

CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 11, 2025

Present: Louis Chatroop Seth Marcus
 Ed Madden Dana Sievertson
 Jill Moskal Agnes Wojnarski

Guests: Cathy McQuillan and Jan Giblen
 Members of the Earth Shepherd Ministries in Arlington Heights, IL

OPENING ITEMS

Call to Order

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

Roll Call

Roll Call proceeded. All Commissioners were present except John Kamysz. However, a quorum was present.

Meeting Minutes of the Board Meeting of August 14, 2025

The minutes of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission Board Meeting of August 14, 2025 were reviewed. No changes or additions were provided. Therefore, the meeting minutes of August 14, 2025 were approved.

Visitor Comments

Ms. Kathy McQuillan of 1625 East Avon Court, Arlington Heights, Illinois and Jan Giblen attended the PHNRC meeting of September 11, 2025 expressing a request of our presence at the St. Francis Fest at Deer Grove Forest Preserve on Sunday, October 5, 2025. The festivities begin at 3:00 p.m. with a Guided Hike followed by a Prayer Service at 5:00 p.m. then dinner (meatless, vegetarian chili) at 6:00 p.m. To date, 22 attendees are expected. Kathy provided us with a printed brochure.

Dana responded that we try to reach out as much as possible with the community. Several of us could possibly be available to present and participate.

Kathy and Jan also asked if we have other organizations to suggest for attendance. Over the years, they have had the Water Department present and Birds and Bees displays. Jan mentioned they are expecting the Illinois Compost Federation and the Arlington Heights Garden Club. Jill suggested contacting Go Green Des Plaines. Agnes suggested the Northbrook County Sewer and Water Conservation District and the Sierra Club.

Kathy and Jan are members of the Earth Shepherd Ministries at St. James in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

OLD BUSINESS

Volunteer Workdays

A volunteer workday was conducted on Sunday, August 17, 2025 at Tully Park. Work accomplished included trail chipping, invasive plant removal, and planting.

A volunteer workday was conducted on Sunday, August 31, 2025 at The Slough near Zeke's Trail to clip and collect the invasive cattail seed heads before they broadcast seed. Every cattail seed head is capable of launching 100,000 to 200,000 of the wind-aided seeds back into the restoration area. This task is very important.

Agnes said the workdays continue to be heavily attended with new volunteer presence.

The September 14 workday will be held at the ComEd Seeded Prairie where we are expecting 46 students from East Leyden High School. With our volunteers, we are estimating 70 participants. The workday area will involve clipping and stacking Tall Golden Rod in the triangle that parallels the sidewalk on Elmhurst Road where we have never done anything but where it has populated itself. We need to address this area. The Park District will pick up the debris.

Prospect Heights Public Library/Park District Events

Nature Speaks Program

Dana reported that the next Nature Speaks Program will be held on November 3, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. with Peter Gorr on "Powering Your Home with the Sun."

Dana is working on procuring another speaker for the Nature Speaks winter program. The suggested speaker is a Professor of Environmental Psychology at the University of Chicago and is working on a new book publication that the New York Times just reviewed.

Dana appreciated Seth Marcus' assistance with the September 6 Fall Bird Walk, which was a huge help. We are uncertain of the status of the September 20, 2025 Fall Bird Walk.

The Bird Walks are on Saturdays from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. The meeting place is the Izaak Walton Pavillion.

Projects – Update/Status

Commissioners' Monitoring Reports

Jill reminded Commissioners that Monitoring Reports should be provided to Commissioners before a scheduled meeting and only concerns or special topics at each site is discussed at the regularly scheduled meeting.

ComEd Seeded Prairie (Dana Sievertson)

Dana reported that the ComEd Seeded Prairie is flush with Tall Golden Rod and Asters. We are looking forward to the big workday planned on September 14 with the East Leyden High School Science Club.

Dana reported that utilizing the hemi parasitic rope dodder is effective in controlling the Tall Golden Rod. Agnes said there is a five-year Tall Goldenrod Study assessment. Jeff Weiss from Buffalo Grove and our intern, Isabelle Sparreo, performed the quadrant sampling. Do not yet know the results.

Jeff Weiss commented that the ComEd Seeded Prairie is much richer in diversity than all the other sites.

Heron Pond (John Kamysz)

No current report was provided.

Hillcrest Lake – Pollinator Park (John Kamysz)

No current report was provided.

Nature Preserve (Gary Morava), The (formerly Pete Hahn)

No current report was provided.

Public Service Commons Project (Dana Sievertson)

Dana reported receipt of a deposit for the brick pad (half payment). However, the Project is still held up by the Fire Department's engineering crew. Dana spoke with Mark Roscoe, Director of Public Works, who said a phone call between the city and engineering firm is scheduled for Monday, September 15, 2025. Mark fully intends to receive a decision on whether the NRC may continue to work on the pad and install the remaining plantings.

Remnant Prairie (Seth Marcus)

No report was provided.

Remnant Sedge Meadow (Jill Moskal)

Jill reported that the Remnant Sedge Meadow is status quo.

Saint Alphonsus (Ed Madden)

Ed Madden reported that the St. Alphonsus prairie is looking good. However, there may be some type of invasive weed creeping in on the edges, but not too many to be concerned about. Ed provided two photos for reference. Ed also mentioned the prairie is seed heavy preparing for the winter.

The Slough (Agnes Wojnarski)

Seth commented that the path at the Slough is the best it has ever been and asked who was maintaining the Slough paths. Dana said that Greg, Maya, Spencer and Louis have been maintaining the trails at the Slough.

Seth said the path is so clear you can see the tree roots. Therefore, should we utilize the tree root removal tool? Dana agreed.

Dana said we normally cover the tree roots with wood chips but there is no accessibility down to that area because the riparian buffers are robust. Also, Louis said rain run off would keep washing the wood chips away.

Dana acknowledged and praised Greg and Maya for everything they have accomplished this summer for the NRC. They have made a positive difference.

Louis commented that the trimmer donated by Dick Dobson works great and makes clear paths with ease! Louis spoke with Greg about it, and Greg knows that the trimmer is stored in Louis' garage. Louis said the trimmer is more effective on trail maintenance than the weed whacker.

Seth inquired about path maintenance and poison ivy. Can herbicide be applied to the poison ivy plants? Dana said there was an abundance of poison ivy on Hillside, and Seth said poison ivy is located on the path as you traverse from Dana and Agnes' house.

Agnes said you must be trained in how to use the herbicide, and timing and temperature are important. Therefore, Agnes said the volunteers with the Adopt-a-Trail Maintenance cannot use the herbicide. Agnes will provide instructions to our intern, Isabelle, on herbiciding the poison ivy.

Tully Park (Jill Moskal for Wendy Dewar)

The PHNRC held a volunteer workday at Tully Park on August 17, 2025. The work performed was trail chipping, invasive removal and planting. Wendy Dewar said the volunteer workday was successful. All the trails are now chipped and re-chipped, where needed, thanks, in large part, to using a wagon towed by a lawn mower.

Wendy reported that approximately 500 sun and shade grasses and plants were installed along the north side of Tully Park and many seed heads of Tall Golden Rod were clipped.

Currently, the following native plants are blooming at Tully Park: White Snake Root, Boneset, Cardinal Flower and many yellow flowers that Wendy does not yet know the name of. Wendy said soon to bloom will be the Masters, but currently, Tully Park is a beautiful blanket of yellow.

Seed/Greenhouse Program Update

Agnes reported that Transplanting Wednesdays are still occurring. The Greenhouse Crew and Maya are still weeding and planting with volunteers arriving every single day from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and 3:00-4:30 p.m. while others just arrive during the day to work for several hours.

Seed Collection Wednesdays are occurring, and an abundance of seed has been collected to date. Upon inquiry, Agnes said the recent Seed Collection Wednesday netted 10.625 pounds of seed.

Education Update

MacArthur Middle School

Agnes has not heard from Stephanie Ritter for seed collection at the ComEd Seeded Prairie. School just started.

MacArthur Middle School has both a wet and dry prairie, which are looking amazing! The cattails have been herbicided. A huge table landed in the area, but the School District removed it.

Wheeling High School

Agnes reported that she has not heard from Mrs. Mediha Abat, the Wheeling High School Environmental Science Class (STEM) sponsor and Science Teacher; however, school just started. We anticipate hearing from them soon.

District 214

Agnes reported that only one student, Leah, from Prospect High School is part of the fall micro-internship program. Leah's first day was Wednesday, September 10 and will be meeting twice a week for two weeks from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Leah expressed an interest in insects. Therefore, if anyone has a good insect resource, please let us know. Agnes' specialty is plants.

Nature Camp – Prospect Heights Park District

Dana reported that Nature Camp will be conducted on September 17, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or two hours by the baseball field. The PHNRC will have three stations – Art staffed by the Sunflower Group for coloring art craft, Skins and Skulls, and Microscope and Hand Lenses for Insect, Flower and Leaf Exploration. Forty-six (46) children (two classes) aged 4 to 6 years are expected and will rotate between the three stations.

Seth wondered on the appropriateness of having young children seeing dead animals. It might be scary for them and too real. Louis has two children and did not feel it was inappropriate. Nature centers in our area are filled with these items, and children find them to be interesting. Agnes said we are not showing bowels, and the presentation is scientific. Louis said we are not locking the children in a room and forcing them to engage with the exhibit.

Agnes said at the MacArthur Middle School Science Fair, dead animals were exhibited, and the children seemed to like seeing what an animal's skin or coat feels like. The exhibitor informed the audience that no one killed or harmed the animals and that the animals and skins were provided for education and to view and feel because you might not be able to touch one in the wild.

Seth said there is a difference between a 4year old and an 8 year old child. Entire skins of a raccoon, skunk and squirrel are part of the Skins and Skulls Kit. Dana will ask Stephanie Ritter for her guidance.

Summer Internship Program Update

Dana and Agnes said that Isabelle and Sawyer have been spectacular! The two summer interns this year were the brightest we ever had, but then we say that every year!

Isabelle is still working with us. We have never had an intern work with us into the month of September. Isabelle is working twice per week on Wednesdays and Fridays and knows over 330 plant identifications. Both Isabelle and Sawyer can identify 200 plants. Agnes said it was obvious they learned well and studied hard. Both were achieving 100% on all the study materials.

Sawyer Schnell has changed her minor to botany due to her participation in the internship. Also, Sawyer wrote a beautiful letter to Agnes and Dana on her summer internship experience.

Update: PHNRC Videos

Patrick Colvin is continuing the process of making videos about our sites, our processes, our current work and where we are currently working.

Patrick sent a link to the introduction of the Public Service Commons. The audio is baffled by the wide, but it will be refined. The interns are on the video talking about plants at the Public Service Commons.

Dana encouraged us, again, to send ideas to Patrick. I reiterated that Louis suggested filming of a prescribed burn this fall.

CONTINUOUS REPORTING

NRC 2025-2026 Budget

Dana reported that Peter Falcone provided us with our current City of Prospect Heights 2025-2026 NRC Budget, dated September 8, 2025.

Dana reported current Net Revenue of \$8,446.04 for the rest of the year until April 30, 2026.

Supply Expenses totaled \$2,192.86 and included purchases of clip and holds to bolster our collection for the East Leyden High School workday; purchase of soil, non-ionic surfactant, backpacks, pruners; and tool maintenance with Arlington Power. Agnes said we will need to restock with planting cups, soil, etc. in both the fall and early spring.

The Hillcrest Lake Shoreline Restoration, Year 4, has a current Net Revenue of \$6,000.00. This project was untouched this year due to everyone's work schedule. However, we will get an early start in 2026.

The First Responder Commons Funds have a current Net Revenue of \$11,480.49. Dana is currently producing the interpretative signs and will provide providing proofs to everyone for review.

Seth requested an explanation of the Donation Funding section of the budget. Dana and Agnes funded the internship salary of \$1,290.81 and \$516.80 to extend Isabelle's summer internship for two weeks and then an abbreviated two days a week for two weeks. No other expenses are from the original budget.

Also, Seth inquired as the Friends of the PHNRC gets underway and receives donations, may the NRC request funding for objectives, programs, etc. Yes. The purpose of the Friends of the PHNRC is to provide funding in support of the NRC.

Adopt-A-Trail Program Update

Dana reported that Spencer and Mary Watson are organizing this Program and working with Louis, Maya, Greg and the Pine Street Group. It's in good shape!

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation

Jill reported on the following:

Summary: Civic and Community Meeting Minutes – August 2025: At the City Council meeting of August 25, 2025, the following actions were approved:

- The appointments of Peter Falcone as City Administrator and Lloyd Austin as Assistant City Administrator.
- The Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Prospect Heights and the Prospect Heights Park District to establish a framework regarding the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission.

For over a decade, the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission has undertaken naturalization projects throughout the City. These projects have been on both City property and Park District property. Over the years, the City and Park District have worked together to oversee the work of the NRC with a handshake agreement. The intergovernmental agreement formalizes the relationship between the City and Park District and framework for future projects undertaken by the Natural Resources Commission.

The Prospect Heights Park District (PHPD) Board met on August 26, 2025. The Park District held a meeting at Country Gardens Park on August 12, 2025 to obtain community feedback on the design perspectives for redevelopment of Country Gardens. Forty-five (45) people were in attendance. Also, a survey conducted drew 85 adult responses where 90% of respondents favored the design concepts.

The lease with ComEd for Country Gardens Park and the bike path, which spans three cities or villages, indicates that motorized vehicles are not permitted on the leased property. The current park district ordinance indicates motorized vehicles are not permitted in parks. The City of Prospect heights is developing an ordinance specific to e-bike and e-scooters.

Tully Park: Scope of Work Plans from the engineer for installation of a horseshoe driveway will be submitted to the city for their approval then a construction date will be determined within the next few weeks.

In 2026, the City of Prospect heights celebrates 50 years and the PHPD celebrates 60 years. Therefore, a joint celebration may be planned and in conjunction with the Block Party. The PHPD Block Party is scheduled for June 20, 2026.

The Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals (PZBA) met on August 26, 2026. Regarding the renovation of the Fire House, Dan Peterson, Building and Development Director, reported that the City and Fire District completed a successful IGA (Interior Gross Area) for shared features. However, the MWRD stated that although the Fire District is a 100% impervious surface, any new work done needs increased detention.

Friends of the PHNRC Update

Jill reported that the Friends of the PHNRC Board last met on July 28, 2025.

The next scheduled meeting of the Friends of the PHNRC Board is October 21, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

NEW INITIATIVES

Illinois Prairie Week is September 15 – 21, 2025: The NRC decided last year not to host anything in 2025 due to busy schedules. However, the NRC will look to next year.

PHNRC Annual Seed Processing and Volunteer Appreciation Day – November 16, 2025:
This event will be conducted from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The next alternate date is two days before Thanksgiving, which is not favorable. Last year, 40 people attended. This year, could see 60 people. We may ask Mark Roscoe for a different venue, one that is spacious, open and airy.

Agnes inquired if we were interested in scheduling a seed collection day at Poplar Creek. It must be on a Saturday or a Sunday where we do not have a scheduled NRC workday. Our workdays always alternate with the PCPS workdays. We would be collecting Indian Grass and maybe a few other species. Jill suggested sending an e:mail message to our regular volunteers asking of their availability in October.

Pop-Up Art Walk Sale: The Pop-Up Art Walk Sale will be held on Saturday, September 27, 2025 at the Izaak Walton Pavillion. Kate Tully reported that many local artists are participating this year. Agnes said it has become one of the greatest events in Prospect Heights, and we look forward to it.

Following are excerpts from an article in *Suburb Talk* on September 20, 2024 by Eileen Daday on the Pop-Up Art Walk Sale. Kate Tully, mural artist, said the Pop-Up Art Walk Sale is truly a community, grassroots art project that provides a lovely feeling to a once forgotten park. The backdrop of Izaak Walton Park located at 201 Elmhurst Road is a natural setting and part of the attraction of the show. It has a short boardwalk that overlooks the Slough, a small pavilion and is home to many types of birds and small wildlife.

In 2020, at the start of the pandemic, Kate Tully partnered with fellow Prospect Heights artist, Mara Lovisetto, a retired Northbrook elementary school art teacher, to create The Sunflower Project. Kate and Mara started installing sunflower art created from items they had collected around the Slough in Prospect Heights. People started joining in and walking to see what was new each day.

Soon Kate and Mara drew more artists to join them and display their works of art. Together Kate and Mara held the first ArtWalk in 2021 with entries featuring different interpretations of scarecrows. The art is created by mostly local artists and others who are supportive of the project. The Prospect Heights Park District generously allows them to display art, which has been created by recycled, natural and found objects. Installations begin showing up in the spring, and they stay outdoors until October. Artists add pieces all summer and even into the fall at the park setting, which compliments Kate's and Mara's works of art.

Creations are all types of media, including mosaic glass, painting, drawing, photography, wood, metal or another medium of the artist's choice. The ArtWalk is interactive, as demonstrated by Rocky the Caterpillar, which keeps growing as people add their own painted rocks to make him longer. Another artist, Jamie Fee, created a wood block puzzle game of insects.

Prospect Heights artist and fabricator, Louis Chatroop, provided an interpretation of a preying mantis made from bicycle parts he welded together.

Kate Tully has worked as a muralist for 25 years, painting a number of creations at municipal buildings and pools throughout the Northwest suburbs and, most famously, on her own garage door. Mara Lovisetto has a large piece that reflects on her favorite artist, Vincent Van Gogh, calling it Van Gogh's Moonlit Moths.

NEW BUSINESS

Announcements to the Public

None.

Visitors' Comments

Please refer to the first page for information on this topic.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission will be held on Thursday, October 9, 2025 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 7:45 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary