

CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
February 8, 2024

Present:       Pete Hahn                               Jill E. Moskal  
                  John Kamysz                       Dana Sievertson  
                  Ed Madden                        Agnes Wojnarski

Absent:        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 except Seth Marcus were present. However, a quorum was present.

Meeting Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 11, 2024

The minutes of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission Board Meeting of January 11, 2024 were reviewed. No changes or corrections were noted. Therefore, the meeting minutes of January 11, 2024 were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Volunteer Workdays

Our first PHNRC Volunteer Workday of the New Year was held on Sunday, February 7, 2024 at Heron Pond where volunteers accomplished essential winter work: invasives, woody brush, and trail maintenance.

Our next PHNRC Volunteer Workday was held on Sunday, January 21, 2024 at Pollinator Park (Hillcrest Lake). Volunteers met at the Solstice Garden on Hillcrest Drive and Willow Road where a snag was dropped onto the ice to create a prime habitat in the spring. Then volunteers worked on the south side of Willow Road to remove the last large stand of buckthorn. The January 21, 2024 workday was held from 12:00 – 2:30 p.m. due to cold temperatures.

Our PHNRC Volunteer Workday of Sunday, February 4, 2024 had volunteers return to the south side of Willow Road to complete the removal of the last large stand of buckthorn in this area.

For the year 2023, we achieved 3,374 volunteer hours, a new record. Our workday of February 4, 2024 was attended by 27 volunteers. A typical volunteer workday may see seven or eight people.

### Prospect Heights Public Library/Park District Events

#### Nature Speaks Program

Terri Campbell, Adult Programs Coordinator at the Prospect Heights Public Library has retired. Olivia Mullenax is the new manager for the Library's Adult Programs.

Kathleen Marie Garness is scheduled to present the winter Nature Speaks Program at the Library and via Zoom on February 22, 2024 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Kathleen will present "Inspiring Young Artists Through Nature and Conservation."

Dana reported that the PHNRC Commissioners will be presenting for the Nature Speaks Program on April 25, 2024 on 10 Years and a look back on the Commission and how it has changed the face of Prospect Heights. The PHNRC presentation is in conjunction with the library's summer reading program entitled *Read, Renew, Repeat* featuring the idea of conservation.

Conservation as a movement focuses on protecting species from extinction, maintaining and restoring habitats, enhancing ecosystem services, and protecting biological diversity, iREAD 2024: *Read, Renew, Repeat* will be a wonderfully-diversified summer reading program that encourages reading as a restorative method of self-improvement and self-preservation.

Olivia Mullenax, who replaced Terri Campbell as Manager of the Library's Adult Programs, has left the library for another job after three months of employment. Therefore, the library is seeking a new Adult Program Manager.

#### Projects – Update/Status

Currently, it may be a bit warmer outside. However, everything is still dormant because it is still the winter season.

#### Seed/Greenhouse Program

Agnes reported that all the seeds have been potted and are stratifying outside over the winter. Eighty percent (80%) of the seeds collected have been distributed at our worksites.

The Greenhouse is constructed, and potted seeds will be placed in the Greenhouse at the end of February or first week of March.

#### Education Updates

##### Wheeling High School: Classes and Visit

Agnes said that Wheeling High School Environmental Science Class (STEM) sponsor and teacher, Mediha Abat, has requested the PHNRC to plan a visit and an in-class 35-minute presentation. Agnes and Seth will manage this educational request at a date to be determined.

MacArthur Middle School

Nothing new to report.

District 214 Micro-Internships

The District 214 Micro-Internships for the spring season will start February 13, 2024. The Micro-Internship is a total of 30 hours per student and conducted on Tuesdays after school and a few Saturday afternoons with time for make-up days before the internship completion date . We are expecting three students – one each from Buffalo Grove, Hersey, and Prospect Heights.

Spring Prescribed Burns

Spring prescribed spring burns may be conducted as early as March pending weather conditions, such as the direction of the wind or where the wind is coming from at a particular site. The EPA Permit is secured.

Worksites scheduled for a burn are Gary Morava Nature Preserve, Heron Pond, Pollinator Park, the Slough, and Tully Park.

PHNRC Presentation to the City Council and Prospect Heights Park District Board of Directors

The Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission provided an update on our work to the City Council meeting of January 22 and the PHPD Board of Directors meeting of January 23, 2024.

CONTINUED REPORTING

Eagle Scout Project

Dana did not have new information to share. A meeting with Chief William Caponigro and Public Works Director, Mark Rosco, must be held to talk about the areas in earnest, how the areas would be divided in parcels, and who to talk to develop a well-coordinated plan.

Adopt-A-Trail Update

Dana said the February 2024 *Journal* will feature an article on the Adopt-A-Trail Program and a request for volunteers to manage a trail at any one of our sites.

## CONTINUOUS REPORTING

### NRC 2022-2023 Budget

John Kamysz provided Commissioners with a copy of the current City of Prospect Heights FY2023-24 NRC Budget. John reported that Net Revenue is currently \$7,904.64 and removing 2023 donations of \$3,000 leaves \$4,904.64 to be spent by April 30, 2024.

Dana has prepared a Purchase Order to submit to Peter Falcone covering purchase of needed supplies, such as power loppers, loppers, Felco 5-gallon water backpacks, Radians safety glasses, work gloves, potting mix, etc., totaling \$3,916.00. The remaining funds may cover shipping costs for the supply orders and purchase signage for the Hyndman Plum Grove and Solstice Garden.

Dana queried Peter Falcone if the \$3,000 in donations may be exempt from the spending deadline. Peter did not know if money from the city's general fund may carry over into the next fiscal year. Peter said the best time to donate is to first speak with the PHNRC first and find out when money is needed. People typically like to donate during the holiday season. Dana said we never know when a donation may be received; it is always a pleasant and appreciative surprise.

Peter will check with the Finance Department to see what flexibility we have and what we can legally do.

A motion was raised for approval of the purchase order. The motion was seconded and passed.

### Proposed NRC 2024-2025 Budget and Comprehensive Equipment List

Dana and Agnes prepared a comprehensive equipment list and then drafted the PHNRC FY 2024-2025 Budget for review by Commissioners. The PHNRC is requesting funding in the same amount as the previous year or 2023, which is \$13,544.00.

The PHNRC budget request includes funding for one summer intern. The PHPD funds will cover the request for a second summer intern. Further, the PHPD funding includes funding for the Nature Camp during the Summer Camp held in mid-August.

After a brief discussion, a motion was raised for approval of the Proposed NRC 2024-2025 Budget. The motion was seconded and approved. Therefore, Dana will provide the proposed 2024-2025 PHNRC Budget to Peter for submission to the City Council.

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation

City Council Regular Meeting – January 8, 2024

Public Comment on Agenda Matters:

Resident Ms. T. H. Tuntland of 1581 Cove said that in 2017 (later corrected to 2007) residents on the west side of the City had three dreams: (1) fix the issue of the flooding road of Willow, (2) lack of a sidewalk from the railroad station, and (3) the high cost of water from Illinois-American. Ms. Tuntland said that the Willow Road flooding and the Wolf Road sidewalk have been accomplished. However, the price of Illinois-American water remains an issue. Ms. Tuntland suggested the addition of dredging the Lake to lower the water levels and inquired if the sidewalk on Wolf Road would be wide enough to accommodate bicycles and walkers. Further, who will maintain the sidewalks?

Ms. Tuntland said water and wastewater services are costing too much, especially for eastside residents. She said that Illinois-American has different rates for R1 and R2 housing. She said that in 2010 the rate was \$26 for one person monthly for sewer and water and now the rates have been separated and metered. Further, in 2017, the rate was doubled, and Illinois-American said that the cost increase was for infrastructure.

Ms. Tuntland said the City established a Water Committee in 2017 to find options to bring down the cost of water. None of the suggestions of the Committee were exercised. In 2022, more increases for infrastructure occurred but the improvements are being made in Southern Illinois. Ms. Tuntland requested the city “resurrect” the Water Committee documentation.

Staff, Elected Officials, and Commission Reports

Director of Building and Development, Dan Peterson, said that the January 24, 2024 PZBA Meeting is a public meeting regarding chickens in Prospect Heights and changes to the regulations to keep chickens.

City Council Regular Meeting – January 22, 2024

Mayor Ludvigsen stated that this month and next month will involve budget preparations for next year.

**4. PRESENTATIONS**

**A.** Presentation of the Natural Resources Commission by Commissioner Dana Sievertson

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROSPECT HEIGHTS NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

### Introduction: About the Commission and What We Do

Initiated on February 10, 2014 by Agnes Wojnarski and Kari Spiegelhalter. Celebrating 10 years on February 10, 2024.

Mission: To preserve, protect and restore natural areas and raise awareness of environmental issues affecting Prospect Heights, Illinois.

### Current Commissioners:

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Peter Hahn  | Jill Moskal     |
| John Kamysz | Dana Sievertson |
| Seth Marcus | Agnes Wojnarski |

### Current Worksites:

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| ComEd Seeded Prairie        | Remnant Sedge Meadow |
| Heron Pond                  | Saint Alphonsus      |
| Gary Morava Nature Preserve | Slough, The          |
| Remnant Prairie (Wheeling)  | Tully Park           |

### Slough, The

The Slough is a naturally occurring wetland.

Work began in 2014 with the first ComEd Green Regions Grant of \$20,000 and matched with the City of Prospect Heights and the Prospect Heights Park District. Task: Restoration work on the Slough and create a five-acre prairie under the power lines due west of Elmhurst Road.

The Slough was surrounded by a thicket of buckthorn, Reed Canary Grass and Cattail infestation, and a field of teasel.

Buckthorn secretes a chemical called emodin into the soil, which prevents growth of plants and grass, and seeps into water reducing the amphibian population by 50%.

One teasel head contains 50,000 seeds.

Beginning restoration work tools was conducted by hand with loppers and hand saws and hand trowels for planting. However, when Joe Wade became City Administrator, use of chainsaws by certification and brush pile burns were permitted.

\$10,000 of the Grant money was used to purchase 7,206 native plants to be planted in the restored areas at the Slough.

Removal of invasives allowed the native seed of plants that should have been there and were present at the beginning time began to grow. Over 80 native species were present, such as Native Michigan Lilies, which flower is listed on the high conservation list of plants, Turtlehead, *Lobelia cardinal* (Cardinal Flower), *Silene virginica* (Fire Pink), Trilliums, especially along paths, and Mud Flood Annuals.

By 2018, improvements at the Slough included native plantings, aquatic plants along the east shoreline of the Slough, a carp enclosure and installation of a trail system. Aquatic plantings absorb the wave action along the shoreline.

We have witnessed an increase of 65 – 70% of traffic on the trails by the Slough even during the winter season.

Bird migration has increased the bird species population from 68 to over 100, such as the Northern Schebler, Double-breasted Merganser, Black Crown Night Heron (juvenile), and Pie-billed Griebe (during migration).

Two Eagles are regularly seen with a juvenile Eagle visiting on occasion, which means the Eagles are nesting nearby.

The Osprey is fishing the Slough and Hillcrest Lake on a regular basis. We have a video of the Eagle and Osprey fighting in mid-air, vying over turf.

The presence of a juvenile Black Crown Night Heron indicates this bird is nesting nearby.

Art Walk at Izaak Walton Park was created by the Sunflower Group led by Kate Tully and Mara Lovisetto with the Prospect Heights Park District.

In October 2023, Kate Tully and Mara Lovisetto of the Sunflower Group received statewide recognition for making lasting contributions to the Prospect Heights community through the annual Art Walk. At the Illinois Association Park District's Best of the Best Awards Gala, Kate and Mara were honored. The award recognizes agencies that support the arts and the partnership with artists to enhance the quality of life in their communities. The Park District competed against other park districts, forest preserves, conservation districts, and recreation agencies throughout the state to win this award.

At the Pop-Up Art Sale held annually in September, 50 to 100 people at any given hour are present, shopping and enjoying the occasion. The Sale is conducted in the Izaak Walton pavilion near the Slough and Boardwalk. A common comment of an attendee is: "I cannot believe this is here. Why can't we do this in our community?"

#### Osprey Pole Installation

The PHNRC has enjoyed amazing support from ComEd/Openlands throughout our history as a Commission. We have been the fortunate recipients of several Green Regions' Grants, and our natural areas have benefited enormously. With every Grant received, we have looked for ways to compound the value of the Grant. It has enabled us to create a five-acre prairie from mowed turf grass under the powerlines, restore the wetlands in earnest, and start a very successful Greenhouse Program. We have created a two-acre interactive nature park for children at the Gary Morava Nature Preserve and a Pollinator Park at Hillcrest Lake.

It provided us with the ability to install 450 feet of Boardwalk and reclaim one acre of wetland from the invasive cattails.

Osprey sightings and Osprey fishing were observed in 2022. Ospreys are stunningly attractive birds and are considered uncommon in our area. With the Osprey fishing in the Slough, they could very well nest in our area.

On April 19, 2022, a 45-foot Osprey Pole was installed by ComEd with a great deal of skill and professionalism in the wetland just east of Izaak Walton Pavilion. The installation was video recorded by Patrick Colvin, and Dana provided a voice over.

The PHNRC Commissioners researched, designed and built the nest and mounting system. Longtime volunteer, Louis, added the naturalizing touches. Zeke of “Zeke’s Trail” fame and his sister, Kalista, collected the sticks, and Louis’ wife, Andrea, assisted with the documentation of the event.

Our sincere and heartfelt appreciation to Sara Race, ComEd Environmental Services; Calandra Davis, ComEd External Affairs, and John James and his crew.

Tom Skilling, WGN Channel 9 Meteorologist, featured the Osprey Pole installation on the news, and it was all over Facebook.

#### Tree Planting Day

The Tree Planting Day of May 27, 2022 was a collaborative effort with the Prospect Heights Park District, Chicago Region Trees Initiative, and the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission. The Tree Planting was conducted at the South by the Izaak Walton Pavilion.

Twenty (20) trees were delivered. A special thanks to Commissioners Peter Hahn and Seth Marcus for their assistance. The trees weighed 70 pounds and measured 18” x 18”. Six Hackberries, seven Swamp White Oaks, and One Bald Cypress were planted. Most of the trees were planted between the Boardwalk and Elmhurst Road with the remaining six trees planted by the creek.

This event was made possible by financial support from the Morton Arboretum and their Centennial Year Celebration. The native trees will help reduce heat islands and create essential oak ecosystems for the species to thrive.

#### Hyndman Plum Grove

In December 2021, the PHNRC received a gift donation of \$3,000.00 from the Hyndman Family. The matriarch of the family, Ellen Hyndman, had a long-standing history and tradition of philanthropy and made it her mission to teach the ideology to her children and grandchildren. Her plan was to give each of them a lump sum every Christmas that they would, in turn, choose a charity to donate to and then discuss their reasoning.

Eva Hyndman, long-time PHNRC volunteer and wife of Ellen’s son, Doug, and a former Horticulturist of the Mount Prospect Conservatory, discussed her idea with her husband, Doug, and three children, Andrew, Stephan and Sophie to pool their money and make a substantial donation to the PHNRC.

The PHNRC Board felt compelled to publicly acknowledge the generosity of Eva and her family and decided to utilize the donation three ways: improve the habitat, bolster the education program, and provide a higher-level of visibility of the Commission to the community. The result was the planting of a native plum grove (*Prunus americana*) in the open space of a 200 foot area of cleared buckthorn that parallels Elmhurst Road.

The planted Plum Grove provides a privacy shield for area residents, beautiful white flowers in the spring, and delicious and edible plums during the growing season, as well as a habitat for birds, insects, pollinators, and wildlife. A plaque designates the area as the Hyndman Plum Grove.

The PHNRC is always looking for opportunities to educate and foster the next generation of Stewards and volunteers. Therefore, the second portion of the donation has been used to fund educational resources for the public. We partner with the Prairie Research Institute of the University of Illinois at Champaign and purchased wholesale quantities of educational materials from their outstanding wealth of publications. Fan deck ID card sets for Illinois insects, birds, reptiles and amphibians, publications on Illinois plants and insects, posters and maps.

Lastly, the Commission's identity will be accomplished through publication of event identifications and promotional items to inform our community of our purpose and objectives to enlarge green space in Prospect Heights.

The PHNRC remains deeply appreciated and humbled by the generosity of the Hyndman Family.

#### Sci-Fi at the Slough: Drone Herbicide of the Cattails

After receipt of approval from Mark Grassi, Superintendent of Parks & Facilities with the Prospect Heights Park District, 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 involved one half day in September 2023 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 (Leah Morris, Crew Leader) 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 precise. A slightly obstructed portion of the application was accomplished with manual flight and the larger unobstructed section would follow the flight map Leah Morris created of the area.

We learned of this resource through the 2022 Wild Things Conference.

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.

The application took about three hours, including set up. Two weeks after the application, we observed distinct effective signs. Seed pods have atrophied, interestingly. A prescribed spring 2024 burn is planned.

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

### ComEd Seeded Prairie

The turf grass under the high-tension wires due west of Elmhurst Road was converted into a prairie starting in 2014.

Quadrant sampling was the first step to use that data to monitor the progress of native growth every two years. Next, the area was herbicided and thatch was removed with the assistance from Horcher Brothers. Paths were defined. Thirty-volunteers distributed 80 pounds of 90 species of native plants to seed the area on December 7, 2014.

Standing by the electrical tower on the west side of the four-acre prairie and looking east you can view all the native plantings. Any plant has two to five thousand pollinators in the area, so imagine that over one million pollinators are present as opposed to turf grass.

ComEd has made the ComEd Seeded Prairie in Prospect Heights a feature on all their B Program literature and restoration work has elevated Prospect Heights. We have quite a lot of visibility with Com Ed.

ComEd performs the prescribed burns at the ComEd Seeded Prairie because of carbon arch danger. Too much smoke from a fire could cause the high-tension wires to arch down through the carbon and cause a lightning strike.

### Gary Morava Nature Preserve

A second Grant was received in 2016 and utilized to convert a forest of buckthorn and invasives into a natural preserve from Pine Street west to Elm Street behind the Gary Morava tennis courts.

Volunteers removed the invasives, and after paths were defined and herbicide performed, native plantings were installed.

Tim Delareia, former President of Chase Bank in Mount Prospect, and his Jail Bars Jeep Club, who were chainsaw certified, volunteered and in one day cleared the entire area of buckthorn and invasives.

An Eagle Scout Project occurred at the Nature Preserve and will be described later.

The Gary Morava Nature Preserve is a hidden gem with proximity to the Park District, Public Library, and Eisenhower School. It is visited and used on a regular basis.

### Pollinator Park

The third ComEd Green Regions Grant was received and utilized to create Pollinator Park and a pilot program, which has become our Shoreline Restoration Program (riparian buffers).

The perimeter of Hillcrest Lake was ecologically useless (turf grass) with shoreline erosion. Excluded are Owen Court and Willow Road due to the Willow Road Reconstruction Project.

Informational signage is placed throughout Pollinator Park, such as the seven “Can you find me?” signs. These signs are located where there is a high-probability you may find the given species.

The tiers of the Shoreline Restoration have been chosen by Canadian Geese to nest and raises their young. Turtles and bunnies have also found nesting by the shoreline to be advantageous.

One of the obligations for Pollinator Park was seating. Therefore, Commissioner John Kamysz created the Solstice Garden. Schwake Stone provided the “seats.”

The Hillcrest Lake shoreline was a two-foot drop to clay. The Shoreline Restoration work begins with the placement of erosion blankets and core logs which were stapled and roped in. In two years, plantings are established, and a natural shoreline now exists.

The roots of the plantings at the shoreline are 15 to 20 feet deep; therefore, biomass is below the surface and holds the soil. The plantings take the nutrients from the surrounding water.

The City of Prospect Heights funded a six-year Shoreline Restoration Program for \$35,000. Phase 1 = 6,000 plugs were used in the restoration. Phase 2 = completed the summer of 2023 utilized over 8,000 plugs. Aquatic plants are planted into the core logs. We install a carp enclosure because invasive carp root up the plants, so we exclude from the planting. Semi-aquatic plants and prairie plants are planted above the aquatic plants and prairie plants are the buffer to hold run-off from the street.

### Tully Park

In 2017, residents approached the PHNRC for assistance in turning the land-locked park into a naturalized habitat. We assisted the Friends of Tully Park in creating a five-year plan, and we work with Park District and Friends of Tully Park. Two Stewards of Friends of Tully Park are regular PHNRC volunteers.

Also, the five-year plan includes the property of 214 South Wheeling Road, Prospect Heights. The structures were removed in November 2023.

### Heron Pond

Heron Pond is owned by the Park District.

In 2017, we placed erosion blankets on the shoreline of Heron Pond and then planted and seeded the area. We perform regular removal of buckthorn, buckthorn resprouts and invasives from the area and maintain the walking trail.

### Remnant Prairie, Wheeling, IL (North of Palatine Road, west of the RR tracks)

By simple definition, a remnant prairie is a true native prairie. Unlike restored or reconstructed prairies, which have been reestablished or returned to prairie, prairie remnants are fragments of the original, pre-settlement prairie landscape. We feel this location is a remnant prairie.

The Remnant Prairie served as the NRC's seed source for the first three years of our restoration work. It is a beautiful place.

### Remnant Sedge Meadow (Camp McDonald, Willow and Wolf Roads)

Sedge meadows are sedge-dominated wetland communities with wet prairie grass co-dominants on saturated soils. Sedge meadows are characterized by their dense groups of tussock-forming sedges, which often grade into shallowly flooded marsh edges. Typical species include a diversity of sedges (*Carex spp.*), blue-jointed grass (*Calamagrosti canadensis*), spike rushes (*Eleocharis spp.*), great angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*), Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*), and boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*). Rare wetland birds, snakes and invertebrates, (e.g., butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies) can be found in remnant sedge meadows.

Giant reed grass, Reed Canary Grass and Purple Loosestrife are typical invasive species in sedge meadows,

The Remnant Sedge Meadow parallels the bike path and is part of the lease agreement with the Park District.

### Grow It, Don't Mow It Program – Saint Alphonsus Liguori Parish, Prospect Hts., IL

#### Eisinger Residence

Lauren Eisinger started volunteering with us when she was five years old. Lauren spoke with her mom of her wish to have a prairie in front of their family home. Lauren approached us with her wish. Agnes herbicided the front yard. We then planted the front area. We regularly perform a prescribed burn at this location, too. Lauren is now a high school student.

#### Saint Alphonsus Liguori Parish

The St. Alphonsus Parish Landscaping & Garden Committee approached us on the retention pond located in front of the church and southwest of the parking lot. It is an area filled with water most of the year and mosquitos in the warmer months. With the Committee's members, we transformed the detention pond to a wet prairie.

The Committee collects their own seed, participants in seed processing, volunteer with us, etc. This is another example of a symbiotic relationship with our community and places a spotlight on the city, the Park District and the PHNRC.

### Greenhouse Program

The original Grant provided \$10,000 for the purchase of 7,206 plants. We felt we can do better and started the Greenhouse Program. Agnes became educated in how to effectively create and manage a Greenhouse.

The location was in two locations at 9 Marion Place with a third smaller Greenhouse. We have expanded to a larger version in one location.

From 2015 – 2022, we produced between 20,000 and 30,000 plugs. In 2023, we produced 40,000 plugs. At the rate of \$3.75 per plug, we have a savings of \$112,500 annually for 30,000 plugs. We would not be able to manage our sites without the Greenhouse Program.

Transplanting requires a lot of soil. Therefore, we buy a pellet of soil and one-inch and two-inch plantings cups per season. For all the giving-away plant programs in community outreach and our grow it, don't mow it program, and education programs, Commissioners purchase all of the materials from personal funds, and labor is provided by Commissioners and volunteers. There is no comingling of funds.

We feel strongly about community outreach, education and goodwill in the community. Therefore, we fund the Greenhouse Program ourselves.

### Prescribed Burns

Prescribed burning is a thoughtful and skillful application of fire to a specific site under selected weather conditions to accomplish specific land management objectives. Prescribed burning is one of the most cost-effective methods for managing plant communities and controlling natural succession. Also, it helps to reduce the invasion of woody growth in grassland habitats; control the spread of exotic and aggressive plants; remove thick litter layer accumulations that can inhibit wildlife mobility or smother the growth of beneficial grasses, forbs, and legumes; stimulate the germination of beneficial plants through seed scarification (breaking down of the seed coat); reduce the accumulation of hazardous fuel loads; releases nutrients bound to dead organic material; and reduces the spread of plant diseases.

Prescribed burns differ from wildfires. Wildfires are accidental and uncontrolled. They threaten lives and property and can cause great harm.

Prescribed burns are set intentionally after considering the safety of people and property. Prescribed burns are planned to achieve specific objectives in a specific area under specific weather conditions and at the right time of year. Fire control equipment and fire crews, as well as the use of natural or man-made barriers are utilized to keep the fire under control.

The following are rigorously considered before conducting a prescribed burn: wind, relative humidity, temperature, rainfall, fuel, and soil moisture, air mass stability, topography, and local regulations and policies.

The PHNRC has up to nine Commissioners, volunteers and former interns who are burn certified. The PHNRC notifies the city staff, police and fire departments before performing a prescribed burn.

Joe Wade, City Administrator, complimented the PHNRC on the thoughtful and informative way we conduct prescribed burns with safety always a top priority.

### Eagle Scouts

2024 Eagle Scout Projects: PHNRC working with Joe Wade, City Administrator, and Mark Roscoe, Public Works Director to naturalize public lands around Prospect Heights' facilities or the park district.

Sam Sobczak and Scout Troop 468, Gary Morava Nature Preserve – Created 650 feet nature trail, built a natural staircase from the creek up to the trail, built stepping stone bridge in the creek, planted over 2,000 natural species plugs. (August 2017)

Felix Weirich, The Slough Boardwalk (400 linear feet; floating) – Oct 16 and 17, 2021

The Buffalo Grove High School Environmental Club planted over 8,000 plugs in the reclaimed area by the cattails and Boardwalk over two workdays.

Brady Martin, Collapsible Seed Processing Units (10) – February 2023

Hans Milaniak, Meditation Garden at Tully Park (invasives removed, shrubs planted, walking area chipped, seating bench built) (May 2022)

Jason Prenpas – Installation of 3,800 plus into the wet detention pond at MacArthur Middle School with 37 volunteers with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. (September 2023)

### Education

Buffalo Grove High School started with an idea for building a prairie on campus as an open living classroom. Soon Prospect High School and Wheeling High School developed the same idea.

Ari was a regular High School student volunteer who would bring classmates with her to our regularly scheduled volunteer workdays. Ari wanted to leave a legacy to her high school by creating a prairie, which is located at the school's main entrance. Mr. Rich Schram is the E.C.C. (environmental club) Director at Buffalo Grove High School and said that teachers inform him when they have a student that is agitated, they take them out to the prairie to calm down.

MacArthur Junior High School regularly comes out to the Slough for tours and natural areas management classes with two classes of Sixth Graders, 70 students in each class. Also, we regularly participate in the MacArthur Junior High School Science Fair in April.

The Wheeling High School Environmental Science Class (STEM) regularly visits the Slough with their teacher and sponsor, Mediha Abat. A tour and educational component consisting of facts and information on the Slough and Commission's work are provided. Further Wheeling High School created a prairie at the school's front entrance. The school's Zoology Club tried to locate life on campus, and the only area they located was the prairie.

District 214 is comprised of five high schools: Buffalo Grove, Hersey, Prospect, Rolling Meadows and Wheeling. We offer a micro-internship 30-hour program to the D214 schools applicable to one to four students annually.

### Summer Internship Program

The PHNRC started our summer internship program in 2016 offering a five-day-a-week paid position from end of May to end of August. The position description is posted on the PHNRC website, the Chicago Wilderness Job Market, and the Chicago Environmental Network Job Network. Other similar job listings offer higher pay, but we offer educational classes the first 1.5 hours of the workday, hands-on work, the opportunity to obtain both a Herbicide and Prescribed Burn Permits. At the conclusion of the summer internship program, interns are about to identify between 200 and 300 individual plant species, know best management practices, and know safety procedures.

2016: Daniela Sanchez  
2017: Aaron Phalin and Jeremy Schultz  
2018: Gabby Szyniec  
2019: Alyssa King  
2020: Blair Ripley  
2021: Colin Ewert  
2022: Eric Rivas and Evie Sanchez  
2023: Arianna (Ari) Blank and Catherine Fisher

Our summer interns have gone on to established job roles: Gabby is Head of Restoration for Greeley, Colorado. Evie is with the Forest Preserve District in New Mexico, managing their seed source project. Eric is the Restoration Ecologist for Stantec.

### Outreach Programs

Prospect Heights Public Library and Nature Speaks Program: This series offers four speakers annually, one each season, and is designed to bring important national, regional and international speakers to Prospect heights to discuss important, informative, and entertaining topics affecting our city, our state, and our planet. All programs are held at the Library typically on a Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m. Admission is free; however, registration is required. Four programs are conducted annually with regional, national and, thanks to Zoom Meeting, international speakers. We are proud of the connections we made, to name a few:

|                             |                                          |                                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Chris Anchor (06/22/2016)   | Bill Kleiman (06/26/2019)                | Dan Shilling (04/22/2021)        |
| Peter Cairns (04/20/2023)   | Stephen Packard (01/23/2018)             | Dr. Doug Tallamy (11/19/2020)    |
| Joel Greenberg (11/29/2018) | Dr. Allison Sacerdote-Velat (09/23/2021) | Doug Taron (04/19/2016)          |
| Chris Helzer (01/28/2021)   | Dr. David Schwaegler (04/21/2022)        | Dr. Gerould Wilhelm (10/19/2023) |

Prospect Heights Park District Bird Walks – Spring and Fall Seasons: Started in 2015 and initially led by Mr. Lee Ramsey, Bird Conservation Network (BCN) Coordinator, and Mary Lou Mellon, BCN Past President. Admission is free, but registration is required.

Ms. Mellon retired from the Bird Walks in October 2023. Ms. Cyndi Lubecke, an area bird expert, will continue leading the program.

Prospect Heights Park District Summer Camp is annually conducted for two to three days in August where the Commission provides a nature camp, Skins & Skulls demonstrated, art stations, tour and scavenger hunt, recycling games, and a creek science class.

### Partnerships

We are very appreciative of the alliances and liaisons we have established these past 10 years with civic and community organizations and affiliations. Our relationships are conducted with respect and are symbiotic.

City of Prospect Heights  
Bird Conservation Network  
Citizens for Conservation  
Commonwealth Edison  
Fermilab Natural Areas

Forest Preserve Districts  
Popular Creek Prairie Stewards  
Prospect Heights Park District  
Prospect Heights Public Library

### Our Volunteers

Our ability to accomplish our mission and objectives is through the tireless efforts and dedication of our volunteers. We work throughout the year on a biweekly basis on Sunday mornings, weather permitting. In 2023, we logged 3,374.25 volunteer hours. The National Volunteer Wage Rate is \$31.80 per hour. This equaled a monetary value of \$107,301.15. However, our volunteers tell us that we provide them with an opportunity to give back to their community and make a difference for nature.

Prospect Heights, Illinois is a diamond in the rough, a unique, untold beauty of a community.

**Next Meetings:** The City Council Regular Meetings for the month of February are February 12 and February 26, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall Chambers.

### Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of January 23, 2024

#### Presentation: PROSPECT HEIGHTS NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Dana Sievertson and Agnes Wojnarski provided the PHPD Board of Directors with an Overview of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission or the same presentation provided to the City Council on January 22, 2024.

At the conclusion of the presentation, no questions were raised. However, Tim Jones, President, simply said: "Wow!"

**Proposed 2024 Budget and Appropriate Ordinance – Prospect Heights Park District:** The Prospect Heights Park District Budget for the Full Year 2024 was approved at the January 23, 2024 Board Meeting. As previously noted, the Budget includes a \$7,500 contribution to the PHRNC, which is listed under the Corporate Fund 100 and a PHNRC contribution for Summer Camp 2024, which is in the Recreation Fund 200 Department 14, Summer Camp.

**Christina Ferraro, Executive Director: January 2024 Board Report**

**PAID LEAVE FOR ALL WORKERS ACT**

Beginning January 1, 2024, all Illinois employers must offer both full-time and part-time employees 40 hours of paid time off per 12-month period with the exception of park districts and public schools. The law does not specifically exempt other special recreation associations. Cook County also passed a similar ordinance with similar provisions; however, park districts and public schools and special recreation associations were not exempted. I have corresponded with Cook County Commissioner Scott Britton, requesting an amendment and explaining the hardship it would cost the park district in terms of timekeeping and the money it will cost to pay all employees an additional 40 hours per year. Obviously, all park districts in Cook County are included in the county ordinance and several park directors are contacting the commissioner for their district requesting an amendment with Arlington Heights and Glenview Park Districts attending the Cook County January 25 Board meeting to speak on this issue. Meanwhile, the park district must abide by this ordinance as part of Cook County until amended.

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Christina said that the Paid Leave for All Workers Act will cost the PHPD between \$100,000 and \$300,000. The Glenview Park District will see a cost of \$1 million.

**TULLY PARK : 214 S WHEELING**

Last month the District passed an ordinance regarding this property transfer and then the City passed a resolution. The transfer is being executed by quitclaim deed and a title commitment because the IDNR requires a title policy for grant award purposes, proving ownership. The agreement will be signed and then the title company can finalize the title work/closing details. A survey will be ordered for the new boundaries

**Full Year 2024 Look Ahead – Highlights:** The Park District looks forward to expanding Tully Park and creating an intergovernmental agreement with the NRC.

**Block Party 2024:** The Block Party for 2024 is scheduled for Saturday, June 22, 2024.

**Next Meeting:** The next regularly scheduled Prospect Heights Park District Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. at the Gary Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Hts., IL.

### Plan Zoning Board of Appeals – Meeting of January 24, 2024

*I was unable to attend the PZBA January 24, 2024 meeting in person but reviewed the meeting Agenda and listened to portions of the meeting recording.*

#### V. New Business 1. PZBA Case No. 24-01 PC – Public Meeting Description: Staff report and public comment regarding keeping of chickens in the R-1 Single Family District.

The PZBA Meeting of January 24, 2024 was a public meeting held per request of the City Council to address the matter of keeping chickens in Prospect Heights. This request was spurred by the city receiving a few complaints.

Chickens have been present in Prospect Heights before 1976. The objective of the PZBA January 24, 2024 meeting was to hear residents' opinions and collect the opinions expressed then develop a solution that favors everyone.

#### Summary of current situation provided by Dan Peterson, Director of Building and Development.

Chickens have been present in Prospect Heights before 1976.

Prospect Heights is considered a rural suburban area and has maintained its character.

Current city ordinances were enacted in 1977 and are dated; they have not been changed. However, some conditions have changed. Over the last 10 years, we have seen an increase in urban agriculture. However, our ordinances do not restrict the number of chickens and do not restrict roosters. They do not state you must have a chicken coop. zoning Further ordinances do not state further requirements.

We have zoning ordinances, and cases over the years have centered on chicken coops that are located close to lot lines. Chicken coops are accessory structures. Without knowing who is doing that and who has chickens we are not making sure structures are erected in the appropriate places.

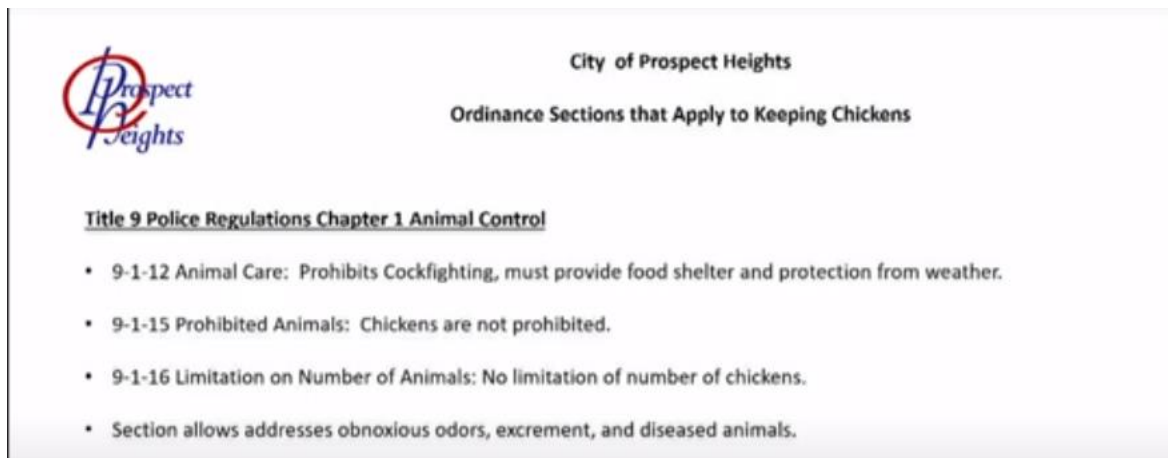
The largest complaint is about roosters. Roosters are covered under animal control, Chapter 3, Noise Control, which states no animal is to be obnoxious, large or intrusive. However, neighbors are reluctant to file a complaint against their neighbors. We must witness it – about the neighbors and the issue - to issue a citation. Do not follow through so we cannot enforce it.

We have seen a significant increase in birds kept on properties. Some cases show more than 20 chickens on a lot. Our ordinance does not allow business use with the keeping of chickens, so this is about personal consumption. The average family is not going through that volume. Is it necessary?

We do not allow eggs to be sold out of homes. This is not an approved home occupation. The State does not sell the sale of livestock out of your house without being a licensed livestock producer and licensed salesperson.

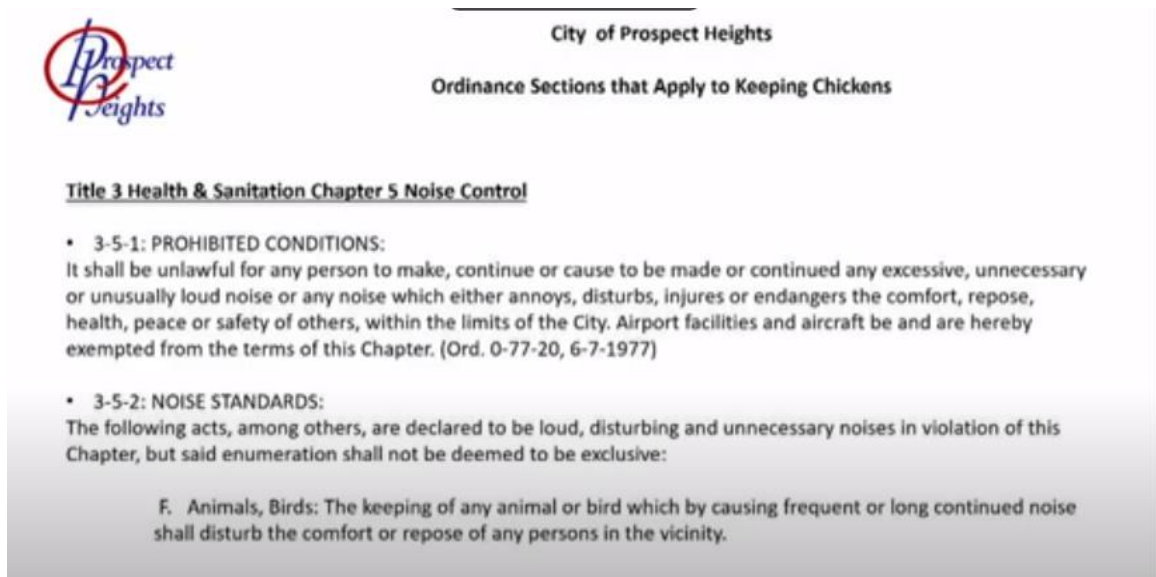
There has been an increase in awareness of Avian Influenza and different diseases that have been brought to the city's attention. The city is mandated to protect the health, safety and welfare of all citizens and preserve the quality of life within the city. The state charges us with establishing reasonable rules to that end.

There are multiple code sections within the city ordinance to address chickens.



No. 1: It is a health and sanitation issue under noise standards; prohibitive uses. Located under the general title. Does not need a zoning hearing but we will make recommendations about noise standards. One of the sections is Animal and Birds. You cannot have long or continue noise that disturbs others. The No. 1 complaint is rooster crowing.

Prohibitive conditions: A resident cannot create a situation that is hazardous for its' neighbors. Everyone tries their best, but not all owners of chickens are good managers of their flock.



Zoning issue. Lock coverage rules, Accessory buildings and chicken coops barns and similar structures have required commission and limitation on size. We are generous in our town because we have half acre lots. Coops are defined as an accessory building. We do not allow coops next to property lines; must be 5 feet away; not on corner lots and out of dedicated easements.



City of Prospect Heights

Ordinance Sections that Apply to Keeping Chickens

Title 5 Zoning Chapter 3 General Provisions

Section 5-3-4 Lot Coverage:

G. Permitted Accessory Buildings, Structures And Uses: The following accessory buildings, structures and uses are permitted as projections into or intrusions upon required yards.

"Accessory building" shall be defined as any structure, whether affixed to or resting upon the ground and detached from the primary residence, having walls (open or enclosed) with or without a roof, and specifically identified as follows: garage, carport, open side summer house, barn, summer house, accessory storage building, screened structure, dog or animal house/kennel, playhouse, clubhouse, storage shed, gazebo, fallout shelter, utility toolshed, wood storage shed, greenhouses and any other similar structure.

- Defined as an accessory structure and use.
- Maximum area for coop and pen is 200 sq. ft.
- Only allowed in rear yards.
- Must meet all zoning setbacks and building requirements.

Picture in picture



City of Prospect Heights

Ordinance Sections that Apply to Keeping Chickens

Title 5 Zoning Chapter 3 General Provisions

5-3-9: ACCESSORY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

- Location:
  - No closer than 5' to a side or rear lot line or dedicated easement
  - 120' from the front lot line
  - Not in a reverse corner side yard for corner properties. Must be in rear yard.
- Height: Maximum height not to exceed 15' to ridge

5-3-5: Home Occupations

- Sales of eggs or chickens/livestock are not a permitted home occupation.

Picture in picture



City of Prospect Heights

Ordinance Sections that Apply to Keeping Chickens

**Title 9 Police Regulations Chapter 1 Animal Control**

- 9-1-12 Animal Care: Prohibits Cockfighting, must provide food shelter and protection from weather.
- 9-1-15 Prohibited Animals: Chickens are not prohibited.
- 9-1-16 Limitation on Number of Animals: No limitation of number of chickens.
- Section allows addresses obnoxious odors, excrement, and diseased animals.

Also, it is an issue when it comes down to the police because it is an Animal Control ordinance. It is a prohibitive animal but does not state what is allowed. Chickens are allowed but no restrictions on number. However, the city has received an increased number of complaints on the numbers of chickens and free-range and free-roaming chickens, which is a nuisance to the neighbors and a safety hazard.

The ordinance addresses obnoxious odors, unkept feed bins, and other things that could attract other pests, varmint, and vermin. Chickens are not the cause of coyotes. We have always had coyotes present. However, if you are not managing your flock, that is an unexpected detriment of having them because they are looking for a food source. Raccoons, weasels, and other prey animals do come in. Cats are killers of birds.

We are here not to outlaw but to look at the city code and see if we can arrive at reasonable standards that everyone can live with. Folks who have written e:mails about chickens are not against chickens per se but want to have reasonable controls and rules so everyone can live comfortably together. These e:mail messages will be part of the meeting minutes.



City of Prospect Heights

Code Enforcement Analysis

**Top 5 Code Enforcement Complaints:**

1. Noise Complaints regarding roosters.
2. Number of chickens on property – have had properties with 20 or more chickens.
3. Location of chicken coops and runs to close to property lines.
4. Coops and runs constructed without permit for accessory structure.
5. Free roaming chickens – animals at large.

**Enforcement Challenges :**

- Requirements as currently written are difficult to enforce for Police and Code Enforcement
- Failure to obtain required permits and zoning approvals
- Relocation of the constructed coop and run (accessory structure).
- Chickens roaming at large.
- Compliance with the City's adopted ordinances.
- Reluctance from neighbors to register complaints.
- City does not have good information on the chicken flock in the City

Coops and Runs or Structures: Quality material is necessary. The Illinois Department of Agriculture has guidelines and recommendations on the size of the coop, how much square feet per hen, size of the run area, etc.

Impossible to enforce the noise violation unless we hear it or a neighbor files a written affidavit and complaint asking the city to pursue an enforcement action.



City of Prospect Heights

Code Enforcement Analysis

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Free registration tool to register your property as livestock premises.  
Chickens are not pets; they are livestock. Therefore, IL Dept of Regulation does want to have that. If there is a health outbreak, we must have a system in place to track it.



Picture in picture

City of Prospect Heights

Review of Other Municipalities that Allow Keeping of Chickens

Municipalities that Allow Chickens January 18, 2024

| Municipality    | IL Registration | Municipal License | Fee                          | Prohibit Roosters | Maximum # of Hens         | Max Size of Coop and Run  | Zoning Restriction | Permit/Inspection | Notes                                                                                                |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wheeling        | Yes             | Yes               | \$25 annual                  | X                 | 6                         | 100 sq. ft.               | Yes                | Yes/Yes           |                                                                                                      |
| Palatine        | Yes             | Yes               | \$75, \$50 renewal           | X                 | 6                         | Meat Building Regulations | Yes                | Yes/Yes           |                                                                                                      |
| Des Plaines     |                 | Yes               | \$35                         | X                 | 6                         | 100 sq. ft.               | Yes                | Yes/Yes           |                                                                                                      |
| Rolling Meadows | Yes             | Yes               | \$25, annual \$25 Renewal    | X                 | Min. 2<br>Max. 6          | 100 sq. ft.               | Yes                | Yes/Yes           | 25 Licenses issued by City                                                                           |
| Mundelein       | Yes             | Yes               | \$100                        | X                 | 2, 4, 6 Based on lot size | 144 sq. ft.               | Yes                | Yes/Yes           | 20 Licenses issued by Village                                                                        |
| Long Grove      | Yes             | Yes               | \$90 Lic., \$50 insp. Annual | X                 | 6, 4, 6 based on lot size | Per Bldg Regs.            | Yes                | Yes/Yes           |                                                                                                      |
| Bartlett        |                 | Yes               | \$25.00                      | X                 | 4                         | 100 sq. ft.               | Yes                | Yes/Yes           | 25 License issued by Village Min. Lot area 8,000 sq. ft. Must have license prior to purchasing hens. |
| Elgin           |                 | Yes               | \$30 lic. \$80.00 permit     | X                 | 6                         | 100 sq. ft.               | Yes                | Yes/Yes           |                                                                                                      |
| Champaign       | Yes             | Yes               | 1.5                          | X                 | 4                         | 216 sq. ft.               | Yes                | Yes/Yes           |                                                                                                      |

Researched what other communities are doing.

20 chickens are too many; what is the happy medium?

Nos. of square feet that is allowed for combination of coop and run because it is an accessory structure. Typically: 3 sf to 6 sf per hen per structure, which adds resting, safety concern and healthy space for each chicken.

Staff is seeking a reasonable solution and will address all issues and take all comments into account. Chickens are a viable use within the city. Our lots are R1 District averaging 2,500 square feet offering viable use within the city and ample property for this type of use. However, keeping chickens cannot be disruptive to the quality of life of neighboring properties.

Residents spoke for almost two hours.

In conclusion, the PZBA felt they had neither the knowledge or expertise to offer advisement at this time. Therefore, Staff was requested to research the issues raised, weigh against the complaints, which are not many, compare the existing ordinances and develop a document where code enforcement can effectively do their job. Staff will develop a management statement and educational sheet. Also, some of the chicken owners could be on an Advisory Board to assist with these objectives.

Dan Peterson requested 60 days for staff to report back to the PZBA. The subject matter will be reviewed, experts contacted, and research the rationale presented.

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Public Zoning Board of Appeals (PZBA) is February 28, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in city council chambers, City Hall, Prospect Heights, Illinois.

#### PHNRC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – February 10, 2024

The Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission turns 10 on February 10, 2024 and will host a celebration in conjunction with our Annual Chili Fest at the home of John and Kristen Kamysz on Saturday, February 10, 2024 from 4:00-8:00p.m. A video on PHNRC accomplishments and photos chronicling the years will be presented, and a celebration of our volunteers will be held.

#### Earth Week – April 21 – 27, 2024

Earth Day is Monday, April 22, 2024.

#### Sierra Club Volunteer Workday at the Remnant Sedge Meadow

The Sierra Club contacted us with a request to schedule a workday at one of our sites for 100 to 150 Sierra Club volunteers. The area must be large enough to support this number of volunteers, host a lunch, and support temporary porta potties. The worksite selected is the Remnant Sedge Meadow. Participants at the workday would include the PHNRC, the Prospect Heights Park District, the Sierra Club, various rotary clubs, civic and church groups, and ComEd. The date of the event is April 21, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Commonwealth Edison owns the property we identify as the Remnant Sedge Meadow located in Wheeling and leased by the Prospect Heights Park District. The lease agreement allows the PHNRC to manage the area and collect seed, something we have been doing since 2014 or the date of the agreement. Roughly 80% of the native species used in our restoration projects in Prospect Heights are gathered from either the Remnant Sedge Meadow or the Remnant Prairie. These two vital seed sources have made us what we are today.

Over the past three years, with the increased number of Grant projects and shoreline restoration at Hillcrest Lake, the amount of time we can allocate to maintain the Remnant Prairie and Remnant Sedge Meadow has dwindled. As a result, these two sites need removal of invasive and woody species.

Dick Dobson, one of our volunteers, is on the Northwest Council body of the Sierra Club. Dana, Agnes, Dick, and Barbara Hill met at the Remnant Sedge Meadow to survey the site. The workday will involve clearing woody species and stacking for Commonwealth Edison to chip. This is a tremendous opportunity for us to upgrade the condition of the Remnant Sedge Meadow. Seth Marcus suggested this site.

Crescent Brands, formerly Crescent Paper, is adjacent to the Remnant Sedge Meadow and has a huge parking lot. The PHNRC has had an agreement with Crescent Brands to use their parking lot when we work at the Remnant Sedge Meadows. However, we have never had a workday of up to 150 volunteers. Therefore, we contacted Crescent Paper to ask permission to use the facility on this scale. After an initial rejection, Crescent Paper has agreed but with a stipulation that whoever utilizes their parking lot for the scheduled workday must sign a waiver. Also, they prefer the city to provide a waiver to Crescent Paper to cover them from liability by the town for any participant who does not sign the waiver. It is a blanket release of responsibility for protection. The Crescent Brands parking lot is located at 100 West Willow Road, Wheeling, IL.

Peter Falcone felt what the owner of Crescent Brands is seeking is a COI or Certificate of Insurance. Peter did not feel this was an issue and will manage it for us. Dana provided Peter with complete details on the workday, the PHNRC Waiver, and the Crescent Brands Waiver.

Porta Potties must be available, and a luncheon provided for all volunteers. The Sierra Clubs has funds to cover these costs.

Volunteers participating in the April 21, 2024 workday will also sign the standard PHNRC waiver. Our Commissioners and Volunteers will provide supervision and training. Dana and Agnes will map the site for the work proposed.

Dana said we are awaiting a response from ComEd on whether they will be participating. Our ComEd contact, Sara Race, is in a new role as Senior Environmental Compliance Specialist; therefore, we are awaiting word from her replacement. We have spoken with the PHPD.

#### PHNRC Presentation for the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club would appreciate a PHNRC presentation on native plants on March 14, 2024 at the Spring Valley Nature Center in Schaumburg at 7:00 p.m. Agnes and Dana would be pleased to provide the presentation to the Sierra Club.

Also, the Sierra Club requested us to provide 20 small seed packets with the species noted to allure people to attend the presentation. ComEd will contribute the seed for the seed packets.

The PHNRC presentation will provide an overview on native plants and why they are highly effective and essential for insects, birds, pollinators, reptiles, and wildlife and why they are now more important than ever; our Greenhouse Program; and our worksites, educational programs, and community outreach. Then Agnes will provide a presentation on each of the plants that are represented in the seed packet.

## NEW INITIATIVES

### PHNRC Website

The recent crisis with the PHNRC Website has been resolved. If the result was different, our entire website would need to be rebuilt. However, Dana is researching another generation software program.

Basically, Adobe disabled the software after a Microsoft update. Dana was unable to access the files. Technical support for this software concluded in 2018, but the software could still be used. The expert support sought located the registry files and simply added four s's to the file name. This means Adobe will not be able to locate the file and turn the software off. We need to do something parallel, however, as a precaution.

### Tree Initiative Program

Joe Wade, City Administrator, contacted Dana with a request to locate a program that might have grant funding for placing trees on the east side of our city in the common areas because it is a disadvantaged neighborhood without a canopy.

Dana contacted the Morton Arboretum, who has a Grant application available from \$25,000 to \$150,000 and due on March 21, 2024. Therefore, Dana will put a plan together with the trees to purchase, outlining objectives and a budget. Mark and Joe have been working on the objectives. It is a matter of what Mark Roscoe wants to do and ease in accessing the trees to maintain once planted. Dana will meet with Joe and Mark and format the plan into a grant request and submit.

Another program not yet released is strictly for disadvantaged areas. It is a smaller program, but we will still apply for it.

John commented that we have taken down a lot of trees, removing the canopy, but do we replace them? Agnes said we have planted 25 oaks and 16 trees from the Morton Arboretum. We just remove the invasive trees. Agnes said too much shade does not allow native plants to grow. There are other trees that are growing in the place of the trees we have removed. For example, the Walnut trees are two years old and already 20 feet in height.

At Pollinator Park, portions of the Slough have areas of mature trees have died naturally. Ten years ago, when the NRC was founded, the first objective was working with Public Works and their tree planting initiative. Thirty native trees were planted. The trees around Hillcrest Lake were part of that initiative.

Dana spoke with Mark Roscoe about the Prospect Heights Park District Tree Identification Program for their parks. Part of the grant is to get one to ID all the trees in Prospect Heights. If Mark and Joe want to include this objective then you can have the funding to request an arborist to complete this part. PHPD did their tree planting and mapping the trees in the city.

Peter Hahn said the areas we maintain have a lot of shade. This condition is difficult to get native plants growing so we must select the area where we plant. We cannot do much. Trees need space and sun.

John inquired about cottonwoods and willow trees, which are non-invasive. Do we seek to propagate? Yes, we have at Pollinator Park. Dana said we have some saplings ready to be planted this year. Cotton Wood trees grow very fast. However, Cotton Wood seedlings will not germinate around large cotton wood trees. Things will work themselves out with fire and management.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### Announcements to the Public

None.

##### Visitors' Comments

None.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

##### Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission is March 14, 2024 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 7:40 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS  
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary