I. Call to Order
Commissioner Flowers called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. Roll Call
Commissioners Flowers, Gilmour, and Prochaska all were present.

III. Approval of Agenda
Commissioner Prochaska made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Gilmour. All, aye. Opposed, none.

IV. Citizens to be Heard
No public comments were offered.

V. Fall 2015 Public Program Offerings
Director Guritz stated that that the 2015 fall program offerings were developed by Environmental Education Coordinator Emily Dombrowski. The programs are priced to break even with direct costs when minimum enrollment is achieved, and generate revenue over expense with participation exceeds minimum enrollment. Director Guritz discussed other fall programs and events including another Family Fun Night at Ellis, the Forest Foundation’s Fall Festival, and an ENTICE workshop for preschool educators conducted in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Commissioner Prochaska made a motion to forward the fall 2015 public program offerings for Commission approval. Seconded by Commissioner Gilmour. Aye, all. Opposed, none.

VI. Competitive Analysis of Wedding and Special Event Venues
Director Guritz stated that Events Coordinator Tina Villarreal had completed her review and competitive analysis of wedding venues in and around Kendall County.

Commissioner Purcell entered the meeting at 6:08 pm.

Tina reported that the District’s pricing and venue is in line with similar venues in the region. The District is not the highest priced, or lowest priced venue. Tina reported that many of the venues charge a per-plate fee paid by the caterer following the event.
Tina stated that increasing capacity at Ellis to host 250 would help to increase marketability. For this to occur, the venue would need to expand parking areas and washrooms.

Additional staff support would be needed to help set-up and cleanup after larger events.

The Committee reviewed the spreadsheet, and discussed Northfork Farm’s pricing, which does not include use of an event tent.

Commissioner Purcell thanked Tina for the information.

The Committee discussed the use, pricing and venue of the Kendall County fairgrounds, which charges less for use of the main building/barn.

The Committee discussed other venues where use of an in-house caterer is required, which drives up costs for the wedding event.

Commissioner Purcell inquired into how many events are lost due to the site’s limited capacity. Tina reported that a few possible rentals are lost each year due to the capacity limits.

The Committee discussed that fact that Ellis is a seasonal facility, able to host weddings from May through October.

The Committee discussed the number of wedding events currently scheduled. Tina reported that 12 events are currently scheduled for 2016.

VII. Criteria for Waiver of Facility Rental Fees and Charges
Director Guritz presented a draft outlining criteria for waiver of District facility rental fees and charges for discussion.

Within the proposed criteria, meetings and events of the Forest Foundation and offices of Kendall County government agencies would continue to be waived. Events, programs, and conferences conducted in partnership with the District and outside government or not-for-profit agencies would also be waived. This would include programs conducted in partnership with Chicago Wilderness, The Conservation Foundation, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

The final criteria for consideration would include support of not-for-profit fundraising efforts to support at-risk populations in Kendall County conducted in partnership with a Kendall County government office.

The Committee discussed whether or not to waive fees from other not-for-profit agencies hosting a fundraising event at District facilities, deliberating that the current discounts
offered to not-for-profits should suffice for supporting these efforts, and that the criteria established should be need-based and not too broad.

Commissioner Gilmour stated that she was fine with the criteria presented with the exception of the provisions for considering waiving fees for not-for-profit agencies.

The Committee weighed the benefits from expanded recognition resulting from use of District facilities by not-for-profit groups to the potential loss of revenue from paying groups.

Commissioner Flowers suggested that fees could be waived for not-for-profit agencies during off-season times where facility use from paying clients is less likely to impact District revenues.

Director Guritz stated that one other area of challenge is the District’s charges for hosting events where considerable cleanup or repairs are needed to District preserve areas following the event, and whether the Committee would consider review of the District’s special event permit fees.

The Committee discussed the Kendall County Horse Show Association, noting that while the District does not charge for use of the arena and grounds at Harris Forest Preserve, this group does assist with the maintenance and care of that facility, which could be considered as an important criteria for considering waiving fees and charges.

Consensus was to remove not-for-profits from consideration under the criteria for automatically waiving fees, with request considered on a case-by-case basis.

**VIII. General Discussions and Updates**
Ellis Equestrian Program Manager Amy Clever reported that Jazz has been sold, and staff is working to find a good home for Princess. The Committee discussed Ellis staffing, noting that Rebecca Brigel would be leaving District employment in August.

The ACTHA trail challenge is scheduled to take place in two weeks, with the first barrel racing event to be hosted on August 23. Amy stated that she has been working to promote both events. ACTHA registration is better than the first time offered, but still not what was hoped. ACTHA has advised that enrollment does increase closer to the event.

**IX. Executive Session**
None.

**X. Citizens to be Heard**
No public comments were offered.
XI. Adjournment

Commissioner Prochaska made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Gilmour. All, aye. Meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District