CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 10, 2016

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Natural Resources Commission was held in the City Hall Council Chambers, 8 N. Elmhurst Road, Prospect Heights, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Wojnarski.

The following Commissioners were present when the roll was called: P. Hahn, M. Jendreas, J. Kamysz, D. Sievertson, and Chairperson A. Wojnarski.

Commissioner E. Madden was absent.

Also present were City Liaison Peter Falcone, Park District Liaison Christina Ferraro, and residents Cathy Brady, Dave & Ory Ludwin, Wendy Dewar, Al Stewart, Dolores Monroe, Nancy Lutton, John & Sue Ropski, Jim & Barb Donahue, Mary Ellen & Rob Siemes, Jill Muskal, Colleen Busche, Ken Piedlow, Dick & June Wolf, Terry Cleal, Ethan Jersild, Matt Plischke, Robert Zanio, Peggy Lee, and Rob Ludwin.

Christina Ferraro was introduced as the new Executive Director of the Prospect Heights Park District, and Park District Liaison to the Commission.

Approval of Minutes of Special Meeting of January 8, 2016

Commissioner Sievertson moved, seconded by Commissioner Kamysz, to approve Minutes of Special Meeting of January 8, 2016, as submitted. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS

NRC Journal

The March Journal will be released on March 20th. Commissioners should submit any articles to Commissioner Sievertson.

Library/Park District Programs

There are some new classes scheduled at the Park District this summer which are especially geared to children. Descriptions, dates, and costs will be published in the next Park District Brochure.

Com/Ed/Openlands Grant – Final Report

The Final Report was due 18 months after the grant was awarded, and it has been submitted. Commissioners were given copies of the report.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will again be discussed in the future. It was delayed because of MWRD plans for the Hillcrest Lake area and results of the Hey Report.

Com Ed Prairie – 2016 Plan for Maintenance

A major part of the Prairie was re-herbicided because of the emergence of a thick crop of clover. More seed was broadcast throughout the area, which was donated by Fermilab. The area will need to be mowed one to possibly three times this year. Any burning in the future would need to be done by Com Ed contractors because of the possibility of electricity arcing from the towers with the high carbon build-up from burning.

Slough – 2016 Plan for Maintenance

All buckthorn has been removed and re-sprouts will continue to be cut and herbicided, along with the Reed Canary Grass. Approximately 30 lbs. of seed were broadcast in different areas last year, and the plugs planted in the summer did well in the fall. More plugs will be planted this year.

Update on City Council Presentation of Com Ed Grant/Weed Ordinance/Hey Report

The City Council is working on the re-wording of the Weed Ordinance.

The NRC recommendation regarding the Hey Report is in the hands of the City Council. They chose to go with herbiciding of Hillcrest Lake and have sent out Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to have the work done.

Various residents present expressed their displeasure with the fact that the City Council did not go along with the NRC's recommendation, and instead decided to use herbicide. Other resident comments included that all people in the vicinity of Hillcrest Lake should be notified, Aldermen should notify everyone in their ward about this, and costs will only increase for herbiciding once it has been started. Commissioner Jendreas suggested that residents can obtain further information by going to the NRC website and reading the Hey Report. They can also contact their Alderman and/or go to a City Council Meeting to express their concerns.

NEW BUSINESS

Intern – Advertising/Interviews/Work Plan

One of the NRC volunteers donated money for an intern to work throughout the summer, starting in May or June. Advertising will be done on the Chicago Environmental Network for a student who is studying Environmental Science. Chairperson Wojnarski will put together a job description and send to all Commissioners before the job is posted. Interviews will be done by Chairperson Wojnarski, Commissioner Hahn, and Peter Falcone, at the City Hall offices.

Com Ed Grant – applied with Park District as partner

The Grant is being finalized for submittal, and is due on March 15th. This Park District part of the Grant covers the area behind the tennis courts. Buckthorn will be removed, native plugs will be planted to prevent erosion, and a bridge with interpretive signage is being proposed. The City part of the Grant covers vegetation buffers along the Slough and Lake, and planting a small prairie area between the Fire and Police Departments.

Greenhouses

Native plugs will be grown in greenhouses owned by Chairperson Wojnarski and Commissioner Sievertson, and space is also being donated by Horcher Farms and Oakton Community College.

Prescribed Burn at the Slough – Specifics

The burn will take place after March 22nd and will include a small .6 acre part of the Slough which abuts Chairperson Wojnarski's property. All necessary permits have been granted and the Fire Department will be on site during the burn. Public Works will remove the dead ash trees.

Hillside Lake – 2016 Work Plan

All work is on hold pending information from the MWRD on their future construction plans, and information from the City on the results of the Requests For Proposals (RFPs) about herbiciding.

Work Days at Gary Morava (vicinity of creek near tennis courts) & 2016 Work Plan

Buckthorn removal and burning will continue and native seeds will be broadcast to help prevent erosion. The pile of woodchips on the property will be spread to form a small walking trail through the property.

Tully Park Request – Discussion

Chairman Wojnarski received an email from Wendy Dewar, 206 Tully Place, asking if the NRC would be willing to assist residents with the planting of a prairie in Tully Park.

Ms. Dewar was present at the meeting and stated that there are five or six homes that back up to Tully Park and they would like to see the Park turned into a prairie.

Park District Liaison Christina Ferraro stated that according to Park District records, the Board deemed Tully Park as unusable for any Park District activities because it did not have good access.

Residents present were concerned because the Park District offered the property to The Bridge Randhurst Church, which is merging with and reconstructing the existing Prospect Christian Church on Euclid Avenue. They did not want the area to be turned into a parking lot.

Commissioner Sievertson explained that the NRC has several projects they are working on right now, and to take on another project of this scope would be hard. He would definitely consider having the NRC give direction to the residents and assist with a plan. He commented that the NRC does not have any funding, other than a grant it received for a special project.

Commissioner Jendreas said that it is unclear as to exactly where the Park District, City, and Church stood with this property. She did not want to see the NRC get involved until it is determined exactly what the plans are for the future and with which entity. Neighbors need to talk to the Park District Board and get answers.

Residents present said they would definitely all participate in doing the work, and donating money for a prairie planting.

Commissioner Jendreas provided copies of an article entitled "Growing Your Prairie" and a copy of a seed list with some prices. This company is not endorsed by the NRC, but it was made available to familiarize residents with what is involved with the making of a prairie. She gave ballpark figures of costs as follows: herbicides - $250 to $300, seed mix - $1500 to $2000. Establishing a native plant community from seed can take three to five years. Maintenance, such as weeding and mowing approximately 3 to 6 times each year (depending on the weed crop that comes up) needs to be done for the first 2 to 3 years.

There was consensus among Commissioners to consider assisting with the planning of this project, after information is provided relating to ownership and, most importantly, future maintenance plans. When this information is available, residents can return to the NRC for a final decision on an actual plan.

Revised Meeting Calendar for 2016 – Approval

Commissioners received copies of the revised Meeting Calendar, due to the fact that all meetings have to be recorded and televised. NRC meetings will take place on the second Thursday of each month, January through November, at 7:00 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers.

There was consensus among Commissioners present for approval of the Revised Meeting Calendar for 2016.

Turbo Rain System Information

Dana gave a brief description of a solar Turborain System which a friend of his manufactures. The friend agreed to make the system available at a reduced cost to anyone who purchases it as a result of hearing about it from the NRC. He would also be willing to give the NRC a commission on each system sold. Dana will discuss this with City Staff to see if this idea is feasible, and will provide further information at the next meeting.

Community Day – June 4, 2016

Commissioners agreed to have representation at this event. At least two Commissioners are needed on June 4th, from 9:00 a.m. til Noon, to work at the table. Commissioner Jendreas will try to obtain the watershed model from the Forest Preserve for this event.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Jendreas, Secretary

Approved by:

Agnes Wojnarski, Chairperson