

CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 14, 2025

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

Guests: Freddy Jungo, Assistant City Administrator

OPENING ITEMS

Call to Order

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

Roll Call

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

Meeting Minutes of the Board Meeting of September 11, 2025

The minutes of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission Board Meeting of September 11, 2025 were reviewed. No changes or additions were provided. Therefore, the meeting minutes of September 11, 2025 were approved.

Adjusted Agenda

Dana Sievertson requested to add the topic of the Buffalo Grove High School Prairie to the agenda. Therefore, this topic will be discussed with New Initiatives.

OLD BUSINESS

Volunteer Workdays

A volunteer workday was conducted on Sunday, September 28, 2025 at the Slough. Work accomplished included clipping Tall Goldenrod and seed collecting.

A volunteer workday was conducted on Sunday, October 12, 2025 at Slough. Work accomplished included trail lining, clipping Tall Goldenrod, and seed collecting. Volunteers were joined by 40 students from the East Leyden High School Service Club. The September 14 workday at the ComEd Seeded Prairie welcomed 47 students.

Dana reported the total number of volunteers on September 14 was 70 and 50 on October 12, 2025. An incredible amount of work was accomplished.

The East Leyden High School Science Club has requested our winter volunteer work dates.

Dana reported current volunteer hours are 2,300, which is under from last year; however, a lot of work is being accomplished. Also, Agnes felt that the total does not include unreported volunteer hours.

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.” Solar alternatives and solar power will be the focus of Mr. Gorr’s presentation. The November 3 Nature Speaks Program will be in person at the Prospect Heights Public Library. Registration is required.

Nothing else is currently scheduled for the Nature Speaks Program.

Projects – Update/Status

Commissioners’ Monitoring Reports

Jill informed Commissioners that provision of Monitoring Reports has ceased for the season and will begin again in April 2026.

ComEd Seeded Prairie (Dana Sievertson)

Dana reported corps of Monarda, Coneflowers, Biannual Gora, Compass Plant, Prairie Dock, Cut Leaf Coneflowers, Coreopsis, Tall Coreopsis, Indian Grass, Switchgrass, Big and Little Bluestem, Asters, ~~Bluestem~~, and Cup Plant are intermixed with heavy concentrations of Tall Goldenrod in various states of blooming or seeding. A sparse amount of New England Asters and other types of Asters plus a complete infestation of Callery Pear on the East Prairie are currently present at the ComEd Seed Prairie.

Dana reported that the ComEd Seeded Prairie is in a state of senescence and in desperate need of burning or mowing. Talks are scheduled with ComEd the week of October 20, 2025.

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. Also, Louis Chatroop may be able to monitor the Nature Preserve going forward.

Public Service Commons Project (Dana Sievertson)

No current report was provided.

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 overall is doing well. Ed provided two photos of the St. Alphonsus prairie in his report for reference.

The Slough (Agnes Wojnarski)

Agnes reported that we are hosting a high school intern this year. She is interested in entomology, water quality, and the Science Olympiad. Today, Agnes and the high school intern researched macroinvertebrate sampling at the Slough and discovered things Agnes has not seen before, like the Crane Fly and Damsel Fly, to name a few, and these represent a moderately to high-quality species. Agnes mentioned that Ed and her previously participated in the Illinois River Watch sampling for many years.

Agnes said a representative sample was not present but it was more of an educational event. Agnes and the high school intern were in the creek between the bridge and Elmhurst Road and conducted a leaf litter, a riffle, and checked the water under the tree. The current water quality is pretty good.

Agnes suggested conducting annual water quality and invertebrate sampling at the Slough on a regular basis. A water vertebrae sample at the Slough is suggested to determine over time if the water quality is improving or deteriorating. Agnes still has all the ratings and materials for water quality sampling.

How many samples are required for an actual survey? The survey is conducted over three or four hours. Identification is important. It is a separate event, and professionals help you identify to ensure accuracy. Then information is submitted to a database for Illinois River Water. Water sampling is conducted in Illinois from June through August.

Will Hillcrest Lake or the other end of the Slough have water sampling conducted? Yes, but it is more of a river reach system. We could perhaps check at the entrance or culvert to where it exits into McDonald Creek and then check the water quality of McDonald Creek.

Tully Park (Jill Moskal for Wendy Dewar)

Wendy Dewar reported that Tully Park is looking all purple now with the Blue Asters and Heather Asters in bloom. The Boneset did not fully bloom and is already going to seed. Several things are ready for seed gathering, including Joe Pye Weed, Monarda, Rudbeckia, Cardinal Flower, Obedient Plant, and Inland Oats.

The walking trails are still in good shape; however, the drought is taking a toll on all the plants as they are beginning to droop.

Seed/Greenhouse Program Update

Agnes reported that Seed Collection Wednesdays have been very productive with up to 25 volunteers participating. We are collecting a lot of seeds and have about 60 pounds of seed in inventory. We will be collecting seeds up until our seed processing event on November 16, 2025.

The Greenhouse Crew have done absolutely, incredible wonders. Right now, they are renovating the existing Greenhouse, such as deep cleaning it, moving shelving, redoing the surface of the floor, adding new drain vents and gutter installation. Greg is restoring the lawn mowers. They are organizing their planting days, and the plants are surviving due to their dedicated efforts.

The Greenhouse Crew consists of Maya, Greg, Anabelle, Maria, Spencer and Mary and Greg Eckert. They have been of invaluable service and provided huge relief to Dana and Agnes' schedules.

Education Update

MacArthur Middle School

Agnes reported that Stephanie Ritter and the MacArthur Middle School 6th Graders will be coming out tomorrow at the ComEd Seeded Prairie. We are expecting 160 students to work in two sessions from 10:10-11:20am (three classes with three teachers) and 1:15-2:30 pm (three classes with six teachers). One group will be collecting seed while the second group will be processing seed. Another class will be stay back to mulch the trees they planted with the Treekeepers with Openlands.

Agnes commented that a slight chance of rain is expected overnight. If it rains steadily, the workday must be cancelled. We cannot collect wet seed.

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. We hope to hear 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 is very interested in Science Olympiad and insects.

Summer Internship Program Update

Dana and Agnes reported they have extended Isabelle's internship one month and then two, two-week periods and one, one-week period. Isabelle has a second job interview this week. Friday, October 17 will be her last day. If anyone is around to say farewell and express appreciation for her interest and hard work, please stop by. Isabelle has been an incredible worker.

Pop-Up Art Walk Sale

The Pop-Up Art Walk Sale was conducted on Saturday, September 27, 2025 at the Izaak Walton Pavilion. Reviews are that it was very successful. John stopped by in the morning and saw a lot of people milling about and buying things. It was a good time had by all.

Dana reported that this may be the last year for the Pop-Up Art Walk Sale because a lot of work is involved in organizing and preparing for it. However, they say this every year!

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. Dana is working on video modifications.

Patrick is seeking subject matter.

Dana will send a notification when videos are ready for review.

CONTINUOUS REPORTING

NRC 2025-2026 Budget

John expressed appreciation to Dana for obtaining a current copy of the City of Prospect Heights 2025-2026 NRC Budget, dated October 1, 2025 from Freddy Jungo.

John reported current Net Revenue of \$7,567.99 for the remainder of the year until April 30, 2026.

Supply Expenses totaled \$2,665.36; however, the expense entry on October 7, 2025 of \$370.80 from Possibility Place Nursery belongs in the First Responder Budget. Also, signage and additional plantings and the other half of the deposit on the brick pad that the picnic table is resting on are expected to be part of the First Responder Budget

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.

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 is in good shape and is of tremendous help so that Dana and Agnes may focus on what they must focus on.

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation

Jill reported on the following:

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

- O-25-16 Staff Memo and Ordinance Amending the City Code, Title 10 Chapter 18 of the City Code Regarding Low-Speed Electric Bicycles and Low-Speed Electric Scooters.
- O-25-17 Staff Memo and Ordinance Amending the City Code, Title 10 Chapter 17 of the City Code Regarding as Powered Bicycles.

Information on these approved Ordinances appeared in the City's e:news of September 26, 2025, on the city's website, via social media, and on the Police Department's webpage under "Transportation Devices & Rules."

The warning period and public education is from October 1 – 31, 2025. Police enforcement begins on November 1, 2025.

Summary: Prospect Heights Park District (PHPD) Board Meeting – September 23, 2025: The intergovernmental cooperation between the Prospect Heights Park District and the City of Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission has earned the state award for being Best of the Best. Illinois Association for Park Districts announced the award winners on Friday, September 12, 2025. Each winning agency will receive an award on stage at a formal Gala on Friday, October 24, 2025 at the Wheeling Park District's Chevy Chase Country Club.

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.

Summary: Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals (PZBA) Meeting – September 24, 2025: Dan Peterson, Building and Development Director, reported that the Cell Tower located behind the Fire Department is completed. Dan said engineers believe the cell tower will withstand inclement weather this year.

The chicken application process closes on Friday, October 17, 2025 at the end of the business day. At that time, the application period is concluded and closes for the 2026 license year.

Friends of the PHNRC Update

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

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

Also, Dana said the domain of Friends of the PHNRC was purchased some time ago. A temporary website of the domain name friendsofthephnrc.com is up and running. Dana encouraged Commissioners to review the website and provide commentary. The website is currently being developed.

NEW INITIATIVES

Buffalo Grove High School Prairie

Dana reported that Dana and Agnes received a notice two weeks ago that the Buffalo Grove Prairie that we installed with the students and environmental club at the Buffalo Grove High School was going to be removed. Dana and Agnes attempted to learn where this information originated. Rich, who is the Faculty Supervisor of the Environmental Group, said he was informed that the Office of Regional Education had issued a citation against the prairie. Removal of the prairie is ironclad and done.

The reasons provided for removal of the prairie were that it presented security problems, was a fire hazard, attracted rodents, and caused bee stings. Dana and Agnes asked for a copy of the citation but encountered stone walls. Dana and Agnes then contacted Illinois State Representative for the District 57, Tracy Katz Muhl. Tracy called and was informed there was never a citation issued. Something was amiss. Therefore, Dana and Agnes went back to the Buffalo Grove High School Principal, Jeff Waddle, and to Rich and they received a call from the Superintendent. He said it was an internal report from an architectural firm for the High School. Therefore, Dana and Agnes tried to reach out to others to inform them of remedies for problems that really do not exist. No one has been stung by a bee. Rodents are not an issue. We can create a buffer, so the prairie is not close to the building. The Principal called back and sort of changed the story, again, and pushed it back to the person in the regional office who is the director of operations. Dana and Agnes met with her this morning. The bottom line is they want to remove the prairie and install bike racks. This is a final decision.

The real issue is that they were asking us is an effort to move the prairie. They are deep rooted plants and will never transplant; they will die. Also, there are other areas to develop and repeat the prairie. However, there is probably very little appetite to do so. What are our thoughts? Agnes and Dana say no, especially with the hundreds of volunteers, cost, and time involved.

The Environmental Club received a citation, and it was inarguable. That turned into a representation that they were on board with it. Dana and Agnes went to the District 214 Board Meeting on October 16, 2025. Several former interns, volunteers and commissioners appealed directly to the district, sent e:mails and created a packet with photos of everything that was happening. The October 16 meeting was a Public Comment session only.

Dana said all the expense that was incurred into the project was financed by Agnes and Dana to keep it separate from the city because we felt strongly for the cause. The students have been volunteering with us for years. They planted 6,000 plugs at their prairie and watered the prairie over the summer months.

John said we got stung here, and it could be funded through the Friends of the PHNRC. However, it does not sound like a reliable organization who could change the rules at the end of the game.

An outside landscaping firm has been hired to remove the prairie. The Master Plan to develop the landscaping around a couple of cultivars and non-natives.

Rich is gutted but an optimistic person. However, given what has happened he could not do it again and could not endorse developing another area. Seth said we should support it if they take the lead. Maybe six months from now, check and see if Rich and the Environmental Club would want to start it up in 2027. However, they would have to fund it and do the work. We would help in certain ways and support them.

Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards Seed Collection Day

Agnes reported that a Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards Seed Collection Day has been scheduled for Sunday, October 19, 2025 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Carl Hansen Woods. We collect as many seeds as we need, mainly Indian Grass. We propagate plants for them and collect seed for us. They are collecting seeds for us in the future. Seeds are ready to collect at different times.

PHNRC Annual Seed Processing and Volunteer Appreciation Day – November 16, 2025

Our Annual Seed Processing and Volunteer Appreciation Day will be held on Sunday, November 9, 2025 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. The current location is PHNRC Headquarters at 9 Marion Place. However, Dana will speak with Mark Roscoe soon for an alternate location, if possible. The temperatures are typically cold on the seed processing day.

The Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards Annual Seed Processing Day is Saturday, November 22, 2025.

New Procedure: PHNRC Budget Funding and Friends of the PHNRC

Jill reported that Katie King and Jill spoke with Beth Loh, CPA on September 30, 2025 via a phone call to discuss the suggestions from Peter Falcone, then City Administrator. Beth Loh provided her opinion on changing the approach for which the 501(c)3 holds onto funding. Jill and Katie posed outstanding questions on the new procedure to receive a full understanding of all the implications of changing to something new. The main concern is the reporting structure to maintain clear transparency.

The new structure is that the PHNRC would conduct their own purchasing and would not have to wait for City Council sessions to write and approve checks. It is a lot easier for the city, and we receive our supplies on an earlier basis. The city would write a check to the Friends of the PHNRC for a lump sum, and we administer directly from the Friends of the PHNRC. We do not have to wait for a council session to approve the checks; we just write checks. It is a hardship for the city in what is essentially a short order. Saves them effort but makes it a lot easier for them. The city maintains the interns and holding taxes, so that portion of the funding stays with them.

Spring Bird Walks 2026

Dana reported that the Spring Board Walks have been scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2026 and Saturday, May 23, 2026.

Planting in the Parkway Bioswale Program

Dana reported that this is a new program in the city where they are enforcing citations for obstruction in the right of way in people's yards. One person has been notified who has a prairie planting that runs the full gamut in front of their house. They acquired the prairie when they purchased the house. The city has requested they remove the prairie. We are looking at the bioswale program in Downers Grove and how we may emulate their program in our city or come up with an exception for prairie plantings as an obstruction in the bioswale location.

What is the reason for the obstruction? It is in the right of way. May not necessarily involve a bioswale.

Agnes said we should have a discussion with the city. Seth said that plants in the bioswale are a good thing. Plants absorb water, provide less runoff and less pollution in the streams. Many environmental reasons why plants are good in the bioswale.

Is it a visibility or obstruction issue? You did that on own property. What is the obstruction? This is what the discussion is with the city. The ordinance does not mention plants but mentions mailboxes, stones, fences, etc. or hard fixed structures in the right of way. A visual obstruction and not a water obstruction. One house the plantings are three feet from the road. We have the ordinance. Plantings from the center of the road and 30' feet in belong to the city.

If someone is walking down the road and cars going in two directions, the walker needs to get out of the way but would not be able to because of the plants. We asked Peter for an opportunity to address the City Council and make a proposal for a Bioswale Program or an amendment to modify the ordinance. We are working with the city on this matter. Dana will send everyone a copy of the ordinance and the facts behind this and ask for our recommendations.

Seth: Avoiding runoff is a goal. The right of way includes the swales. We understand that 40 complaints were filed and served to residents. Of the six (6) location complaints we looked at four (4) were about hard structures and two were about plants. The city has previously encouraged plantings in people's front yards but not the bioswale.

IAPD Award

The Best of the Best Awards Gala sponsored by the Illinois Association of Park Districts will be held on Friday, October 24, 2025 at the Wheeling Park District's Chevy Chase Country Club from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. PHNRC Commissioners will be in attendance.

St. Francis Fest, Deer Grove Forest Preserve

The St. Francis Fest was held at the Deer Grove Forest Preserve on Sunday, October 5, 2025. Jill and volunteer, Cathy O’Shea, manned the PHNRC Table.

This was the first year for the St. Francis Fest. If it is scheduled, again, PHNRC presence might be beneficial.

PHNRC Meeting of November 13, 2025

Commissioners were asked to think about the cadence for scheduling PHNRC meetings in the year 2026. Should the meetings be scheduled bimonthly or quarterly? Should the meetings be scheduled in January, the end of March, July, and October? We could always schedule a special meeting, as necessary. Keep the November meeting, do not meet in December, meet in January and schedule meetings quarterly thereafter.

This topic will be discussed further at the November 13 meeting.

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 will be held on Thursday, November 13, 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 7:54 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary