

CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
July 11, 2024

Present: Pete Hahn Jill Moskal
 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. The majority of Commissioners were present except John Kamysz. However, a quorum was present.

Meeting Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of May 9, 2024

The minutes of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission Board Meeting of May 9, 2024 were reviewed. No changes or corrections were noted. Therefore, the meeting minutes of May 9, 2024 were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Volunteer Workdays

A volunteer workday was scheduled on Sunday, May 26, 2024 at the Prospect Heights Slough on Hillside Avenue but was cancelled due to rain.

A volunteer workday was scheduled on Sunday, June 9, 2024 at the Prospect Heights Slough on Hillside to plant riparian buffers that continue to ring the Slough along Hillside, clip and collect seed heads from reed canary grass, and remove invasives.

A volunteer workday was scheduled on Sunday, June 23, 2024 at the Remnant Sedge Meadow to clip and collect Reed Canary Grass seed heads and remove invasives.

A volunteer workday was scheduled on Sunday, July 7, 2024 at Pollinator Park to start this year's edition of the shoreline restoration at Hillcrest Lake. The first step is to clear out the shoreline vegetation so that we can get to the shoreline. Volunteers in waders and boots will be in the water and volunteers on the road to cut and clear buckthorn from the shoreline.

A special type of workday was conducted on Friday, June 7, 2024 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the home of Dr. Chris Woods on Heron Pond. Chris is a longtime volunteer with the PHNRC. Chris and his wife, Julie, had a moderate stand of buckthorn and honeysuckle to be removed. Chris and his wife, Julie, purchased Dr. Wertz's home, the same Dr. Wertz associated with Walnut Woods.

Volunteer workdays continue to be heavily attended. To date, volunteer work hours are 1,843. After the Independence Day Parades, 17 new volunteers attended our volunteer workday of July 7, 2024.

Agnes inquired of the analytics of our website; therefore, Dana will provide a current report at each meeting. Since the Arlington Heights Independence Day Parade, we have had an increase of interest in our website as evidenced with the following data:

Total YTD: 8,820 unique hits on our website
 10,805 visits
 22,930 pages viewed
 120,597 clicks
 18.3 gbps of used bandwidth

July 4, 2024: 111 visits
 141 pages viewed
 2,238 hits
 Used 227.85 megabytes

Visits: 66 visits on July 1; 88 visits on July 2; 71 visits on July 3; 111 visits on July 4;
 74 on July 5, 72 visits on July 6; 13 visits on July 7, 2024.

Prospect Heights Public Library/Park District Events

Nature Speaks Program

The Nature Speaks Program on July 17, 2024 will be conducted via Zoom and not recorded. Nimkii Brad Howie will present "Aanii, Our Relationship with Insects and the Plants They Pollinate." Many of our interactions with the environment have to do with our relationships and our perspectives of the beings within the environment.

In Western culture, insects are often seen as a nuisance, but the Anishinaabe see these beings as teachers and ones that deserve just as much respect and reciprocity as other beings. Nimkii will discuss the Anishinaabe relationship with insects and provide an enlightening exploration of how altering our perspective of these beings and the plants they pollinate can lead to a profound shift in our relationship with nature, influencing positive changes in our interactions with the environment.

Nimkii Brad Howie is a land teacher, ecologist, founder of Manoomin Learning, and self-proclaimed friend to all Nature. Nimkii is a mix of Polish and Anishinaabe from Nipissing First Nation ancestry with a diverse career in education and research. Nimkii is a Proud Member of Nipissing First Nation and holds an MES (Master of Environmental Science) and a BSc (Bachelors of Biochemistry). Nimkii is currently a Professor at Niagara College in Canada.

The Nature Speaks program on October 23, 2024 will feature a screening of the outstanding film entitled “Why Not Scotland?” This film is a one-hour presentation and will only be shown in the Library Meeting room and not recorded or via Zoom.

Across mainland Europe, nature is making a dramatic recovery through restoration to rewild countries, like Poland, France, etc. All over Europe, wildlife is returning, forests are expanding, rivers are being set free, and wetlands are being restored. As nature bounces back, people are returning, too, finding new economic opportunities and enjoying the many benefits of a revitalized landscape.

Flo is a young Scot from Glasgow. Seeing the depleted state of nature across her own country, Flo feels dispirited and, like many of her generation, increasingly fearful about an uncertain future. However, on a journey around Europe, Flo encounters a different story, finding places where nature is making a dramatic comeback, revitalizing human communities. Encouraged by these stories of hope and renewal, she is prompted to wonder: If this is possible elsewhere, why not Scotland? The film underscores starting points of where they are and where they are going in Scotland.

Projects – Update/Status

ComEd Seeded Prairie

Dana Sievertson stated in the first time in the 10-year history of the ComEd Seeded Prairie, all he saw were wall-to-wall native plants and very few invasives, little to no Eurasian grass, and very few patches of open ground. Dana observed a mixed bag of increased Biodiversity, mixed in the sense that there is much more widespread distribution of species in both the east and west sides of the prairie; however, they are still dominated by Tall Goldenrod and Monarda.

Dana stated there exists a rise in species’ colonies, which is very exciting. Rattlesnake Master has become ubiquitous and the easiest increase to see with high concentrations at the far west end of the west prairie and, again, as the far east side of the east prairie with a fairly uniform distribution in between. The Silphium are fighting back hard against the Tall Goldenrod, carving out large colonies for themselves. Cup Plant, Compass Plant, Sawtooth Sunflower, Downy Sunflower, False Sunflower, Prairie Dock, Stiff Sunflower have all made their case for being present in an impressive way.

The mow paths are very well maintained. Our sincere appreciation to the Park District and Public Works, who have been tag teaming the mowing. The ComEd Seeded Prairie has mowed turf then a straight up wall of native plants. The Density is amazing!

Dana said hundreds of thousands of pollinators are present and amazing to watch. Dana feels in two weeks, when the prairie is in full bloom, it will be overwhelming.

Dana stated the ComEd Seeded Prairie is a success story of great merit that needs to be told. Underlying this success is burning, burning, and burning. It is also a testament to the tenacity of Commissioner Peter Hahn, who has been herbiciding invasives for years and the shoulders of all the interns who have assisted.

There is evidence that Jeff Weiss's study on controlling Tall Goldenrod is having good results. Dana did not have time to look up the eight (8) test sites to see what is working best; however, a meeting with Jeff will be held next. Dana will provide the results. It is a five-year study.

Dana provided a slide show of the beauty of the ComEd Seeded Prairie while presenting his Monitoring Report: Evidence that Cicadas love Callery Pears; Joe Pye Weed; Butterfly Weed; Rattlesnake Master; Ironweed; and Swamp Milkweed. Canada Thistle was not present.

Tall Goldenrod, an invasive, is still dominant, and Monarda, a native, is in abundance. Three years ago, Agnes and Dana planted Rope Daughter, a native plant that is a parasitic specifically to control growth of Asters. It is a new method in restoration. Rope Daughter forms ropes over the Tall Golden Rod to hinder its growth.

The area in between the Bike Path and Elmhurst Road should be addressed.

A special shout out from Dana and Commissioners to Peter for his diligent, conscientious volunteer hours in herbiciding our sites, specifically the ComEd Seeded Prairie, Remnant Sedge Meadow, Remnant Prairie, and the Gary Morava Nature Preserve for the past eight (8) years. None of this would have been possible without Peter and his efforts. Peter has been a silent herbicide warrior. Thank you very much, Peter!

Heron Pond

John reported that the trails at Heron Pond are overgrown. Unfortunately, John has been unable to cut and trim the trails as he would like. Also, a tree is down across one of the trails. Also, a large tree fell in the water of the pond, which should be managed by the Association and not the PHNRC.

Nature Preserve (Gary Morava)

Peter reported that the Gary Morava Nature Preserve is looking good! Several native wildflowers are in bloom. The trails are cleared and not presently overgrown. The trails need some wood chips in certain areas. A load of wood chips is located next to the branch pile. Two new trees were planted just north of the parking lot

One White Oak that we planted years ago needs fertilizer to correct the yellowing of the leaves. The small Oak Trees we planted with the Girl Scouts need to be cleared of the surrounding vegetation.

A few logs and branches in McDonald Creek are backing up the water flow. The stepping stones need leveling and adjustments.

Pollinator Park and Shoreline Restoration Project

John exclaimed that Pollinator Park is buzzing with joy! Almost all our plantings from the previous years are thriving. One seeded section on the west side did not really take hold. Parking in front of the welcome sign by the stone garden continues to be a problem. Perhaps placing rocks down along this portion would be a better option than our plastic sticks.

John said a huge effort for the Hillcrest Lake Shoreline Restoration occurred the last workday where the way has been cleared for the next section of the shoreline to be restored, which is located just west of the intersection with Owen Court. It looks great and is ready to go! We are awaiting a delivery notice for the coconut rolls.

Remnant Prairie (Wheeling)

Monitoring Reports for June and July were not provided.

Remnant Sedge Meadow

Jill reported that the PHNRC Volunteer Workday of June 23, 2024 was held at the Remnant Sedge Meadow to clip and collect seed heads from Reed Canary Grass and remove a few invasives.

Dark Green Bull Rush, Crested Sedge, and Soft Stemmed Bulrush were present and growing in the workday area, but seed collection of sedges and rushes would be available near end of June/early July.

The sedges will flower in about one month (estimated: June).

Saint Alphonsus

Monitoring Reports for June and July on Saint Alphonsus were not provided.

Slough, The

Agnes Wojnarski reported that the Slough looks great in many areas. Volunteer efforts to rid the Slough of Reed Canary Grass with intern follow-up work has been impressive.

Hillside Avenue needs some work, and Phase 2 of the Riparian Buffers' planting will start soon.

The trails are open and a pleasure to walk through. However, we have a problem with invasive creeping Bellflower, and it is difficult to eradicate.

Turtle nests have not been dug up as in previous years. Agnes wonders if it was easier for the skunks and raccoons to feast on cicadas than look for the nests.

Agnes stated that many visitors have expressed appreciation of the wildlife and the beauty of the Slough.

Tully Park

Jill provided the Monitoring Report for Tully Park from Wendy Dewar.

Wendy reported that as of the end of June, Penstemon was still blooming, Rudbeckia was beginning to bloom, and Elderberry is in full bloom. When the Golden Rod blooms, it will need to be dead-headed. Several patches of Reed Canary Grass are present along the fence by the home of Rod and Mary Ellen Siemens, which needs to be herbicided.

A meeting was held at Tully Park on Sunday, May 19, 2024 with Dana and Agnes of the PHNRC to discuss what the Park District has planned for Tully Park. The Park District will plant 10 donated trees at the southwest corner of the Park or at the back of Monica and Matt's yard and create a maintenance path through the 214 South Wheeling property to the tree line. Concerns are that the maintenance path would cut right through Tully Park's Pollinator area and path.

The PHPD conducted a meeting at Tully Park on Monday, May 20, 2024 at 3:30 pm so that Friends of Tully Park may present an alternative idea. Resolution: Donated tree planting locations were discussed and areas flagged. Entry to Tully Park from 214 South Wheeling Road property was determined to be along the Com Ed right-of-way; therefore, the Pollinator area would not be disturbed.

Wendy Dewar and Mary Ellen Siemens attended the PHPD Board Meeting of June 26, 2024 and expressed their appreciation to the Park District for their support, assistance and collaboration with the Friends of Tully Park. Also, appreciation was expressed for the 10 donated trees recently planted in Tully Park. Wendy requested communication between the Park District and Friends of Tully Park prior to any actions related to Tully Park. The Friends of Tully Park have been in existence for about seven years and have submitted a Master Plan to the Park District on their vision.

Trail Update: As of May 30 2024, the Tully Park Trail is clear due to the efforts of Rod and Mary Ellen Siemens utilizing their brush cutter and guidance/direction provided by Wendy Dewar. A request was made from the Friends of Tully Park to the PHNRC to obtain wood chips (free of charge) with the delivery location to be the south entrance to the trail 9the side towards the creek) in the grass. Friends of Tully Park will distribute the wood chips on the freshly-cut trail around the second week of July 2024. Dana of the PHNRC will determine whether a full or half load of wood chips is necessary to fill or finalize the trail.

Future plans are on hold until a meeting with the PHPD for the 214 South Wheeling Road property. Ideas for that property include planting of pollinators along a spiral trail with a center area of wetland plants due to the flooding in that area of the park.

Seed/Greenhouse Program

Agnes reported that we have a lot of plants! Seed collection will begin in August with the volunteers. Seed Transplanting Wednesdays have been heavily attended. There are about 100 seedlings to transplant. Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards and volunteers will transplant plants from the small to the larger pots next Wednesday morning, July 17. Plants will be installed at the Shoreline Restoration Project, the Slough, and other sites. The remainder will be overwintered.

Summer Internship Program 2024

Agnes said it has been an absolute pleasure to have Emma Tokarczyk and Ava Foster as our interns this summer. They are hard working, intelligent, and were excited to be part of the program.

District 214 creates videos of their most successful internship programs. Therefore, District 214 sent a videotographer on July 11 and made a video of the Slough site with Ava, Agnes and Dana present. The videotaping was 1.5 hours. The videotape is five to seven minutes in length and will be edited to a final version within two months. This videotape will be a huge shout out to the NRC.

Ava Foster was an exceptional District 214 student and, also, part of the micro internship program last summer. It was Ava's participation in the micro internship to spur her interest to pursue environmental sciences or maybe theories.

Education Update

Wheeling High School

School is not in session over the summer months. No plans currently in place.

MacArthur Middle School

School is not in session over the summer months. No plans currently in place.

Dana stated that all the prairies at the schools – MacArthur Middle School, Buffalo Grove High School and Wheeling High School - look amazing and unbelievable! Agnes said it is a wonderful thing to that the students have exposure to habitats and experience the educational classroom. Also, the students volunteer with us.

District 214 Micro-Internships

A District 214 Micro-Internship was not conducted this summer due to the current NRC workload. Our goal is to provide 100% for each student. We plan to conduct the micro internship in the fall.

Prospect Heights Community Days

The City of Prospect Heights conducted Community Days on June 1, 2024. The PHRNC managed a table. Attendance was light at the event perhaps due to the rainy weather. Our table greeted attendees and interested residents on a frequent basis throughout the event.

Living Green Expo (Grace Lutheran Church, Mt. Prospect)

The PHNRC participated in the Living Green Expo hosted by the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church at Euclid Avenue and Wolf Road in Mount Prospect on Saturday, June 8, 2024. The Expo was a family friendly, free event for attendees and residents to learn how to live sustainably and how to make our homes and communities more eco-friendly.

Several attendees visited the PHNRC table managed by Jill Moskal, Commissioner. One attendee voiced the opinion: “I wish Mount Prospect had a Natural Resources Commission.” In addition to educating attendees about the PHNRC, Jill also informed attendees of the Prospect Heights Park District Block Party on June 22, 2024 from 4:00-10:00 p.m.

Participants and vendors included:

Go Green Des Plaines

Illinois Extension – University of Illinois-Urbana – Illinois Master Naturalist Program

Lurvey's: Hands on Gardening with Lurvey's Kids Garden Club

Mount Prospect Monarchs: Steps to install a Butterfly Garden

Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission: Restoring prairie and green space to the community of Prospect Heights.

River Trails Park District: Prairie Restoration

Solar Power Pete: Solar 101: Is Solar right for you?

Teegen Composting: Large Garden and Backyard Compost

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Free activities for children, free food and refreshments, music and fun were provided under bright blue sky and a sun-shining day.

Go Green Des Plaines (www.gogreendesplaines.org) focused on regeneration of the land, using less plastic, composting, sustainability, forest restoration, native plants, pollinators, recycle/reuse, zero waste, and solar energy. Ms. K.T. Petersen, a Master Naturalist, is the Steward for Izaak Walton located on River Road south of Oakton in Des Plaines.

The website of the Illinois Master Naturalist (<https://extension.illinois.edu/mn>) offers information on this particular program and a Naturalist News Blog plus the Naturalist Notebook by Wendy Ferguson offering information on how to appreciate Illinois' natural beauty every season of the year; Everyday Environment Webinars; learn how to identify Illinois wildlife.

Be sure to visit **Backyard Forager** (www.backyardforager.com) a Blog managed by Ellen Zachos, a Harvard graduate and author of eight books including Backyard Foraging: 65 Familiar Plants You Didn't Know You Could Eat, The Wildcrafted Cocktail, and The Forager's Pantry. Ms. Zachos teaches workshops across the United States and lectures at botanic gardens, flower shows, and garden clubs around the world. Ms. Zachos offers foraging courses, such as Five Super Safe & Easy Wild Edibles for The Beginning Forager, The Wild Spice Cabinet – 11 Foraged Herbs & Spices that Will Change the Way You Cook; and Five Early Spring Greens.

Ms. Zachos and C. L. Fornari produce a Podcast by Plantrama entitled Science, Art & Dinner: It is all in your own backyard.

You may be interested in Ms. Zachos' recipe for Garlic Mustard Pesto where the leaves of the invasive Garlic Mustard plant are a substitute for garlic and basil in a pesto recipe. (<https://backyardforager.com/?s=garlic+mustard>)

The Living Green Expo will be reported in the August 2024 issue of the *Journal*.

Prospect Heights Park District Block Party

The Prospect Heights Park District Party was held on Saturday, June 22, 2024. Agnes said it is one of her favorite events, and our Commission appreciates the connection with the City.

The PHNRC managed two tables for our Commission and distributed 106 packs of native flowering plants – Butterfly Weed, Milkweed, and an Aster. Residents who approach our table say they have their plants from last year, which are propagating; visit our sites; and have purchased native plants on their own. Students also approach our table because we are present in the area schools, so it is delightful to have a relationship with them, too. It became clear during the Event that people are familiar with our Commission.

Independence Day Parades – July 4, 2024 (Arlington Heights) and July 6, 2024 (Prospect Heights)

The Prospect Heights Resources Commissioner participated in the Arlington Heights Independence Day Parade on July 4, 2024 and the Prospect Heights Independence Day Parade on July 6, 2024.

John Kamysz tied this year's theme into the Sunflower Group who are exhibiting the Art Walk at the Izaak Walton Pavilion: Bugs. In addition to our float, marching ants, praying mantis, the 12-foot Monarch Butterfly, a trumpet playing turtle, a trombone playing squirrel, and the 20-foot Monarch Caterpillar all made appearances.

John and Kristen Kamysz invest much unseen time and income behind the scenes to ensure our presence is bigger, better, and sure to dazzle audiences. Countless hours were invested into the fabrication of the marching ants. Artist Kate Tully worked tirelessly to achieve the final appearance with outstanding results. A committed and formidable team make it all happen: John, Kristen, Kate, Andy, Mara, Mary, Spencer, Monty and Dick, to name a few.

The Arlington Heights Independence Day Parade has grown into the largest in Northern Illinois with a route of over 1.2 miles. This year recorded the highest attendance, which was reported to have broken Verizon's 5G network with all in attendance taking pictures, making videos of the NRC enclave and texting and e:mail them. The parade was filled with chants of: "First Place! Best in Show! We Love You! along with a never-ending volley of cheering and applause. In the end, the PHNRC retained its crown achievement of a three-peat as First Place in the Non-Commercial Division award.

The Prospect Heights Independence Day Parade was held on July 6 and was more intimate. Participants recognized many of the attendees lining the parade route. Attendees were friends, acquaintances, neighbors, coworkers and volunteers, so participation is special to the NRC.

The Hebron Church, as in past years, provided a hot dog lunch at the conclusion of the parade and to show their support of the City of Prospect Heights.

John was very appreciative of volunteers who assisted in the creation and construction of another award-winning Independence Day float and display. John is especially appreciative for the enthusiasm and hours that everyone put into this effort to bring our vision together and deliver our message of conservation to our communities.

Sincere appreciation was expressed to Commissioner Ed Madden for documenting both parades and taking over 600 photos to capture our enthusiastic participation and our communities' festivities. Also, sincere appreciation to Patrick Colvin, Digital Communications Technician for the city, who videotaped the parade and shared his photos with us.

John expressed appreciation to Dana for obtaining a new vendor and creating and producing new NRC t-shirts (color: periwinkle).

At the conclusion of the parades, the float is dismantled and, along with the puppets, props, posters and paintings, are stored in John's basement; the trailer is returned to Ed's side yard; and dreaming of 2025 begins.

CONTINUOUS REPORTING

ComEd/Green Regions Grant Application

Dana reported that results from the ComEd/Green Regions Grant Application were expected to be received in late June then early July. It is now mid-July and this year's winners have not yet been announced. Dana will keep us apprised.

Eagle Scout Project

Dana did not have anything new to report.

Adopt-A-Trail Update

Dana reported that Commissioners and a few volunteers have volunteered to Adopt-A-Trail. However, not many volunteers have elected to participate in this objective. Perhaps over time a few volunteers may step forward.

Dana expressed this objective about three times and speaks directly with volunteers. It is a big ask.

NRC 2024-2025 Budget

Due to personal and work-related deadlines, John did not provide Commissioners with a copy of the NRC 2024-2025 Budget, dated July 1, 2024.

John reported that the PHNRC spent \$5,500 out of allowance from the city for this year's shoreline restoration. We were allotted \$6,000 from the Capital Budget for the third year in 2024 of the six-year Shoreline Restoration Project. The remaining funds are spent on miscellaneous items. Purchases of soil for the Greenhouse Program were paid from our regular Operating Budget. Our regular budget is healthy, but payment for the summer intern program is occurring.

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation

City Council Regular Meeting – May 13, 2024

STAFF, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Director of Building and Development Peterson – Chicken Ordinance will be on the June 24th PZBA board agenda.

Director of Public Works Roscoe – IDOT sidewalk project along Wolf Rd is getting underway. Everyone should see the construction starting out there soon. Shouted out all upcoming summer events that will be happening in the city.

City Council Regular Meeting – June 10, 2024

10. Staff, Elected Officials, and Commission Report

Dan Peterson, Director of Building and Development, informed the public that the Planning & Zoning Board of Appeals (PZBA) will host a public hearing on Wednesday, June 26, 2024 on the text amendment for the proposed chicken ordinance. A full application and draft text will become available. Notice of the Public Hearing will be published in the City of Prospect Heights E-news and in the *Journal and Topics* Legal Notices. (Please refer to screenshots below.)

Dan Peterson commented that social media has put the word out to all to attend. Therefore, if the meeting attendance is at or overflowing full capacity, the Public Hearing may have to be postponed while securing a larger meeting space to accommodate all attendees.

City of Prospect Heights E-Newsletter of June 14, 2024

All interested parties are invited to attend the Wednesday, June 26th Planning/Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to be held at 7:00pm in the City Hall Council Chambers. During the meeting, the Zoning Board will discuss and could take action regarding revisions to the City of Prospect Heights' animal control ordinance and the City of Prospect Heights' Zoning Code related to chickens. The agenda for the meeting will be posted outside City Hall and on the City's website - [Agenda Center Page](#), at least 48 hours before the meeting. If you have any questions, please call City Hall at 847-398-6070.

Journal & Topics Legal Notices - June 19, 2024

 

JOURNAL & TOPICS  

      

Notice is hereby given that the Plan/Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of Prospect Heights, Cook County, Illinois, will conduct a Public Hearing on the 26th day of June 2024 at 7pm, at the Prospect Heights City Hall, 8 North Elmhurst Road, Prospect Heights, Illinois, for consideration of Text Amendments to Title 5, Chapter 6 Residential Districts. The proposed amendments would amend Title 5, Chapter 2, Section 3 adding definitions and amending Title 5, Chapter 6, Section 1 related to keeping chickens as permitted use in the R-1 Residential District.

The applicant is The City of Prospect Heights, 8 N. Elmhurst Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070. A copy of the application is on file at City Hall, 8 North Elmhurst Road, Prospect Heights, Illinois 60070. All persons present at the meeting will be given an opportunity to be heard.

Maciej Kempa, Chairperson
Prospect Heights Zoning Board of Appeals

City Council Regular Meeting – June 24, 2024

4. PRESENTATIONS: Presentation by the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission to Create a 501C-3 Tax Exempt Organization, “Friends of the PHNRC

NEW BUSINESS A. Request for the City of Prospect Heights’ Permission for the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission to Create a 501C-3 Tax Exempt Organization, “Friends of the PHNRC”, to Provide Funding for the Natural Resources Commission’s Naturalization Projects and Activities Action Requested: (*Motion, Second, Roll Call Vote*)

On behalf of the PHNRC, Dana Sievertson presented the proposal to form a 501(c)3 and entitled Friends of the PHNRC. Purpose: A method for the PHNRC to raise additional funds. Currently, the PHNRC cannot solicit funds or charge for their services. The PHNRC must think of succession and permanence. The PHNRC has an Operational Budget, and Commissioners have always supplemented our Operational Budget with personal funds totaling \$4,000 to \$6,000 annually. Garden Clubs and Garden Societies have often requested the PHNRC to make a presentation for which we are awarded a stipend.

The PHNRC has generated a lot of goodwill in the community. As a result, our work is tangible and seen throughout our town. The PHNRC Commissioners often hear residents outside our community ask why their town does not have a Natural Resources Commission.

It is the philosophy of the PHNRC to utilize donated funds that aid our work resulting is something tangible and that can be seen throughout our town.

Starting in 2016, private donations have made it possible for us to establish a summer internship program and then have two interns participating in the program. A donation from the Hyndman Family in 2021 which funded the creation of the Hyndman Plum Grove along Elmhurst Road. One hundred native plum trees were purchased and planted allowing not only an aesthetic display of white flowers in the spring but acts as a noise buffer. The balance of monies from the donation was used to purchase educational items from the University of Illinois.

A donation of \$5,000 funded the Board Walk Project at the Slough. The Board Walk completely changed the park providing direct and easy access to the Slough, native plantings, observance of Mother Nature in the form of birds, insects, turtles, etc., and a quiet refuge.

Surrounding conservation associations that have an operating 501(c)3 are as following:

McHenry County Conservation District, Friends of the Forest Preserves, The Nature Foundation of will County, Citizens for Conservation, Fermilab Natural Area, The Morton Arboretum, The Nature Conservancy, and the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands.

Grants are only available for land conservation and educational purposes.

Mr. Tibbits inquired if the PHNRC receives cash donations? No, only in check form and currently made payable to the City of Prospect Heights with the Memo section of the check stating “Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission.”

City concerns are the number of benefits available. If a resident did not want their property developed and contacted the PHNRC to naturalize the area, this removes the property from the tax rolls and affects the city's tax base. Other residents look at naturalized areas as breeding grounds for ticks, wildlife, etc.

The city is supportive of our idea with limitations and the assistance of the city attorney to draft an accurate legal proposal and structure. In addition, we must meet with the Prospect Heights Park District.

New Business

B. R-24-24 Staff Memo and Resolution Authorizing a Civil Engineering Services Agreement with Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., for Design Engineering Services for Elm Street Culvert improvements Action Requested: (Motion, Second, Roll Call Vote)

The new culvert is part of the stormwater management plan and will go under Elm Street by the park to prevent severe flooding. The current culvert is undersized.

Staff/Elected Official Comments

Mr. Tibbitts noted that Police Chief William Caponigro performed the Heimlich Maneuver on a PHPD Block Party attendee on June 22, 2024 and saved the attendee from choking.

Dan Peterson, Director of Building and Development, noted that the Irish paving crews are in the area. Mr. Peterson encouraged residents that if approached, obtain their card and send them away and then contact the Police Department (Dial 911). Driveway replacements require a permit, and sealcoating services offered are inadequate, costing a resident thousands of dollars for poor work and poor quality.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

A Prospect Heights Resident at 108 West Kenilworth spoke about the handling of current chicken ownership by residents and expressed frustration. In October 2023, three residents complained about chicken ownership. Two public hearings have since been held to regulate chicken ownership. At the March meeting, two of the three residents who complained were present.

The Resident speaking felt that the solution is to change the regulations instead of speaking to the three residents who have complaints.

The Public Zoning Board of Appeals will conduct a meeting on Wednesday, June 26 to recommend changes to existing ordinances to outline property use, structure size and placement, annual permit, and enforcement of existing city codes.

In a June 14, 2024 Daily Herald article, Dan Peterson was quoted that he is working together with all parties to find common ground. Information was gathered and recommendations on the chicken issues were presented to Dan Peterson from residents. Residents met several times with Mr. Peterson providing solutions to help people on both sides of the issue. No further discussions were held.

Chicken owners feel they are not being heard and feel disrespected. Data and science are not being considered.

Next Meeting: The next scheduled City Council Regular Meetings are scheduled for July 8, 2024 and July 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall Chambers.

Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of May 28, 2024

I was unable to attend the PHPD Board Meeting of May 28, 2024. Therefore, my notes were obtained from the Board Meeting materials packet.

May 2024 Board Report from Christina Ferraro, Executive Director:

PAID LEAVE FOR ALL WORKERS ACT

As of January 1, 2025, the Cook County Paid Leave for All Workers Act will go into effect allowing part time and seasonal workers to earn up to 40 hours of paid leave from work each year. Workers earn one (1) hour of paid leave for every 40 hours they work and can use paid leave for any reason. To demonstrate the challenges with this ordinance: guards and camp counselors may earn up to 2 days paid time off by the end of the summer. Staff cannot take any paid time off until the 91st day that they are employed, and theoretically part-time staff could carry up to 40 hours over to the next year. As a requirement of the act, we are creating a policy outlining the use, accrual, and approval of paid leave time at the District. Currently paid time off is tracked in the Paycom software application for all full-time employees on an accrual basis. Staff will put together a tracking system and policy for part-time and seasonal staff. Training will be provided for part-time employees to introduce the policy and teach them how to access and utilize their time in the system in November or December and again with summer orientation.

Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of June 25, 2024

Wendy Dewar and Mary Ellen Siemens of Friends of Tully Park were present and expressed appreciation to the PHPD and Board of Directors for their support, collaboration and assistance. Also, appreciation was expressed on the donation and planting of 10 trees at Tully Park.

Wendy and Mary Ellen also requested that communication improve between the Park District and Friends of Tully Park for future actions and plans.

Wendy mentioned a few dead trees present in the cul de sac area of Owen Street. The Board directed Wendy to contact Mark Roscoe of Public Works.

Executive Director Report – Christina Ferraro: Tully Park: A meeting will be scheduled with neighbors of Tully Park to gauge “what the locals would like,” access to the Park from 214 South Wheeling Road property, etc. Christina is looking at early October for a ribbon cutting ceremony. Joe Wade must contact the MWRD first; will be a citizen day.

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled Prospect Heights Park District Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 23, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. at the Gary Morava Recreation Center in Prospect Hts., IL and will center discussions of the tennis and pickle ball feasibility study.

Plan Zoning Board of Appeals – Meeting of May 22, 2024

I was unable to attend the PZBA of May 22, 2024 meeting in person but reviewed the meeting Agenda and listened to portions of the meeting recording.

New Business Items

Three locations in Prospect Heights, which were the Prospect Heights Crossing Shopping Center, 201 West Kenilworth, and 309 East Palatine Road for Public Hearing Amendments and Variations to Property or Public Hearing for Planning Commission.

Next Meeting: The next scheduled meeting of the Plan/Zoning Board of Appeals is Wednesday, June 26, 2024 (Wednesday) at 7:00 p.m.

Plan Zoning Board of Appeals – Meeting of June 26, 2024

I was unable to attend the PZBA of June 26, 2024 meeting in person; therefore, I've reviewed the meeting Agenda and listened to the meeting recording to prepare a summary.

V. New Business

1. Review and adoption of rules for public hearings

2. PZBA - Case No. ZBA 24-01 PUD - Public Hearing Amendments and Variations

Applicant: City of Prospect Heights, Daniel A. Peterson, Director Building & Development
Address: 8 N. Elmhurst Rd., Prospect Heights, IL 60070

Description of Request:

- A. The petitioner is seeking to amend Title 5 Chapter 2 Definitions and Title 5 Chapter General Provisions of Zoning Code to add definitions and regulations for allowing chickens as an accessory use in the R-1 Single Family Residential District per Section 5-6-1 of the City of Prospect Heights Zoning Code;

Proposed Keeping Chickens Zoning Amendments

Dan Peterson, Director of Building and Development, presented a draft ordinance on how to proceed with keeping of chickens in Prospect Heights. Dan said that practical zoning requirements for the placement of chicken coops in the flood plain-heavy city are the main reason behind the plan to create rules.

The draft ordinance states:

- Allowing keeping of chickens in the city's R-1 District as an approved accessory use.
- Residents must register with the city and undergo an annual zoning review.
- Residents, who apply under an updated city ordinance, may be allowed to keep up to 20 chickens.
- The new city code allows for a 200 square foot coop or about 10 square feet per chicken.
- Roosters are prohibited. "No other fowl/poultry including but not limited to geese, ducks and turkeys shall be kept on the property."
- Slaughtering of chickens is prohibited.

The new ordinance seeks to establish a chapter of guidelines for residents wishing to keep chickens in their yards, while educating the public on their coopers and where they may be placed. If someone is not in compliance with their coopers, the city recommends one year to correct any issues.

The proposed allowance of keeping up to 20 hens per property is the most out of any among area suburbs, which typically only allow residents to keep up to six chickens. Dan Peterson said most single-family properties in Prospect Heights are at least one-half acre in size, considerably larger parcels than in other suburbs.

Area towns surveyed by the city that allow residential chickens include Wheeling, Palatine, Rolling Meadows, Mundelein, Long Grove, and Des Plaines.

Dan Peterson said the city's Police Department Animal Control ordinance has never listed chickens as among animals that are prohibited from being kept by residents, only that a permit for chicken coops must be obtained and following certain zoning regulations.

City Staff recommends Roosters be disallowed in the new ordinance.

Beginning in October 2023, Dan Peterson said the City started receiving more complaints of backyard animals running loose, making noise, and creating maintenance issues. Complaints have been handled on a case-by-case basis. An example was provided of one resident who had issues with their coop, which the city addressed; however, the city could not enforce the noise complaints because City Staff must hear the noise, like a rooster crowing, in order to write a citation. This is a cycle that is unenforceable.

Dan Peterson said the Planning Zoning Board may make changes to the proposed ordinance. Any recommendations made by the board are sent to the city council.

Board Member Janet Saewart suggested the proposed ordinance be simplified to focus on placement of coops in non-offensive areas.

Board Member Neal Patel said he sympathizes with chicken owners but believes some measures are needed to protect neighbors who do not want to hear roosters before dawn or smell chickens nearby. Mr. Patel was confident that a solution will be devised.

Fourteen residents in the audience spoke. Two said they are comfortable with all aspects of the proposal. One said he finds the rules tolerable, while another wondered what recourse he had to complain about the chicken odor on his street. Many in the audience said offensive smells and noises were signs of a lax owner of chickens and not an inevitable part of keeping chickens.

Resident Genevieve Charet proposed a counterproposal to the ordinance that includes more educational resources for the community and a group of knowledgeable residents to serve as a consultant panel.

Outcome: The proposed ordinance to regulate the keeping of chickens in Prospect Heights failed to secure a recommendation from the city's Planning and Zoning Board on June 26, 2024. Therefore, a hearing on a potential revision is scheduled for September 25, 2024.

Next Meeting: The next scheduled meeting of the Plan/Zoning Board of Appeals is Wednesday, July 24, 2024 (Wednesday) at 7:00 p.m.

Friends of the PHNRC

The PHNRC has started the process to establish a 501(c)3. A conversation has been conducted with the City Attorney, and they are moving forward. Takes about two months to be completely set up. Dana will keep us apprised.

The PHNRC expressed sincere appreciation to the City Council in support of our non-profit arm. It is a herculean effort and a wonderful way to work with the City of Prospect Heights and the Park District, as well as a resource to seek additional funding and grants to improve the City's green space.

MacArthur Middle School and Tree Initiative Program

Pete Hahn provided an update on a Tree Initiative Program with MacArthur Middle School.

Pete said a good meeting was held in June with District 23, MacArthur Middle School, Openlands, TreeKeepers Chapter, and Peter Hahn as the PHNRC representative. Questions were presented: Who would be responsible for watering and maintaining the trees? How many trees would be planted?

Another meeting will be conducted in late July or August to receive more information on the location of the tree plantings. A site visit will be scheduled to mark the trees. Peter is hopeful Dana or Agnes would be present to ensure no interference with the present native plantings.

Peter said perhaps one to three trees or 10 to 15 trees may be planted. The amount of trees is dependent on school District 23, MacArthur Middle School, and Stephanie Ritter, the Science Teacher.

NEW INITIATIVES

Prospect Heights Park District Summer Camp – Native Camp, August 2024

Dana stated the date for Nature Camp as part of the PHPD Summer Camp will be August 8, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00p.m. Lunch will be provided.

Nature Camp will be conducted in the same format as previous years with five (5) stations and 60 plus campers divided into five (5) groups. The five stations are: Toxic Sludge (recycling) Game (Linda Waycie); In the Creek (Dana Sievertson and Cathy O'Shea); Creative Art with Kate, Andy and Mara; Skins and Skulls with Seth Marcus and Joel Steffens; and Magical Mystery Trail with Agnes and Jill.

NEW BUSINESS

Seed Collection Wednesdays – August 21 – October 23, 2024

Agnes said Seed Collection Wednesdays are typically conducted from mid-August to end of October. However, this year we may begin earlier due to the warmer weather.

Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards Seed Collection Days

Agnes said Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards Seed Collection Days have not yet been confirmed but are typically conducted in either September or October.

PHNRC Monthly Meeting – August 2024

A Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission meeting will not be held in the month of August.

Announcements to the Public

None.

Visitors' Comments

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission is September 12, 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 7:37 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary