) and the City of Highland Park (City) regarding the permanent preservation of approximately 150 acres of property located at the southeast corner of Half Day Road and U.S. Route 41 known as the Skokie River Woods. The permanent preservation of this property was accomplished with three conservation easements granted to the District by the City for which the District contributed \$950,000.00 toward the easements. The three conservation easements include the Lushing Combined Parcel, the Highland Park Country Club Parcel and the Highland Park Woods Parcel, which are shown on the attached map.

In addition to permanently preserving the property, the IGA also identified future greenway and trail connections between the subject property and several of the District's preserves including Fort Sheridan, Prairie Wolf and Berkley Prairie and several local schools and parks. The IGA and Lushing Combined Parcel Conservation Easement contemplated that the Park District would improve the parcel with pedestrian and bicycle trails, bridges as well as associated directional and information signage, an overlook and a parking lot. These trails were to be linked to existing hiking and biking trails including future connections to the District property mentioned above. A proposed Hiking and Biking Trail Improvement Plan for the Lushing Combined Parcel was included as an exhibit to the IGA.

The Park District staff has notified District staff that it wants to amend the IGA so that it is no longer obligated to construct certain trails and trail locations, shown on the original Plan, within the Combined Lushing Parcel. District staff is supportive of this request, because the trails could cause environmental impacts to this area, which has been restored since the IGA was approved, that are greater than the impacts originally envisioned. Consequently, the Park District has prepared an alternate plan, titled "Gateway Path Conceptual Master Plan", for which they would like the District's approval. Any approval will require an amendment to the IGA.

Staff is seeking approval of the Park District's proposed changes to the original Hiking and Biking Trail Improvement Plan and authority to continue negotiations with the Park District on a mutually acceptable amendment to the IGA. The amendment would be effective only if and when it is approved by the corporate authorities of the District, the Park District and the City.

District staff and Corporate Counsel are still looking at other potential issues related to an amendment to the IGA, including whether the conservation easements associated with the IGA need to be amended.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Corporate Counsel.



Skokie River Woods Conservation Easements

Legend

- Forest Preserve Easements
- Highland Park Woods: Docs. 5080790 & 5776326
- Lushing Combined Parcel:
Doc. 4973269 (To District & IDNR)
- H P Country Club Golf Course:
Docs. 5080789, 5776327 & 6195870



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Prepared using information from:
 Lake Co. Dept. of Information & Technology
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 18 North County Street
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Map Prepared 5 January 2012

Courtesy Copy Only.
 Property boundaries indicated are provided for general location purposes. Wetland and flood limits shown are approximate and should not be used to determine setbacks for structure or as a basis for purchasing property.

2010 Aerial Photo

