CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 14, 2017

Present:	Agnes Wojnarski, Chairperson	Ed Madden
	Peter Hahn	Jill E. Moskal, Recording Secretary
	Dr. John Kamysz	Dana Sievertsen

Attendees: Christina Ferraro, Executive Director, PHPD
Peter Falcone, Assistant to the City Administrator
Amy Sobczak
Sam Sobczak, Eagle Scout

OPENING ITEMS

Call to Order

Agnes Wojnarski, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. CDT.

Roll Call

Roll Call proceeded. All Commissioners were in attendance for Roll Call. A quorum was present.

Meeting Minutes of Regular Meeting of July 13, 2017

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission of July 13, 2017 were approved. No corrections were noted.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Workday Schedules for Summer

Seed Collection Wednesdays will begin soon, and this is in addition to the regular volunteer workday.

Our last workday was held at the Sedge Meadow where seed was collected and teasel managed. The herbicide did not take well, so might want to up the percentage.

We are working through the different sites or between the Slough and Morava. Where we work is dependent on the week and what needs to be accomplished. The rest of the summer workdays will involve seed collection and invasive plant control.

ComEd Burn Schedule

Sara Race of ComEd confirmed that ComEd has scheduled a prescribed burn for the east side of the ComEd prairie by their contractors this Fall. The cost to conduct the prescribed burn is budgeted. We will be advised of the date when scheduled and provide Peter Falcone with ComEd's contact information. Peter will provide advance notice to residents.

Brownie Troop Educational Workday

The Brownie Troop leader contacted Agnes with the desire to schedule a workday in September with PHNRC at the Slough to learn about the wetlands. They'd like to plant or cut brush and have an educational component.

Agnes will be meeting with the Brownie Troop Leader on Wednesday, August 16 at Izaak Walton. Agnes will keep in mind that the workday would be age-appropriate for Second Graders, and the date will be separate from a regular PHNRC Volunteer Workday.

Jill suggested contacting Kids Care to see if they'd like to join this workday. Kids Care mentioned having another event with PHNRC in the Fall, which, if scheduled, would be separate from the Brownie Troop Educational Workday.

Saint Alphonsus Garden & Landscaping Ministry Volunteer Workday – July 17, 2017

Saint Alphonsus has a wetland area in the front part of the parish property, which floods regularly. They also have native plants in the drainage area. Fr. Curt Lambert, St. Al's Pastor, wished for the area to be extended because it doesn't mow easily.

Saint Alphonsus contacted conservation organizations for guidance on how to manage this area, but it was out of their realm. Therefore, the St. Alphonsus Garden & Landscaping Ministry contacted PHNRC.

PHNRC donated appropriate prairie plants for this area, and the ministry leaders and 15 ministry volunteers along with PHNRC volunteers planted over 2,000 plants in the wetland area of the parish grounds. Ministry volunteers will also participate in our Seed Collection Workdays and take back some seed to this area for propagation.

The parish area is a project of the Garden & Landscape Ministry, and PHNRC is in an advisory role.

Agnes received a recent letter from Fr. Lambert on August 14, expressing appreciation to PHNRC for our wetland plant donation.

Also, Agnes learned of a grant that may be suitable for Saint Alphonsus. The amount is small, like $500 or $1,000, but it an easy grant to apply for by schools and organizations. The purpose of the grant is to improve habitat and monarch, and it can also be a good seed source. If St. Al's applied, they could get 1,000 pounds of seeds or plants. Agnes is available to help St. Al's complete the grant application.

Rotary Club Request to Attend PHNRC Volunteer Workday

The Rotary Club contacted us with a request to attend one of our workdays. We have provided them with our volunteer workday schedule. To date, the Rotary Club have not been present.

ComEd Site Visit of July 18, 2017 and Outcome

The ComEd intern representative met with Dana and Agnes and walked our project sites. They were suitably impressed and stated they have never seen anyone do so much with the money they provided. We have put the money to good use.

We were also informed that ComEd has changed the rules for grant applications, and the ComEd intern representative encouraged us to apply, again, for a grant.

The past rule for the grant application was you could only apply as one entity. However, now we can apply as the City, Park District or both. The only stipulation is that a project must be completely finished with one grant before beginning another. The theme this year is Pollinator.

The grant cycle is 18 months, and submission and receipt of a grant application is by March 15. Therefore, we would have to submit our grant application and required information by February 2018.

We can also apply for multiple grants. The Green Regions Grant is $10,000 with a 50% match, so a city, organization, etc., must match the grant amount.

In the past, the City and the Park District both contributed $5,000 and we applied as one entity. If there was a project solely on Park District land, then it makes sense that the Park District would be funding the grant.

What sort of projects can we do? Should we continue with what we have started or start something new? Who should we ask for it? It all depends on where a project site is located. Does it involve City property? Does the Park District have any ideas? What if we applied for a portion of the grant for Somerset? This will be discussed further. The objective is to put the money to good use.

Ed thought we should consider a project on the east side of Prospect Heights that could incorporate the River Trails Part District, which is a separate entity. We have another end of our City where we have not done much to date. We can do one with the Prospect Heights Park District and one with the River Trails Park District. Involve the east side community.

Because of the ComEd visit and site tour, Agnes has been requested to be a speaker at the next ComEd awards ceremony. St. Al's project could be a good slide show source.

Dr. John Hilty Visit of August 1 – 3, 2017

Dr. Hilty came our way and stayed at the Mayor's Hotel.

Dr. Hilty is quite simply an encyclopedia on plants. He is brilliant in his field and an incredible speaker. His whole goal was to find plants that are rare or he knows about but never saw or has never been able to photograph.

Agnes and Dana took Dr. Hilty to the Volo Bog, Spring Bluff Fen, Lake in the Hills Fen, gravel prairie at Poplar Creek, and our sites. It was a great experience, and Dr. Hilty will be back.

NEW BUSINESS

Summer Interns Progress Report

Jeremy left Saturday morning, August 11, to return to school and will be graduating in 2018. He was completely grateful for the experience, and said if the intern role is available again, he would like to return. Jeremy also said he got a lot out of the role and now is certain he wants to pursue a career in resource management.

Our impressions of Jeremy are that he is very smart, a hard worker and an outstanding individual. He would go home at night and study from the morning classroom plant identification class. He now knows about 400 plants, their botanical name and plant family, as well as management techniques and conservation regulations.

Aaron is on vacation this week, and his last week will be the week of August 21.

We provided both Aaron and Jeremy with a copy of Joel Greenberg's book on the Natural History of the Chicago Region and Dana gave them a loop (to look at and study a plant) as gifts.

The whole summer intern experience of 2017 was outstanding for both us and our interns. A lot of work has been accomplished on our sites.

Morava Nature Center – Eagle Scout Project Update

Sam Sobczak, Eagle Scout, has requested a workday this Saturday, August 19 with an alternate workday of Sunday, August 20 for creating and refining the Morava Nature Center Trail, steps leading down the embankment to the creek and the stepping stone bridge in the creek. The workday will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and involve Sam's Boy Scout troop, parents, PHNRC volunteers and PHNRC Commissioners. Sam and his group will provide both breakfast and lunch.

Dana said a decision was made to go with the stepping stones in lieu of the bridge, which we could not afford. Sam outsourced sources for the actual stones. Sam received recommendations from Lurvey's for contractors, met with them on-site at Morava, received quotations, and arranged with Emerald Landscaping for the installation of the stepping stones.

Emerald Landscaping generously purchased the stepping stones for us at the wholesale price along with an 8% discount. The total cost of this project is $1,500. For comparison, another landscaper that Sam contacted would have charged $1,600 for labor and $600 for the stones.

Emerald Landscaping will have a crew to conduct excavation work of the creek on each side of the shore, place two stepping stones serving as entrance and exit and three triangular stones in the middle of the creek to act as a "bridge." How the stones will be placed will allow the water to flow naturally and without obstruction.

Contractors will also excavate the dirt in the bank to create a gradual decline to walk to the creek. The contractor work will be accomplished tomorrow morning starting at 7:15 am and completed in one day. Dana and Sam will be present.

River rock will be placed underneath the stepping stones for stabilization.

Dana will be supervising the project, and Sam Sobczak will be leading the project. It is Sam's workday. Sam said the team of 40 volunteer workers will start at the trail from the high side and come through the prairie. The bobcats used for the excavation work may destroy some of the existing trail, so they will fix that.

The trail will be outlined with logs. Wood chips will fill in the space between the log borders. The chips will be sourced from the PHPD brush pile, and Dino and his crew will do this work.

The existing stones in the creek bank can be dug out and reset to restore the steps down to the creek bridge. Agnes suggested placing a wood plank. John said paver base can be used to set the stone steps.

Once the trail is completed, PHNRC will plant prairie plants and shrubs along the border of the trail.

Sam and his workers will need tools, wheel barrels, loppers, rakes, shovels and work gloves. Waivers will be printed for volunteer workers' signatures.

The PHPD has provided the money from the grant for the contract work.

As a side project, Sam would like to work on tagging (garden marker) of individual plants.

<u>Morava Nature Center – Interpretative Signage & Features Update</u>

Dana contacted the company Christina Ferraro recommended and is awaiting pricing on interpretative signs. In the meantime, Dana took pictures of signage during the site visits with Dr. Hilty in early August. Dana reached out for pricing and information.

PHNRC was to conduct a brainstorm session on Interpretative Signage & Features; however, due to both time and daylight limits, Commissioners were encouraged to send e:mails with their own research on these topics to each other to review individually. Then at our September meeting we will spend a significant portion of time to plan this together.

Peter provided Dana with the name of an organization that has done work at the Morton Arboretum and are good with nature.

Trail Markers

Dana provided a sample of a Trail Marker, which measures 5" x 8" and will be bolted to a post that will be placed in the ground. We are working with Christina Ferraro of PHPD for production of the Trail Markers.

Ed suggested adding arrows to the Trail marker sign to designate where the trail begins and ends. Members discussed, but ultimately decided the trails are self-explanatory and do not need further designation. The Trail Marker is simply to designate or identify that what one is walking is a nature trail. Nothing more.

We have received a bid, so we know the cost, and we approved purchase of the Trail Markers at the last meeting.

PHNRC Slough Presentation for Nature Speaks – September 19, 2017

Dana will create a matrix on what we plan to present and in an effective format. PHNRC will essentially provide the same presentation we made at the Wilderness Conference earlier this year. We will talk about the same sort of areas as mentioned in the Wilderness Conference presentation, but more directed toward the Slough. Jill be present the historical aspect.

Dana has already provided historical information on the Slough to Jill. Dana also has historical photos.

Dana would appreciate Commissioners that will be speaking to work on text for their speaking part, get the text to Dana, and Dana will illustrate.

A quick outline for our September 19 presentation is as follows:

Introduction	Dana Sievertsen
History of the Slough	Jill Moskal
Starting Point of the Slough	Dana Sievertsen
The Plan and What Has Been Accomplished	Agnes Wojnarski
Funding and Public Use	Ed Madsen
Impact on Wildlife and Nature	John Kamysz

Question & Answer Session

A quick outline for our September 19 presentation is as follows:

Total presentation time: One (1) Hour

Dana noted about 30 cars parked on Willow Road one night, which is a visual indication of the number of residents coming to the Slough to walk the trails and view the natural area and wildlife.

Didier Nolet Show of Slough Paintings

Didier Nolet, the French landscape painter, will have a show at the Library of his paintings of the Slough. The show opens to the public on September 1 in conjunction with the 60th Anniversary of the Prospect Heights Public Library. The show has a local theme, and Mr. Nolet will have between 10 and 15 pieces (oil pastels and paintings) on display. Agnes said you can tell the exact location of the Slough through Mr. Nolet's paintings.

A reception will be held at the Library on September 7 at 6:30 p.m., at which time Mr. Nolet will provide a brief talk about his work.

David Ludwig, Amateur Photographer

David Ludwig, volunteer with the Tully Park Neighborhood, as well as a regular PHNRC Volunteer, is an amateur photographer. David sent some of his photos of flora and fauna, particularly birds, at the Slough to Dana. Dana was so impressed by David's keen eye and quality photography that he contacted Terri Campbell at the Library. Upon inquiry, they would be pleased to sponsor David Ludwig's photography as a show in October 2018. David will have two walls to display his photography.

Journal Articles

Dana is still awaiting Dr. Hilty's approval of the article Dana wrote on him.

Other articles will be Summer Intern Wrap-Up and Eagle Scout Project at Morava Nature Center.

Another article could be on the increase in bird population at the Slough. Lee Ramsey and Mary Lou with the Bird Conservation Network conduct bird monitoring when leading the bird walks, so they are a great resource for substance on this article. John Kamysz volunteered to write this article.

Speaker Request – Prospect Heights Garden Club

The Prospect Heights Garden Club asked Agnes to speak at their February 2018 meeting. Agnes is happy to do so. The Club is looking for more information from the PHNRC and our work. They do not know everything about us. Someone approached Kathy Nowicki of the Garden Club asking us to speak.

McDonald Creek Commission Meeting of July 25, 2017

Jill Moskal attended the July 25 meeting of the McDonald Creek Commission (MCC).

The MCC prepared a Mission Statement and are currently working on setting their goals.

The MCC is attempting to meet with the new Public Works Director, Mark Roscoe, to introduce the McDonald Creek Commission, indicate their purpose and invite him to an MCC meeting.

The MCC is building a webpage on the City of Prospect Heights' website. A full website of their own is planned for the near future.

The MCC is preparing their introduction to the community through submission of an article for the City's fall newsletter.

The MCC will be making a presentation at the City Council Workshop Meeting either in early September or October.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 22 at 6:00 p.m. John Kamysz will attend on behalf of the PHNRC.

Ed would like to reach out to the MCC and inquire about organizing a creek walk with them to identify blockages. Jill said that the MCC discussed conducting a survey of the creek to update the information on file.

Through info@phnrc.com, we received an e:mail message from a resident about the filtering in the creek by Tully Park. We learned that during the destruction of the former Chase Bank Building at Euclid Avenue and Elmhurst Road, an oil main was severed, causing oil to spill into the creek. Filters were arranged in 5 feet increments in the creek to absorb the oil.

Visitor's Comments

Sam Sobczak provided information for the Morava Nature Center – Eagle Scout Project Update. No other comments were generated by our audience.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission is scheduled for Thursday, September 14, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. The venue for our September meeting may be outside, if we have proper lighting.

Review of Project Site

At the conclusion of the August 10 PHNRC Meeting, Commissioners with Christina Ferraro, Sam Sobczak and Amy Sobczak reviewed the Morava Nature Center area that is scheduled for the August 19 workday.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the Commissioners, and the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS
Recording Secretary for the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission