I. **Call to Order**
Commissioner Flowers called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. in the Kendall County Board Room.

II. **Roll Call**
Commissioners Purcell, Prochaska, and Flowers all were present. Director Guritz and Ellis Events Coordinator Villarreal and Barn Manager Clever also were present.

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

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

V. **Discussion of the Ellis Wedding and Special Events Program Budget and Venue for 2016**
Commissioner Gilmour arrived at 6:04 pm.

The Programming and Events Committee reviewed the 2015 working budget allocations, focusing on Ellis cost center 120 for event rentals. Based on current projections, event rentals will generate revenues approximately $43,525 (14 events at $3,300 per event), with expenditures of $16,333 in salary costs ($13,877 full time and $2,456 part time), benefits cost of $3,427, contractual costs of $19,100 ($17,400 tent rental and $1,700 trash pickup), and $1,100 for promotion and staff uniforms, for a net gain from program of $3,236.

The Programming and Events Committee discussed the report presented, including an increased in the number of similar and competing venues hosting wedding events in the county.

Events Coordinator Villarreal reported that Uncle Bub’s has offered to purchase a sponsored ad in The Wedding Guide, and has offered to purchase a horse wagon or cart for promoting Ellis that would be installed along Route 52.
Commissioner Flowers expressed concerns over the declining events, stating that board discussions of Ellis operations were likely a contributing factor to the decline, and requested review of rental activity for the past four years.

The Programming and Events Committee suggested further discussion to develop a clearer picture of Ellis operations in 2016 before committing to partnering with Uncle Bub’s for promoting event services.

Committee directions included completion of a competitive analysis and comparison of nearby venues and costs, expressing interest in pursuing marketing opportunities offered by Uncle Bub’s and further discussion on the 2016 event venue based on trends.

The Committee discussed the timing for making decisions on continuation of hosting larger events at Ellis, with concerns over insuring ample lead time is provided to scheduled parties should their events need to be relocated to other venues.

Director Guritz stated that completion of a preliminary budget for 2015-2016 should help to inform discussions of how much support is available to offset District operational costs at Ellis, and the District as a whole.

VI. **Ellis House and Equestrian Center Fundraiser Discussion**

The Programming and Events Committee discussed the Breyer Horse fundraising opportunity suggested by Janie Johnston. Breyer is a well-known and established model horse manufacturing company that produces replicas of horses and other farm life models and accessories.

The Programming and Events Committee provided direction to move forward with work to secure lodging and dining sponsors for a weekend package in Galena that would include a visit to Green Valley Farm to visit GVF Sjokolade, or “Hershey,” a Breyer model horse.

Amy Clever provided background on the opportunity, and suggested that the package would need to be pulled together soon in order to promote the opportunity at Family Fun Night in July, and to the larger Ellis community.

The Programming and Events Committee discussed the cost for raffle tickets, suggesting that tickets be offered for $20-$25, packaged appropriately to encourage sales, and include runner-up prizes as part of the overall raffle.
VII. ACTHA Event Evaluation Discussion

The Committee discussed the ACTHA event, which was cancelled due to the HEV virus outbreak, and poor weather outlook.

Challenges for the event included the limited time available to pull together and market the event; contract provision limitations; recruitment of staffing, volunteers and judges; and limited registrations from the market pool. Overall the partnership was positive with good communications and resources in preparing for the event.

An event budget and actuals was reviewed by the committee. While we had a good number of individuals register, many of the registrations were from lower-cost classes.

Director Guritz stated that the contract would need to be renewed in order to validate the change in dates. Commissioner Gilmour expressed restated concerns with the existing contract.

Amy Clever stated that the overall cost for the weekend is a contributing factor. More engaged ACTHA competitors are accustomed to the full cost of registration and travel, but those new to the program may be deterred. Director Guritz cautioned that for these reasons, and the distribution of lower-cost program registration fees for certain classes, there is not a high likelihood that a rescheduled event will achieve the budget projections initially presented. Approximately 2/3 of the registrants were local, with 1/3 of the enrollments from active ACTHA members.

The Committee discussed the liability provisions. Director Guritz stated that our gap coverage may be in place by the August event.

Direction was received by the Committee to forward a revised contract with updated dates for the event to Commission for approval.

VIII. 5K Reindeer Run/Walk Program Budget

The Programming and Events Committee discussed the program budget for the 5K run. Last year, the event attracted 107 runners generating $4,290 ($1,400 in event sponsors). Based on review of the program budget, the Committee directed staff to move forward with planning for the event.

IX. Program Capacity and Marketing Priorities Discussion

Director Guritz presented areas of program where the District is not filling to capacity for discussion. This includes environmental and equestrian program summer camps, use of
Meadowhawk Lodge and Ellis Events Rentals (rental fees currently under review), and enrollment in horsemanship lessons.

The Committee discussed current program capacity, highlighting the following areas for further research and direction including:

1. Examine target marketing opportunities for Ellis equestrian programs (within 10-mile radius).
2. Survey parents of current summer program participant to determine if camp schedules meet parent needs (work schedule, cost, and enrichment value).
3. Examine and revise policies for facility rentals to create more customer-friendly practices (fee-based staff-supported set-up and cleanup services, insurance to allow non-catered service of alcohol, and allowance for clients to bring in/prepare their own food).

X. General Discussions and Updates

The Committee discussed the possibility of hosting Barrel Racing equestrian events at Ellis, with the first step needed to examine the insurance coverage for the event. Amy Clever felt this would be a good fit for Ellis, and generate revenue to support operations. Director Guritz directed Amy Clever to prepare an event budget for review by the Committee in July.

XI. Executive Session

None.

XII. Adjournment

Commissioner Prochaska made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Purcell. All, aye. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Guritz
Director, Kendall County Forest Preserve District