

McDonald Creek Commission

Amended Meeting Minutes for May 23, 2017 -- Approved at 6/27/17 meeting

Present: Commissioners Cathy Brady, Harold Kargenian, Jan Fuller, Jon Kindseth, and Rick Hartke; Dana Sievertson (PH Natural Resources Commission)

Next meeting: 6 pm June 27, 2017 in PH Police Station (basement)

I. OPENING ITEMS

Introductions: Commission members introduced themselves and explained their interest in the creek. Jan, Rick and Jon live near the southeastern reach of the creek, Harold and Cathy live near the middle reach along Schoenbeck Road north of Palatine Rd. Jan, Rick and Harold are creek owners. Jan and Harold were members of earlier creek committees.

Review Open Meetings Act: All commission members completed the OMA training. Three members constitute a meeting and a quorum. Three votes are needed to conduct business. Since this is only an advisory body, a quorum is not required at open meetings. Dana advised not to "Reply All" in email communications to avoid an illegal online meeting, but said it is OK to use BCC instead. Cathy was selected chairperson.

II. NEW BUSINESS / DISCUSSION

Meetings: Commissioners agreed to meet once a month on the fourth Tuesday at 6 pm in the Police Station basement (site was assigned by the City Clerk). Next meeting will be June 27.

Organization: Jan and Harold provided a history of earlier creek committees -- the pre-incorporation Homeowners' Association Creek Committee and the McDonald Creek Improvement Committee. The latter was a very active standing city committee which had full cooperation from the city engineer and public works, and the authority to impose fines, but was disbanded by Mayor Pace in 2003. Harold will write up a history or timeline of prior committees and the issues they dealt with.

Jan suggested we try to recruit representatives from every stretch of the creek, asking aldermen for recommendations. Harold provided a 2008 list of property addresses adjoining the creek in Prospect Heights and Wheeling. He asked:

Who is our main city contact?

Is there a chain-of-command we should follow or can we reach out directly to public works, the city engineer, other municipalities?

How do we liaison with Arlington Hts. and Mt. Prospect?

Jon asked if there is a creek easement, who is it granted to? As commissioners, would we have the right to walk the creek through private property?

Purpose:

FLOODING: Per Jan, Alderman Rosenthal proposed this commission in fall 2016 in response to her neighbors' concerns about erosion and flooding in the Alton - Edward neighborhood, south of Camp McDonald Road between Wolf Road and Rob Roy. In small storms, the creek water level rises 5-6 inches. In large storms, the creek overflows to the Euclid-Wolf roads intersection.

Harold thought one reason for re-establishing a creek commission now might be changes in flood insurance policies. Reducing flooding should be a primary goal of the commission.

Blockages and sediment build-up cause much of the flooding. Per Jon, large blockages will be removed by MWRD, which has jurisdiction over the creek because it flows into the Des Plaines River. Structural flooding is prioritized over nuisance flooding (standing water in yard for 48 hours after rain ends is normal). Poor drainage along Edward Road has caused some structural flooding.

Owen Court is another flood-prone area, per Dana. MWRD plans to raise Willow Road 3 feet and excavate detention areas around Hillcrest Lake to alleviate chronic flooding where the lake meets the Slough. Dana noted that the road no longer flooded after culverts at the north end of the slough were cleared, causing the slough water level to drop.

Creek owners are responsible for clearing small blockages, but many are not aware of their responsibility for maintaining creek flow (Jan). Rick suggested starting out small by organizing clean-ups of small sections of the creek; later we might look into getting grant money for larger scale clean-ups.

INFORMATION: In a Journal-Topics Online article dated Nov. 16, 2016, Brian Cleary reported that the committee was formed to provide information on maintaining the creek to nearby homeowners. Cathy will provide a copy of this article to commissioners.

Aldermen seem to want this commission to be an information-gathering and dispensing resource for the community, but we have no budget for flyers or mailings. Jan and Harold provided copies of brochures distributed by earlier creek committees. Should we update the brochure and distribute personally so we have a chance to meet and talk with creek owners? Do we need city approval for such brochures?

Dana suggested getting email addresses of creek homeowners and creating a newsletter (PHNRC uses Mail Chimp) to distribute information at no cost. We could begin by using the city's online newsletter and soliciting subscribers through that.

Jon has contacts with Lake County Stormwater Management Commission; they have many printed materials that we could post on the city website. Peter Falcone runs the city website; we can ask him to create a separate page for the creek commission. Jon has experience managing websites and would be willing to do that.

Harold asked how do we want people to respond? Do we need a commission email address?

III. NEXT MEETING / ACTION ITEMS

- History/timeline of past creek committees and creek projects/issues (Harold)
- Send copy of Journal-Topics article and link to MWRD Detailed Watershed Plan for the Lower Des Plaines River Watershed to commissioners (Cathy)
- City contacts/ chain-of-command/ outreach to other municipalities (Cathy -- Joe Wade)
- Page on city website, how/when to submit something for city newsletter (Cathy -- Peter Falcone)
- *.pdf versions of LCSMC brochures (Jon)
- Review brochures from prior creek committees and update as needed

IV. MEETING ADJOURNED 8:30 pm. Next meeting 6 pm Tuesday, June 27, 2017.

Minutes submitted by Cathy Brady, 6/20/17