



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES
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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

DATE: August 26, 2019

MEMO TO: John Wasik, Chair
Planning Committee

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

REQUEST: Provide policy direction regarding request from the Fox Lake Fire Protection District to allow annexation of District property at Gander Mountain Forest Preserve.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: None

FINANCIAL DATA: At this time there is no financial impact.

BACKGROUND: The Fox Lake Fire Protection District (Fox Lake FPD) has requested that the District consider allowing the annexation of Gander Mountain Forest Preserve into their protection district. According to the Fox Lake FPD's Deputy Fire Chief, Fox Lake FPD is in the process of annexing properties to make its boundaries more unified. Fox Lake FPD, which stretches from the Wisconsin border to just north of Volo, has been able to annex other properties because they were not already included in other fire protection districts, however Gander Mountain currently falls inside the boundaries of the First Fire Protection District of Antioch (Antioch FPD). The Fox lake FPD has indicated that they have been operating under a 1940's handshake agreement with the Antioch FPD to provide fire protection services to Gander Mountain Forest Preserve and portions of the Chain O Lakes State Park.

The Fox Lake FPD has one fire station that is closer to Gander Mountain than any fire station within the Antioch FPD. According to the Fox Lake FPD Deputy Fire Chief, both Fire Protection District Boards have agreed that removing Gander Mountain from Antioch FPD and annexing it to Fox Lake FPD will be beneficial to them, the Forest Preserve District, and local residents in an emergency situation. The two fire protection districts considered a process to revise the boundaries by simply transferring the property between them. Unfortunately, according to Fox Lake FPD, the Fire Protection District Act limits this type of transfer to 60-acres or less.

After much consideration, the Fire Protection Districts are asking (see attached) the Forest Preserve District to file a petition in the Circuit Court of Lake County seeking the transfer of Gander Mountain from one fire protection district to the other. Because the District is tax-exempt, it would not be assessed with any ad valorem real estate taxes by Fox Lake FPD. Fox Lake FPD's chief states in his letter that Fox Lake FPD would draft the petition and all the necessary documents, in consultation with both parties' corporate counsel. The Forest Preserve District would still likely incur some legal fees related to this proceeding.

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



Fox Lake Fire Protection District

306 Washington Street

Ingleside, IL 60041

847-587-3312

Fire Chief Ronald Hoehne



Antioch Fire Department
First Fire Protection District

835 Holbek Drive

Antioch, IL 60002

847-395-5511

Fire Chief Jon Cokefair

May 31, 2019

Mr. Ty Kovach
Lake County Forest Preserves, Executive Director
19808 West Grand Avenue
Lake Villa, IL 60046

Re: Gander Mountain Forest Preserve

Dear Mr. Kovach:

The Fox Lake Fire Protection District is in the process of annexing properties in order to make its boundaries more unified. The District stretches from the Wisconsin border to just north of Volo. Thanks to these annexations, most of the District is now one connected territory. However, there are still two areas that divide the District's boundaries, one of which is Gander Mountain Forest Preserve.

The District was able to annex other properties because they were not already included in other fire protection districts. Gander Mountain, on the other hand, currently falls inside the boundaries of the First Fire Protection District of Antioch, so those previous methods would not work here. Since Antioch FPD has no objection to this annexation, the two districts considered simply transferring the properties between them. Unfortunately, the territory is too large; the Fire Protection District Act limits that type of transfer to 60 acres or less.

After much consideration, the Districts have determined that the best remaining option is to ask the Lake County Forest Preserve, as the owner of Gander Mountain, to petition the Circuit Court of Lake County for a transfer. That process is allowed under Section 16a of the Fire Protection District Act (70 ILCS 705/16a).

Since Gander Mountain is tax-exempt, there would be no financial implications for the Forest Preserve. Fox Lake FPD would draft all the necessary documents, in consultation with its attorneys. The only requirement for the Forest Preserve would be signing off on the transfer petition.



If the court grants the petition, Fox Lake FPD's northern territories would finally be connected. Then, if the State of Illinois follows suit regarding the northern section of the Chain 'o Lakes State Park, the entire Fox Lake FPD will fall under one uniform boundary, which will benefit the residents of Lake County.

Please feel free to contact Chief Hoehne should you have any questions regarding this idea.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Hoehne", written over a horizontal line.

Ron Hoehne, Fire Chief
Fox Lake Fire Protection District

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Cokefair", written over a horizontal line.

Jon Cokefair, Fire Chief
First Fire Protection District of Antioch