

CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2023

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

Guest: Peter Falcone, Assistant City Administrator

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. Therefore, a quorum was present.

Meeting Minutes of Regular Meeting of July 13, 2023

The minutes of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission Board Meeting of July 13, 2023 were reviewed. No changes or corrections were noted. Therefore, the meeting minutes of July 13, 2023 were approved.

WELCOME, MARK GRASSI!

The PHNRC extends a warm welcome to Mark Grassi, the new Superintendent of the Prospect Heights Park District, replacing retiring Superintendent, Dino Squires.

Mark was raised in Prospect Heights, attended Saint Alphonsus and Saint Viator schools, and spent his entire childhood at Prospect Heights Park District facilities, parks and programs.

Mark has a vast range of professional and management experience. Most recently, he served as the Environmental Education Manager with the Bartlett Park District. Prior to that position, Mark was the Frontier Park Supervisor in Arlington Heights after working in their Parks Department as a Groundsman and Crew Leader. Mark also worked for the Nunda Township Road District.

Mark's working experience includes ecological restoration, storm water mitigation, culvert installation, arboriculture, and involvement with turf/horticulture and tree care. Mark is burn certified and knows native plants. Mark also served as an original founding member and lead event organizer for Envirogroup, the Arlington Heights Park District's first community-driven service group committed to conservation/environmental volunteerism.

Mark has a degree in Environmental Sciences and Studies from DePaul University.

OLD BUSINESS

Volunteer Workdays

Our volunteer workday of September 3, 2023 was held at Pollinator Park along Hillcrest Lake where volunteers completed installation of plantings at the shoreline restorations, removing a few invasives and performing a general clean-up of the areas.

Our volunteer workday of August 20 was conducted at the Prospect Heights Slough to clip tall Goldenrod around the intersections of Maple, Marion and Hillside and moving west towards Elmhurst Road.

Our volunteer workday of August 6 was conducted at the Prospect Heights slough to clip the aggressive tall Goldenrod, which, although a native plant, can take over and create a monoculture, destroying the biodiversity we have worked hard to establish. Volunteers worked in and around the southern side that parallels 105 Hillside Avenue to Elmhurst Road.

Our volunteer workday of July 23 was conducted at the Nature Preserve at Morava where maintenance was the order of the day – clearing out the trails, relining the trails with wood chips, and clipping invasive plantings.

All volunteer workdays are heavily attended, as well as Seed Collection Wednesdays. One Seed Collection Workday held 24 people, some new volunteers.

Dana reported 1,590 volunteer hours to date for this year.

Prospect Heights Public Library/Park District Events

Nature Speaks Program

Dana confirmed Dr. Gerould Wilhelm as our speaker for the Fall Nature Speaks Program on October 19, 2023. This is a unique opportunity for us. Dr. Wilhelm will engage with the audience, accepting and answering specific questions and concerns, and talk about the endangered rare and endangered habitats in the Chicagoland Region, climate changes, and the importance of land stewardship. Please be sure to register with the public library.

The three topics Dr. Wilhelm will present for engaging the audience are: (1) The effects of climate change on species mitigation and moving around; (2) the importance of stewardship now more than ever; and (3) important but endangered restoration sites in Illinois. More information will be available in the September 2023 issue of *The Journal*.

Kathleen Marie Garness will be our speaker for the Winter Nature Speaks Program on February 22, 2024. Kathleen's presentation is entitled "Inspiring Young Artists Through Nature and Conservation." Kathleen Garness is a freelance scientific illustrator and a scientific affiliate at The Field Museum whose area of focus is plant conservation. Many years ago, Kathleen monitored populations of rare species and was also in the early stages of creating a guide to common plant families in the Chicago region.

The Prospect Heights Public Library has extended an invitation for Kathleen to show her illustrations in the Gallery. Kathleen's show opens February 1, 2024. Part of the context of her work is her ongoing participation in regional and international orchid conservation. Kathleen volunteers for the Chicago Botanic Garden Plants of Concern Program, doing citizen science monitoring of several species of locally rare plants. Orchids are sensitive to their environment, so they have much to teach us about living in harmony with nature.

Kathleen is a Steward at many conservation sites, particularly Grainger Woods Conservation Area in Mettawa, Illinois. This is the location where we have offered to help with the removal of Buckthorn on a day in October.

Dana Sievertson led the Bird Walk on September 9, 2023. Mary Lou sustained a foot injury, and Cyndi Lubecki contracted Covid. A lot of birds were present, and it was a pleasant Saturday.

Mary Lou has retired from her role as Bird Walk leader, and Cyndi will be the new Bird Walk Leader. Dana suggested scheduling one more Bird Walk with Mary Lou and to pay her homage. The next scheduled Bird Walks will start in May 2024.

Prospect Heights Park District Nature Camp – August 9, 2023

The PHNRC provided a Nature Camp during the 10th week of Summer Camp for Prospect Heights Park District participants. The weather was pleasant, and all felt the event went well.

A sincere appreciation to our many volunteers who helped develop games and assisted with the Event. We sincerely appreciated Joel Steffens and Bruce Haerr managing the Skins and Skulls segment of the Nature Camp. The children were enthralled.

Our summer interns were not present having returned to college.

Projects – Update/Status/Commissioner Site Monitoring Reports

Board Walk

Dana indicated that signage has been received, but the mounts were not included in the shipment. The company said they shipped it three months ago. The PHPD has no record of receiving the mounts for the signs. The supplier will track them down.

The Board Walk needs to be leveled! Two or three sections are particular trip hazards and other sections move quite easily. Perhaps leveling may be accomplished during a volunteer workday. No poison ivy is located by the Board Walk.

Site Monitoring Reports

Site Monitoring Reports are provided by each Commissioner before the meeting date. During the meeting, questions or concerns will be addressed but not the entire reading of each report.

ComEd Seeded Prairie (Dana Sievertson)

Dana reported that it is all things yellow at the ComEd Seeded Prairie! It appears that the Tall Goldenrod has taken over. A fair amount of Grass-Leaf Goldenrod is present and a few stiff Goldenrod. The Silphium are contributing and starting to give way to the Boneset and Asters.

A few spikes of Canada Thistle are present and need to be zapped. A workday for clipping the Tall Goldenrod before it goes to seed is required.

Rattlesnake Master is enjoying a banner year, and the biannual Gora is happily spreading in both the east and west prairies. The burn made a huge difference, and we need to lobby both Stantec and Com Ed to ensure to burn us, again, this year.

Dana said it is remarkable that on a recent seed collection night, hundreds of Goldfinches were storming the area to get seed. We have never seen anything like this anywhere in our town. Walking five feet on the trail would flush a dozen or more Goldfinches that would then come right back as you passed. It is real validation to the success of the conversion.

Pollinators have been off-the-charts this year, too. Dana feels the Bombus outnumbers all other bees and pollinators. Nothing but praise and appreciation from passersby.

The ComEd Seeded Prairie is a true success story. We need to take stock of this fact and feel very good about what we have done. Nature abounds at the site.

Heron Pond (John Kamysz)

John reported that Heron Pond is looking quite nice, not overrun with Goldenrod as other sites. Purple Asters are coming in nicely along with a variety of yellow flowers. There has been a tremendous overgrowth of Pokeweed this year, which nearly obliterates what was a nice patch of Lobelia Cardinalis last year. John is cautious of digging deeper for fear of encountering poison ivy.

Hillcrest Lake (John Kamysz)

John stated that Pollinator Park is simply stunning! All the plugs are thriving thanks to Dana's incessant watering. The shoreline is looking great. With drought, there is green algae present in the water. Aquatics in the new areas are a bit slow to grow.

The oak trees are nutting nicely, and there are a ton of pollinators and birds. Six Green Herons were spotted the other week. The Cormorants have returned; six were in a tree this morning.

Plenty of Goldfinches are seen everywhere, and a cool bunch of Cedar Waxwings.

John noticed the albino looking mallard. Jill has observed what she described as a cream-colored mallard on a recent workday at Hillcrest Lake.

Warning: Beware of the ravenous poison ivy along the shoreline!

Nature Preserve (Gary Morava) (Pete Hahn)

Pete visited the Nature Preserve at 12 Noon on September 14, 2023. Pete was greeted by American Goldfinches feeding on Sawtooth Sunflowers.

Pete observed some birds beginning their migration, probably warblers.

The paths are improved but still need to be grimed back and mulched with wood chips in just a few spots.

The oak trees are doing fine, but vegetation needs to be cleared around the bases. Some oaks need to be treated with fertilizer. Dead trees and branches need attention. One Bur Oak has large acorns, the first year that such large acorns have developed.

Pete noted many plants in seed head formation. New England Asters are blooming, but Goldenrod seems to be crowding out many other native plants.

Pete observed a mowing pattern removing native plants by the bleachers. Also, the brush pile is getting longer, heading west toward the creek.

Remnant Prairie (Seth Marcus)

A current monitoring report was not provided.

Remnant Sedge Meadow (Jill Moskal)

The Remnant Sedge Meadow provides a viewing of mostly green grasses, such as Reed Canary Grass, a few Canada Thistle and Teasel, along with native plants, such as Swamp Milkweed, Dark Green Bulrush, and invasive plants, such as purple Loosestrife, woody shrubs, most of which are brown due to lack of rain, Phragmites, and Dog Bane.

Saint Alphonsus (Ed Madden)

Ed reported that the prairie at St. Alphonsus is looking pretty darn good with the foliage just starting to wind down for the season.

Slough (Agnes Wojnarski)

Agnes stated that the Slough looks great, especially around the Boardwalk areas. Plants have come in on their own in addition to our plantings. Nodding Bur Marigolds are currently flowering.

Hillside Avenue needs some work on removal of Buckhorn resprouts, Invasive Siberian Elms, and too much shade exists. It would be good to keep working on this area, clearing it of woody invasives and seeding grasses so it could finally burn. A lot of Canada Goldenrod is present despite many attempts of their removal.

Tully Park (Wendy Dewar)

Wendy Dewar reports that Tully Park has a few areas with the tall Canadian Golden Rod, which she is hoping to clip before they go to seed.

Many plants are blooming at Tully Park despite the drought: **Wingstem**, Rudbeckia, Purple Coneflower, Tall Coreopsis, Cardinal Flower, White Snake Root, Compass Plant, Fleabane and Boneset. The Pye Weed, a few grasses, and Tall Bell Flower are all going to seed.

Wendy said they have had success getting some grasses to grow in the new planting areas on either side of the bridge entrance.

Funny experience: ComEd installed a new pole across from the bridge right near the detention pond. They left a big pile of dirt that was growing big weeds, so Wendy started to clip them. Underneath were two large tomato plants with about 10 tomatoes! The tomatoes were still green but good sized.

Seed/Greenhouse Program

Agnes stated that a lot of seeds have been collected to date. Seed Collection Wednesdays have attracted a lot of volunteers. Half of the garage at 9 Marion Place is filled with seed. Plants are prepared to go out and over winter. Agnes has been working on it for the last few weeks. Dana said we will begin building the Green House.

Summer Interns

Arianna (Ari) Blank and Kathryn Fisher, our summer interns, were simply amazing! They worked well together, accomplished a lot of work, never spent time on their iPhones but instead preferred to study and work, and received quality education. Dana said Ari and Kathryn managed the brunt of herbiciding the Reed Canary Grass.

Both Ari and Kathryn are welcome to return. It was a wonderful, pleasurable experience, and we were appreciative of their time with us.

Both Ari and Kathryn are back at school.

District 214 Micro-Internship

The Fall High School Interns' Program has started. With four students on Tuesdays from 4:30-7:00 pm and Friday from 5:00-7:00 pm for a total of 30 hours per week. The end time will change over the next few weeks to conclude at 6:30 p.m. Two students are from Prospect High School, one is from Rolling Meadows, and the fourth is from Wheeling High School. The Fall High School Interns' Program concludes on October 17, 2023.

During the interview process, Dana said there were no awkward moments. They were forthright, and you knew instantly these young people would get along and make a great team. They will have a lot of work to accomplish.

Dana encouraged Commissioners to attend one of their workdays.

Buffalo Grove High School Prairie Update

The Buffalo Grove High School Prairie looks great! Everyone is excited about it.

The Environmental Club has asked for our assistance with planting one additional patch. They will collect seeds, and we will supply some plants on September 28 at 3:00 p.m.

MacArthur Junior High School Prairie Project

The patch of prairie at the Junior High School that was overseeded looks great. Next year, the prairie will be wonderful!

Installation of the Sedge Meadow Prairie at the retention pond is an Eagle Scout Program by Eric and will occur on Saturday, September 23, 2023 from 9:00am – 12 Noon.

MacArthur Junior High School students have regularly come out for seed collection and tours of the ComEd Seeded Prairie. This program has expanded. A request to be present on Weds., October 11, 2023 has been made. Two shifts are scheduled with 75 kids per shift: 10:15-11:30 am and 12:45-2:00 pm. Three teachers will be present, and they specifically requested Agnes and Dana to be present. Dana said having three Commissioners present to participate would be good. Fifty percent (50%) of the seed will be collected by the students. The PHNRC will provide lunch.

Wheeling High School: Prairie, Classes and Visit

Wheeling High School has been visiting us for many years now. They arrive by two buses, and the kids walk around the Slough and talk about things. Three dates have been requested: October 4, October 25 and November 8, 2023. Two groups, two different shift times, two sets of students interested in the Environmental Sciences Class. The first shift starts at 10:00am. Agnes will e:mail the other shift time.

CONTINUOUS REPORTING

Path Maintenance

Mary and Spencer Watson have suggested an idea: Adopt a Trail Program. Mary and Spencer Watson have already adopted the path from the south Board Walk from the pavilion to the path that parallels Hillside Avenue. Maintaining the path would occur on one's own time to clip overhanging foliage and ensure the path is open and usable.

After a brief discussion, Commissioners agreed to proceed. Therefore, Dana will develop a prospectus. The PHNRC would monitor the path maintenance, including volunteer hours. Trail Map for each of the sites is available.

NRC 2022-2023 Budget and Treasurer Report – John Kamysz

John provided Commissioners with the City of Prospect Heights Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024 NRC Budget:

<u>Budgeted Funding:</u>		
City of Prospect Heights	\$	13,544.00
Prospect Heights Park District	\$	7,500.00
Donation Funding	\$	<u>500.00</u>
TOTAL:	\$	<u>21,544.00</u>

Supply purchases and Summer Intern salaries have brought our Current Revenue to \$3,243.72.

Hillcrest Lake Shoreline Restoration Project Budget: Restoration Expenses of Coir Logs and supplies, mulch, and plantings total \$4,895.60 leaving a Net Revenue of \$104.40. These funds will be utilized to purchase aquatic plants.

The Restoration Project Budget is \$6,000 every year, but since we were over \$1,000 in 2022, the 2023 Budget was \$5,000.

The Project plantings are robust, fantastic and saving the shoreline of Hillcrest Lake.

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation

Jill highlighted notes from the following July and August City Council and PHPD Board meetings:

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY MEETING MINUTES

City Council Regular Meeting – July 10, 2023

I was unable to attend the July 10 City Council Meeting in person but reviewed the meeting Agenda and listened to the meeting recording. Nothing of real significance to report.

City Administrator Joe Wade said that Treasurer Tibbits requested City Clerk Shultheis to read into the record the second appeal for the discontinuance of Zoom Meetings. Treasurer Tibbetts has previously spoken with Council Members. Therefore, after speaking with Mayor Ludvigsen, it has been decided to wait for Treasurer Tibbetts to return so that he may direct the Council.

City Council Regular Meeting – July 24, 2023

I was unable to attend the July 24 City Council Meeting in person but reviewed the meeting Agenda and listened to the meeting recording. Nothing of real significance to report.

City Council Regular Meeting – August 28, 2023

I was unable to attend the August 29 City Council Meeting but reviewed the meeting Agenda and listened to the meeting recording. Nothing of real significance to report.

Treasurer Tibbets provided commentary on hybrid meetings and said remote attendance by other individuals is still permitted today. Zoom meetings or other systems are still useful. Treasurer Tibbets spoke with a few residents, and they said they do not understand why Zoom meetings were eliminated.

IML cited Senate Bill 103 and House Bill 1408 that would extend authority of conducting remote meetings to chief elected or appointed officers of the public body to determine if an in-person meeting would pose a risk to the public safety and health.

Mr. Tibbetts welcomed comments and questions from the City Council and offered placing this topic as a future Agenda item at a City Council meeting. No comments or questions were posed by the City Council to Mr. Tibbetts.

Next Meetings: The next City Council Regular Meetings are scheduled for September 11 and September 27, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall Chambers.

Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of July 25, 2023

I was unable to attend the July 25 Prospect Heights Park District Board Meeting of July 25 but reviewed the meeting Agenda and meeting materials packet, as well as the minutes of the meeting provided in the August 23 meeting materials packet. Noted below are items of interest.

ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

Christina Ferraro, Executive Director: August 2023 Board Report

Tully Park (City IGA): The Park District continues to work with the city to make the park accessible for all with parking and signage at the 214 South Wheeling Road property. The city anticipates demolition before Labor Day.

Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of August 22, 2023

ADMINISTRATIVE/OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

Christina Ferraro, Executive Director: August 2023 Board Report

Heron Pond: The drainage pipe underneath the small strip of land that connects the creek to the pond was installed for flood control but has been a problem. Trying to work on it. The root cause of the problem is erosion; lots of pieces to this puzzle. Christina and Mark Grassi did a walk through and spoke with residents in the area.

Tully Park (City IGA): The Park District Staff and City Staff are meeting to discuss permeable pavement for the entry area of 214 South Wheeling Road property. The city anticipates demolition after Labor Day, probably during the month of October.

2024 Budget Preparation Calendar: The 2024 Budget preparation has begun. The tentative dates for meetings and action items related to the annual roll-over bond, tax levy, and budget are shown below.

Board and Finance Committee Meeting Schedule for Bond, Levy, and Budget:*

Date	Time	Description
10/24/2023	7:00pm	Board Meeting- 2023 Bond Ordinance
11/14/2023	7:00pm	Board Meeting - Levy Truth in Taxation
12/4/2023	6:00pm	Finance Committee - Budget Review
12/12/2023	7:00pm	Board Meeting - FY 2024 Budget Presentation
12/12/2023	7:00pm	Board Meeting to approve Annual Tax Levy Ordinance
12/15/2023		FY 2024 BUDGET available for public inspection
1/5/2024		Public Hearing notice on budget to local paper
1/23/2024	7:00pm	Public Hearing on FY 2024 BUDGET
1/23/2024	7:00pm	Board Meeting to approve FY 2024 Budget

* All dates and times are tentative and subject to change.

Mark Grassi, Superintendent of Parks & Facilities:

The PHPD Board Meeting of August 23, 2023 was the first meeting attended by the new Superintendent of Parks and Facilities, Mark Grassi.

NRC: The PHNRC has recently visited the Nature Preserve trail behind Gary Morava to perform basic maintenance to make trails more accessible and groomed for visitors.

NEW BUSINESS: PHNRC Drone Usage for Pesticide Application

Below is the letter that Agnes Wojnarski sent to Christine Ferraro and Mark Grassi on August 17, 2023 regarding permission to utilize a drone service by The Davey Tree company to apply herbicide on the invasive cattails at the Slough.

Mark's first concern was drifting of the herbicide to residents' properties and needs more information. Therefore, a decision on whether to proceed was deferred. However, the Park District Board indicated they would look to Mark Grassi to decide on this situation. If Mark approves, then the Board approves.

Mark Grassi called Agnes and Dana on August 23, 2023 and expressed concerns on drift, overspray and the type of herbicide used. Agnes and Dana answered all of Mark's questions to his satisfaction. Mark approved the Project.

Dana said spraying is only accomplished with a 6-mph wind or lower. Also, the heavy downdraft from the drone props forces the herbicide straight down helping to alleviate drift.

Dana provided Mark with the label of the herbicide utilized. Mark was satisfied.

Dana further stated that The Dave Tree Drone Pilots were securing FAA flight clearance, which Dana would provide to Mark upon receipt.

A further phone call was placed by Mark to Dana and Agnes regarding scheduling. Dana said the tentative dates were September 7 or 8, 2023.

Steve Messer said this was cutting-edge technology and involved only a small area.



August 17, 2023

Dear Christina and Mark,

The Natural Resources Commission would like to request permission to use drone applied herbicide on the invasive cattails at the Slough on either September 7th or 8th, pending conditions.

As you know we have been battling the invasive cattails at the Slough now for 9 years. While we have made progress, it has been slow and very labor intensive and will continue to be so forever and a day. There is new drone technology that surgically applies herbicide from above the cattails with pinpoint accuracy. The service is offered through Davey Tree and is now the leader in this type of application. Currently we brush cut an area at the base, then rake and stack the 10-foot stalks into habitat piles. Herbicide is then manually applied down the remaining stalk that protrudes just above ground. Some of the cattails are in very deep muck, making them almost impossible to get to. Droning makes this process very different. With the cattails dead, we can burn them off in the fall or winter and have a fresh slate for the spring to plug and seed. As we have also seen, once the cattails are gone, native wetland plants that have been in the native seed bank for at least 30 years, come roaring back, further assisting the restoration.

We would very much like to do this and turn the tide on this never-ending problem. We are asking for permission to do the treatment. The cost would be completely covered by the Commissioners, which underscores our commitment to the restoration. The only things we would need are permission from the Park District and notification to the Wheeling airport that we would be flying the drone, so they don't force it down. PHNRC would manage it with Davey to be sure that no one is in the area at the time of application and dry time. This process would save us countless hours over many years of cutting, stacking, raking, herbiciding and then hand wicking resprouts.

There is some urgency in all this as the cattails are getting ready to go to seed. September 8th or 9th is the date we are being given as possibilities by Davey. They are looking for an expedited answer as the crew comes from Ohio and we are being ganged with other visits to try to contain costs.

Thank you for your consideration and expedited answer.


Agnes Wójcicki - Chairperson - PHNRC

Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission 8 N. Elmhurst Road - Prospect Heights, IL 60070

Next Meeting: The Prospect Heights Park District Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Gary Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Hts., IL.

NEW INITIATIVES

Eagle Scout Project Update

Dana sent Commissioners the maps created from photos of the areas to provide a perspective point on the map. It is difficult to conceptualize.

Dana sought Mark and Joe Wade's comment on the summation of Dana's talk with them. Mark responded with details and augments on the individual sites. It is a bit more restrictive, but what we were looking for. The City and other agencies are involved in the project, and Mark also supplied background information.

Dana remarked that we do not have to do anything with it now except to answer the question: Do we want to pursue this as a solution for continuous requests for Eagle Scout Projects? If we do, then we must craft a plan. Each plan must be in conjunction with the city and residents in the neighborhood. The idea would be a plan for each individual site, and parcel it out as packages to Eagle Scout candidates.

John said some of the restrictions were a bit prohibitive. We must remember that the Eagle Scout Projects do a lot of work for us and route of work for us on the side. We must be selective and cannot answer to all of them. We could spread this out along the line. Dana said no more than two projects could occur at a time. The idea is to create a reservoir of things that could be doled out. The key is it must work for us, the Scouts, the residents and everyone else who is a partner of the projects.

The benefits are extending the green corridor, migration paths, pollinators, carbon sequestration, etc. It is a win-win situation. However, we must be vigilant on not over committing ourselves.

Pete said can we work some trees into the plantings. We have a lot of pollinators, but trees do not require much maintenance, and they would help provide diversity. Dana said many Grant Programs for Trees are available.

Ed mention the timing of Grants and the Projects. John suggested getting the Grant and then launch an Eagle Scout Project to work with the Grant. Do in reverse. Have the funds available first.

Every proposed area requires massaging except Levee 37. It butts up to the Forest Preserves. Jill likes the project site of the Metra Station because it is visible and a welcoming site.

Is a Grant necessary? Dana said it depends on how to do it. Levee 37 is about a half acre of turf grass. We would tie this into a big seed collection with the Eagle Scouts. They would collect the seed, put it down, create a sign, etc.

Seth said there is beauty and joy with native plants, but some work better than others. Agnes said for small patches, short plants work well. Short plants prefer sandy, gravelly areas or areas out west. They are difficult to grow and tend to be more conservative. Native Petunias only grow near the road and from plugs not seed. Things of this nature are part of crafting a plan.

Commissioners agreed to pursue this idea. We are helping out nature and Mark Roscoe's maintenance crew (no mowing). Dana requested Commissioner s to look at the sites and assess what makes the most sense. Commissioners should provide their comments to Dana via e:mail. Dana said to select one of the areas and craft a plan.

Drone Herbicide of Cattails at the Slough

After receipt of approval from Mark Grassi, we coordinated herbiciding the cattails by the Slough through The Davey Tree company drone unit. It would have taken about eight years for us to remediate the situation. It invovled one half day for set up, but the drone accomplished the herbiciding in 30 minutes.

Dana said Davey Tree manually placed one part from the creek up to the wire and flew the drone while Davey was on a ladder and observing the drone in real time. Davey Tree received FAA approval. However, the Slough is in a red zone because landing and take-offs of planes happen by the Slough. The software locks out flying in a red zone. Therefore, Davey Tree went back to the manufacture to install the proper software so the drone could fly in a red zone.

Davey Tree created a map for the drone to do bigger stuff. They simply pressed the button, and the drone follows the paths created the day before. It was all very neat and prcise. We will see the results in two weeks.

We learned of this resource through the Wild Things Conference last year. Our original thought was to use this resource for eradication of Phragmites at the Remnant Sedge Meadow; however, ComEd forbids use of drones under power wires.

The drone carries about one gallon of liquid at a time. The mixture of the liquid is based on conditions. The down draft from the drone fans is so strong that the herbicide is sprayed straight down with no drift. The herbicide utilized is specific and safe for aquatic use.

Dana and Agnes paid for this service with their own funds. Thank you, Dana and Agnes!

When the cattails are dead, we will burn if it happenes this fall. The area that was sprayed by Dave Tree is an area we could never get to due to wet conditions.

Agnes said where we have removed cattails, all types of seed in the ground are growing native and sometimes rare plants, such as, the Tufted Loosetripe, Walter's Barnyard Grass (*Echinochloa walteri*), which is rated a #8, and Nodding Bur Marigold. Plants are coming back!

Dana invited Sara Race to come out and observe. Dana spoke with his contact at The Davey Tree Company, and he said they perform this service for ComEd all the time. Dana's contact sent him the link to the program and a video showing the service in operation. A specialized crew performs this service for ComEd frequently.

Seth said this is a great tool and sounds like we should have this service cost as part of a future budget, especially to prvent Dana and Agnes from utilizing their own funds.

Dana said The Davey Tree Company has also modified this program to include seeding.

The Rotary Club of Arlington Heights

Ed and Dana provided a presentation on the PHRNC to The Rotary Club of Arlington Heights on August 3, 2023. The audience was receptive. To date, we have not heard anything.

The Rotary Club International added protecting the environment as its seventh core cause. They seek to create a new satellite group focusing on natural issues and are looking for community partners to offer service opportunities to their members. They are particularly interested in partnering with us for workdays for the people in his group to get them started.

NEW BUSINESS

Seed Collection Wednesdays

Our Seed Collection Wednesdays started August 3 and will continue until November 15, 2023. They have been heavily attended, and a good quantity of seed has been collected. On one day, 24 volunteers were present, and we ran out of bags and clippers.

PHNRC Annual Seed Processing and Volunteer Appreciation Day

Our Annual Seed Processing and Volunteer Appreciation Day will be held on Sunday, November 12, 2023 from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm. Dana requested Commissioners to inform him of their choice for the annual award so that he can craft the golden loppers.

This year we will have an adequate number of seed processing boxes thanks to the Eagle Scout Project last year and where John and Monty helped manage.

District 214 College and Career Ready Night

District 214 offers a College and Career Ready Night on October 18, 2023 for current and future District 214 students and their families to learn of the myriad of opportunities available at District 214, such as explore careers while in high school; simultaneously earn high school and college credits; and participate in word-based learning experiences, internships and apprenticeships.

The program engages a moderated panel discussion with industry professionals, university and college partners, and District 214 faculty, students, and staff.

Dana has received correspondence from District 214 to participate in the College and Career Ready Night on October 18, 2023. Two sessions will be held. We would provide a presentation on the PHNRC District 214 Micro Internship Program and answer questions.

Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards Seed Collection Days

Information for this activity is currently unknown. It may occur on a Sunday alternate from our volunteer workdays. Agnes will configure October dates.

Prescribed Burns and Permit Renewal Update

Dana said the prescribed burn permit has been completed and submitted to Floyd McKinsey. The form requests permission to burn in both the fall and spring seasons and at all our sites. The burn permit would be effective from November 1, 2023 until April 15, 2024.

Sites to burn in the fall would be the cattails, if they are ready; the area by the oaks at Pollinator Park, which burn would be a very slow back burn; so the fire is above the ground; and select locations where we want to seed. We have had successful burns in the spring.

John said to consider the aesthetics on the Lake. Do not have charred areas, which are unsightly, in the winter. In the spring, consider leaving things available for the wildlife.

Announcements to the Public

The Annual Pop-Up Art Sale will be held on Saturday, September 30, 2023 from 10:00am to 4:00pm at the Izaak Walton Pavilion in the Prospect Heights Slough restoration area just off Elmhurst Road. The sale features the work of local and regional artists and craftsmen who will be exhibiting paintings, drawings, sculpture, woodworks, ceramics, jewelry, clothing and essential oils and soaps.

Parking is available on Hillside Avenue facing Elmhurst Road. Walk the boardwalk to the pavilion.

The Pop-Up Art Sale is a collaborative community event sponsored by the Sunflower Art Group, the Prospect Heights Park District, and the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission.

Visitors' Comments

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission is October 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Central Time in City Hall Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the meeting. Therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary