

CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 9, 2023

Present: Peter Hahn Jill Moskal, Recording Secretary
John Kamysz Dana Sievertson
Ed Madden Agnes Wojnarski
Seth Marcus

Guest: Peter Falcone, Assistant City Administrator

NOTE: Meeting held via Zoom. Meeting ID: **852 6004 9754**

OPENING ITEMS

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Central Time by Agnes Wojnarski.

Roll Call

Roll Call proceeded. All Commissioners were present, and a quorum was present.

Meeting Minutes of Regular Meeting of February 16, 2023

The minutes of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission Special Board Meeting of February 16, 2023 were reviewed. No changes or corrections were noted. Therefore, the meeting minutes of February 16, 2023 were approved.

NEW AGENDA ITEMS

Agnes added a new category under New Business – Annual Plan review to cover a few items that did not make it to the original Agenda because they are new.

No objections were voiced. Therefore, the new items will be discussed.

OLD BUSINESS

Volunteer Workdays

Our volunteer workday of February 19, 2023 was conducted at the Slough at Hillside, Maple and Olive Streets and performing essential winter work of clearing invasives, mostly buckthorn, tending to a few downed trees and bringing a few down, creating fire breaks, and distributing more woodland grass seed.

In addition, we celebrated the 9th Anniversary of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission, founded on February 10, 2014. A delicious and nature-themed cake was provided Genevieve Bulev of Sadiecakes.

Our volunteer workday of March 5, 2023 was conducted at the Slough working on Hillside Avenue starting at Willow Road and working west towards Zeke's Trail for spring clean-up,

Also, a returning group of Boy Scouts joined us.

Volunteer workdays continue to be well-attended with enthusiastic participation and many accomplishments! We are averaging 21 volunteers per volunteer workday. We are short of equipment, such as loppers. When our regular volunteers are not present, the void is filled by new volunteers. Also, the new volunteers keep returning.

Prospect Heights Public Library/Park District Events

Nature Speaks Program

Dana spoke with Sara Race of ComEd. Two Bee seminars will accompany the ComEd Bee Project at the ComEd Prairie involving Open Workshops and hands-on participation. The seminars will be in conjunction with a potential Nature Speaks Program presentation on Bees by Grace Hart, Aveole urban Beekeeper.

The PHNRC may be joined by the Public Library and/or the Park District. We are awaiting their proposal.

Agnes said there is follow-up from the Wild Things Conference of February 25, 2023 for potential Nature Speaks Program presentations.

Peter Cairn from Scotland will be our speaker on April 20, 2023, and this is part of Earth Week 2023. National Geographic published an article entitled *The Rewilding of Scotland* and returning Scotland to its natural state. This project is a concerted effort by the whole country and several organizations by offering a restoration tourism B&B package where you pay to volunteer on the projects. Dana said Peter is an amazing speaker. Dana will provide Ed with information for a press release.

Slough Boardwalk Project – Update/Status

Dana has completed the signage and will be sending it to Commissioners for review. Upon receipt of Commissioners' comments, Dana will then send to the Park District and ComEd for final approval before production.

Dana is finishing the Grant Report and will send to Commissioners for review before sending to Christine Ferraro, Executive Director of the Park District and ComEd for final approval.

Discussions on planting and cattail removal in the Board Walk area will be held during future PHNRC meetings.

Pollinator Park Update and Shoreline Restoration Project

The Pollinator Park Grant is essentially completed; therefore, this Project is simply the continuation of our work and shoreline restoration. On March 16, 2023, the MWRD will conduct the 60% completion review of the Plan. Therefore, when we receive confirmation of the meeting date, Dana will attend the meeting and learn how the Willow Road modifications will impact the areas where we need to work. Then John and Dana will review Hillcrest Lake and decide what section will be managed next. Ideally, we wish to work on the northeast corner of the Lake; however, we must learn of MWRD's plans for Owen Court.

Gary Morava Nature Preserve

The workday of March 5, 2023 will be conducted at the Nature Preserve upper section for maintenance and removal of woody species. We have not been successful in burning this site.

Pete Hahn mentioned the patches of blackberries or raspberries and inquired if we are cutting them. Pete said they are off the beaten path plus he enjoys eating them, as does the wildlife.

Agnes said they are native and not invasive but aggressive. However, it would be nice to leave a huge patch of blackberries. Agnes does not herbicide them. What sets them back naturally is fire.

Seed/Greenhouse Program

Agnes typically places all of the seed pots stratifying outside into the Greenhouse around March 7, 2023. Therefore, Agnes hopes to move half of the pots into the Greenhouse on Sunday, March 12, 2023. The Greenhouse has been power washed and is clean of algae and mold.

Once the pots are in the Greenhouse, heaters will be powered to assist with germination.

Prescribed Burns

Stantec (ComEd) conducted a spring prescribed burn of the ComEd Seeded Prairie on March 8, 2023. Dave Bart took photos, which Dana forwarded to Commissioners.

The burn result was a totally and completely black prairie. All the Eurasian grasses are gone. It was a complete burn and much different results from the first burn. The first burn was conducted crosswise in strips from Elmhurst Road to Schoenbeck Road. Yesterday, the Relative Humidity dropped to 30% with a south breeze, so conditions were perfect. The burn was conducted from south to the north and ringed. The burn crew used the trails as a fire break, burning one half in a chunk and the other half in a chunk and working west to east. This approach resulted in the entire prairie being burned. Also, the remnant prairie located by the substation was burned.

Today, March 9, Dana and Alyssa King distributed 12 to 15 pounds of prairie seed at the ComEd Seeded Prairie. It may snow tonight, which is a benefit.

Reviewing the photos of the burn provided a great feeling of satisfaction of a job well-done. Thank you, ComEd and Stantec!

Agnes plans to conduct prescribed burns at our sites as early as Wednesday, March 15 and asked for availability of those who are burn certified and others to help with set up. Agnes would provide two days lead time. The snow should melt, and strong winds will dry areas. It is burn season now going forward.

Also, duties with a prescribed burn include set up, sign warning postings and scouting, which do not require a volunteer to be burn certified.

Dana shared photos taken by Dave Bart. Volunteer Linda Waycie was kind enough to go out and represent us for the burn. Thank you, Dave and Linda.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Plan Review

Dana did not get further than what previously provided. Once the signs are completed, Dana will continue with the Annual Plan Review.

Eagle Scout Projects

We have been approached by Boy Scout Troop Leaders who have attended our workdays to state they are seeking Eagle Scout Projects. The potential for four Eagle Scout Projects exists and to occur before mid-summer.

Jill suggested shoring up the stepping stones at the Nature Preserve to make them stable. Pete said the stepping stones are an issue and that clean up and maintenance of the creek in that section would be a nice Project.

Ed said Eagle Scout Projects are about leadership and a Boy Scout organizing a plan and leading a team to complete something that is a benefit to the general community. The Boy Scout must decide on the tools and seek resources. Our role is to advise and assist. Therefore, Ed felt clean up and maintenance of the Creek from Pine Street to Maple Street is a Project that could be completed over one or two weekends.

John spoke with the Boy Scouts and learned that they are not allowed to demonstrate anything to the people they are leading. A leader leads by example. In the past, some of the Scout projects have turned out to be our projects. We need assistance, but it must be leader worthy.

The Board Walk and Stepping Stones at the Nature Preserve were incredible projects. The leadership demonstrated with these projects was impressive. John said let us keep to a high standard.

Ed agrees that the Board Walk and Stepping Stones projects were exceptional, but it may not always be plausible to have that type of project. General Clean-Up is helpful and beneficial to the community.

Seth suggested removal of chunks of concrete located very close to the path the runs along Elmhurst Road and extends to the stream.

Jill also suggested the area of the Nature Preserve as one walks up the hill from the tennis court parking lot past the Park District's dump site to the trail. The area could be reconfigured for a nicer appearance.

Agnes has noted all suggested Projects.

During the meeting, Dana received a text message from Simon Siegel, who is seeking an Eagle Scout Project.

Arlington Heights Rotary Club

Chris Wood asked for the PHHRC to provide a presentation on who we are, what we do and outline our projects in a presentation to the Arlington Heights Rotary Club. Dana felt Seth, John, Agnes and he could provide our standard presentation. A date and time are to be determined.

PHNRC Summer Interns and District 214

Dana, Agnes and Seth interviewed two candidates for the summer internship position: Lucas Bonardi and Abby Gonzalez. The interviews went well, but one was better than the other. An in-person meeting has been arranged with Abby Gonzalez for March 14 at 9 Marion to further discuss the internship on site. After a brief discussion, Commissioners agreed that the summer internship should be offered to Abby.

We have not received other applications. The summer internship position is posted on our website, the Chicago Wilderness Job Market and the Chicago Environmental Network Job Market. Other listings offer a higher pay, but we provide other intangibles. We have funding for one intern.

Our former interns have said that they learned a lot of valuable things that they could not learn in a classroom. Robin Flakne, part-time instructor at Northeastern Illinois University, said that Eric, our former intern, spoke of us non-stop and what a difference we made and how he loved the internship. Evie, another former intern, was the same way and provided good feedback.

Eric spoke with his professor at Northeastern University, and they are now referring who they feel are qualified students for the PHRNC summer internship position. Lucas Bonardi was one of the recommended students.

Ed suggested placing quotes from former interns in the job position to encapsulate the intangibles we offer. Dana said we revised the job position listing this year. Our home page has a link to the internship and takes you to the listing. People who send a resume are provided links to our publications page where all the months that have Journal articles written by or about the interns are listed and provides a good flavor of what the internship is all about.

District 214

Kathryn Witt from District 214 contacted us about three potential interns that are High School students. One student has contacted us, and we have spoken to another. Two students have not yet contacted us, so we will reach out to them.

We would prefer all interested students to come at the same time. The Internship is for three to five hours per week and could be either a 30-hour or 60-hour internship. Eva has chosen the 30-hour internship, is a delightful person and eager to learn about environmental restoration.

Earth Week – April 15 – 22, 2023

Dana said Earth Week is April 16 – 22, 2023 with Saturday, April 22 as Earth Day.

After a discussion, Commissioners developed the following Earth Week plans:

April 16, 2023 (Sunday)	PHNRC Volunteer Workday
April 19, 2023 (Weds.)	Wheeling High School students plus a Tour
April 20, 2023 (Thurs.)	Nature Speaks Program -Peter Cairn and <i>The Rewilding of Scotland</i> and returning Scotland to its natural state.
April 22, 2023 (Saturday)	Earth Day – Board Walk Open House, Transplanting, Osprey Education and Celebration Day, Food and Fun!

Prospect Heights Community Day – June 3, 2023

Dana said Prospect Heights Community Day is scheduled on Saturday, June 3, 2023 from 9:00am until 12 Noon. Dana and Jill will manage a table for the PHNRC. Others are welcome to join us.

Prospect Heights Park District Block Party – June 17, 2023

Dana said the date of the Prospect Heights Park District Block Party has been moved up this year from June 24 to Saturday, June 17, 2023. The timing is 3:00 until 7:00pm; however, we are welcome to stay until 11:00pm.

Agnes said the Block Party is our annual Plant Give-away and a very fun Event.

Independence Day Parade, City of Prospect Heights

The Independence Day Parade will be held on Saturday, July 1, 2023 starting at 9:30 am. Dana said John has plans to make our participation even bigger and better than 2022.

Dana inquired if Commissioners saw benefit in participating in the Arlington Heights 4th of July Parade. Ed said the exposure is incredible. After a brief discussion, Commissioners suggested applying for participation in the Arlington Heights 4th of July Parade.

NRC 2022-2023 Budget and Treasurer Report – John Kamysz

Dana sent a proposal to Commissioners to utilize the current budget revenue of \$2,032 to purchase desperately needed equipment, such as loppers. So many people are volunteering during our workdays that we have a shortage of loppers. Agnes said we also need Garlon (herbicide); two backpack sprayers, inserts for transplanting, and soil. Agnes further said we have many donations that could fund purchase of high-quality live seed to seed areas that were successfully burned this spring.

Seth proposed that our budget funds should be utilized to purchase the seed costs presented to us and Dana's e:mail message detailing needed supplies. Commissioners present agreed. Therefore, Dana will submit our purchase order to Peter Falcone. Any money left over will be used to purchase soil.

City Council Meeting of March 13, 2023

Dana stated that the City Council Meeting of March 13, 2023 is the budget meeting. Joe Wade suggested we be present to answer questions. Dana asked Commissioners that if they are available, please attend to show support. The Budget Meeting begins at 6:00 pm.

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation

Jill highlighted notes from the following February 2023 City Council and PHPD Board meetings:

City Council Regular Hybrid Meeting – February 13, 2023

NEW BUSINESS

A.O-23-01 Staff Memo and Ordinance for Consideration of a Text Amendment to Title 5 Chapter 2: Definitions and Chapter 6 adding Short-Term Rentals to the R-1 Single Family District (**1st Reading**)

F.O-23-04 Staff Memo and Ordinance for Consideration of Changes to Title 3 Chapter 7 the Property Rental Code Adding Regulation for Short-Term Rentals (**1st Reading**)

Mayor Dolick asked that the Council look at **O-23-01** Staff Memo and Ordinance for Consideration of a Text Amendment to Title 5 Chapter 2: Definitions and Chapter 6 adding Short-Term Rentals to the R-1 Single Family District and **O-23-04** Staff Memo and Ordinance for Consideration of Changes to Title 3 Chapter 7 the Property Rental Code Adding Regulation for Short-Term Rentals together as they are both FIRST READING and both pertain to short term rentals. Director Peterson noted that the PZBA had a public hearing and unanimously approved the short term rentals to R1 homes only. They also approve of the rules and regulations that will govern the short term rentals (Title 3, Chapter 7)

- The short term rentals will only be in the R1 district
- The fee schedule is \$500 application fee (to include an "intense" background search). The applicant must have a vendor such as Airbnb or VRBO.
- They must come to the Council for approval.
- The applicant must have insurance
- Unit occupancy inspection
- Video cameras outside the house. Video cameras must storage capacity. Video cameras will confirm who the occupants are.
- Marketplace vendor must pay the taxes – the City will not be responsible for getting taxes collected.
- The City can audit vendors.
- No less than three day rentals
- The City can revoke and/or penalize any non-compliance.

Alderman Ludvigsen asked if the City could limit the number of cars/people?

Director Peterson replied that there is an occupancy limit. Overbooking is not allowed. The City abides by the International Property Maintenance Code- they set the standards. Parking, as per City ordinance must be at the site.

Alderman Ludvigsen said that he did not like the look of many cars in the driveway. Director Peterson said that based on the houses that we have, he did not think that there would be a different look.

Alderman Ludvigsen said that he did not see Prospect Heights as a vacation draw. He wants rentals to maintain the single family look. He asked if the owner had to be the applicant. Director Peterson replied that part of the application includes that only the owner and not a third party can rent the property.

Alderman Ludvigsen wanted to make certain that the wording was modified so that it only applied to single family homes and not townhouses. He did not want to see inexpensive homes being bought to turn around and use as short term rentals.

Director Peterson said that the wording would be tweaked to remove townhouses, and that he did not know the value added or detriment to short term rentals in an area.

Alderman Ludvigsen stressed the importance of the City setting up controls. Mr. Colombe said that as an owner of a short term rental, ratings for the property were very important. High ratings would be needed to stay in the short term rental business. Repeat customers were necessary. He

noted that he invested \$50,000 in the property just to help it be more accommodating to guests. He added that the Prospect Heights greater surroundings has about 500,000 people. There are weddings and events that people come to stay in this area, and it has a close proximity to Chicago. Alderman Ludvigsen noted that this is a very different use and that the City was “treading” into an area that residents might feel would take away from the community.

Director Peterson responded that until Mr. Colombe started sending in tax revenue checks to the City, the City was not even aware it was permitted. That is why the City should control and update policies on short term rental.

Alderman Morgan-Adams asked of the rentals were ongoing or if there were interruptions. Mr. Colombe replied that the average stay was 5-6 nights, and the average guest size was 6. He noted that they are typically booked 20-22 days per month.

Alderman Morgan-Adams asked if there was a cleaning crew after each booking? Mr. Colombe replied “yes.” He said that the renters pay a cleaning service fee.

Alderman Morgan-Adams asked if an abundance of these rentals was going to have a bad effect on the neighborhood. Director Peterson said that the City currently only has Mr. Colombe as a short term rental owner.

Alderman Morgan-Adams asked if there were a growing number of short term rentals, could the City become more restrictive. Director Peterson said the if the City accepts the controls as presented, it would be the strictest codes on the books.

Alderman Cameron asked who manages the property? Mr. Colombe said It is multi-layered. He has a network of contacts of landscapers, cleaning crew premium service on demand, cameras monitored remotely. His vendor EVOLVE serves a mediator and can initiate eviction of a renter.

Mayor Dolick asked how the property is accessed? Mr. Colombe said that there are coded door locks, and a physical key box on site. The codes are changed every month.

City Council Regular Hybrid Meeting – February 27, 2023

4. PRESENTATION

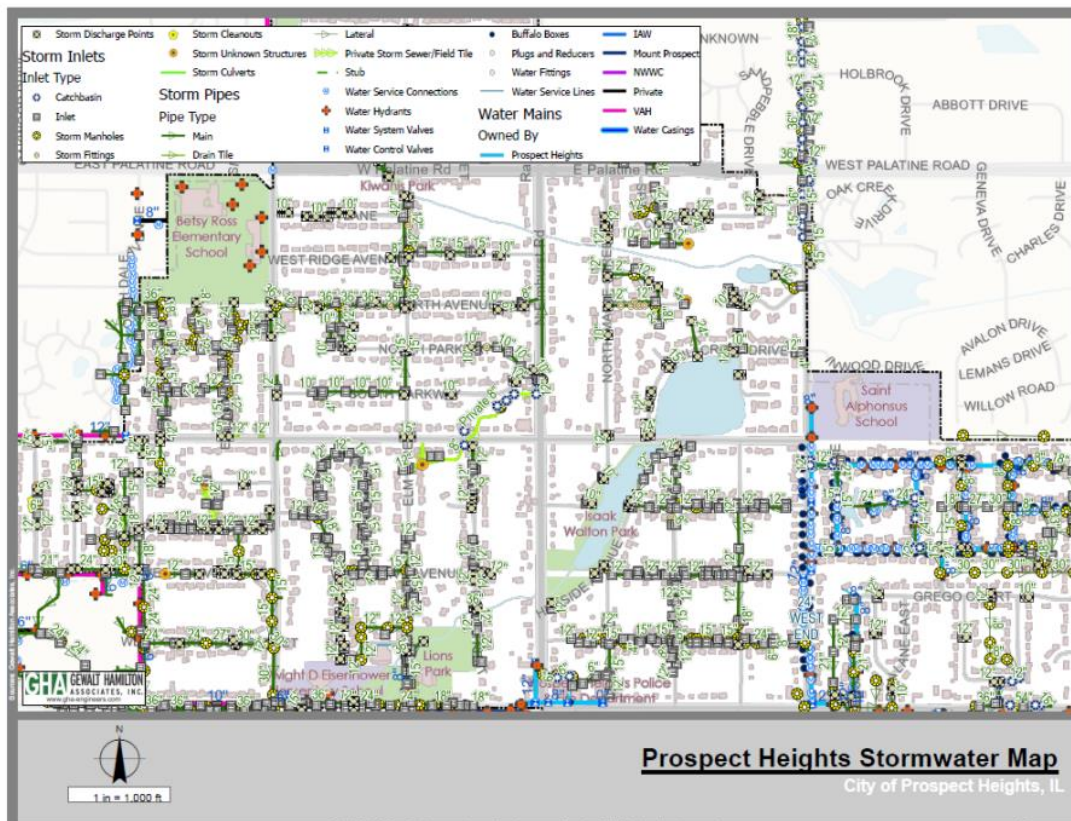
- A.** City of Prospect Heights Water Quality and Compliance with National Pollution Discharge Elimination Standards Report by Mike Warner of Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc.



NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE DETECTION AND ELIMINATION (NPDES)

**Illicit discharge (pollution) detection and
elimination (IDDE)**

**Pollution prevention/good-housekeeping
for municipal operations**



General Information ▾ Business ▾ **Government** ▾ Educators ▾ About IEPA ▾

IEPA ▾ Topics ▾ Forms, Permits, and Fees ▾ Water Permits ▾ Storm Water Permits

General Storm Water Permit for Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)

2021 MS4 Permit Renewal Notice: The MS4 Permit is in the process of being reissued. Until this permit is reissued you will continue to operate under the expiring MS4 permit. The timeframe for the renewal will most likely occur by March 2023. If you have not submitted an NOI for Renewal, please do so as soon as possible. Please note we have new Renewal & Waiver NOIs.

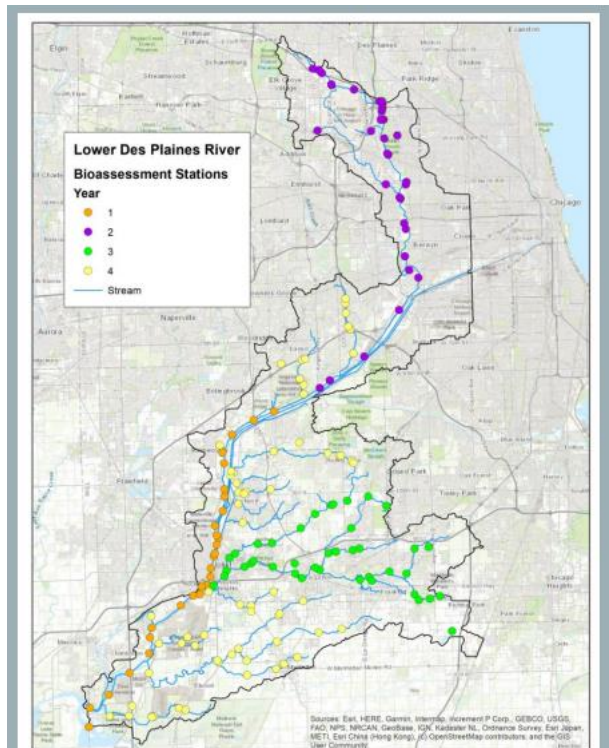
STORM WATER PERMITS

- Industrial
- Construction
- MS4**

WATERSHED WORKGROUPS

- Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup
 - <https://www.drww.org>
- Lower Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup
 - <https://ldpwatersheds.org/about-us/lower-des-plaines-watershed-group>
 - Prospect Heights does not fall within either workgroup directly
- Potential requirement to join workgroup by new ILR40 Permit





Next Meetings: The next Regular City Council Hybrid Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. The next Regular City Council Hybrid Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Next Meetings: A City Council Regular Meeting will be held Monday, February 13, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. A City Council Regular Meeting will be held Monday, February 27, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of February 28, 2023

The Prospect Heights Park District Board Meeting of February 28, 2023 was cancelled due to lack of Agenda items.

The next regularly scheduled Prospect Heights Park District Board Meeting is March 28, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Gary Morava Recreational Center.

Announcements to the Public

None.

Visitors' Comments

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission will be held on Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the meeting. Therefore, the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary