



### Presentation to the Prospect Heights Park District Board of Directors

Seth Marcus provided a presentation to the PHPD Board of Directors regarding the PHPD dump site in the Nature Preserve at their meeting of February 26, 2019. Dana, Agnes and Jill attended the meeting.

The PHPD Board tabled discussion of the points in our presentation until a later date.

### Wild Things Conference

The Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission was invited for the second time to present at the Wild Things Conference held on Saturday, February 23, 2019 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont. All Commissioners presented except Peter and Jill.

Our presentation focused on how the PHNRC became a successful environmental organization, accomplishing objectives through volunteerism.

Dana said the Conference was spectacular. Every speaker who presented at the Nature Speakers Program, except two, were presenting at the Conference. That says a lot about the caliber of the speakers present.

John stated that the citizens of Prospect Heights and our officials should understand that the PHNRC was invited two years running in the largest conservation conference in this area, which typically draws 2,000 people in attendance. Our participation placed Prospect Heights on the map and enhanced the caliber of our recognition.

We showcased what we have been able to accomplish with natural areas managements in our town. We are recognized and are true entity that people admire.

Ed said that we had a good-sized audience and made an impact based on audience feedback.

### Library/Park District Program

#### Nature Speaks Program

Dana stated that the next speaker for the Nature Speaks Program on April 16, 2019 is Terry Miesle of Fermilab, and his presentation is "Chasing the Rusty-Patched Bumblebee." Once very common throughout the Eastern United States, the Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*). Populations have dramatically decreased in the past few decades. Added to the U. S. Endangered Species List, this bee has become the recipient of substantial attention. Terry Miesle will discuss the reason for this decline, how we may help, and how we may report information as Citizen Scientists.

Terry Miesle's presentation will be the lead event for Earth Week.

The June 26, 2019 Nature Speaks Program welcomes Bill Kleiman, Nachusa Grasslands Project Director. Bill will be presenting “Nachusa Grasslands: 30 Years of Protecting and Restoring Habitat.”

Thirty years ago, it was a radical notion to attempt to purchase and restore a semblance of the lost Illinois landscape. Today due to efforts of people like Bill Kleiman, it has become more commonplace.

Under Kleiman’s guidance, Nachusa Grasslands project, located in Franklin Grove, Illinois, has grown to over 4,000 acres and has become a mecca for science. Today, with staff and a vigorous volunteer cadre, The Nature Conservancy has protected sizable remnant prairie, wetlands and woodlands; weaving them together with over 100 habitat restorations.

There are over two dozen scientists studying various aspects of the 4,000-acre preserve to help Nachusa Grasslands be an innovative and intentional model project.

#### Nature Summer Camp for Prospect Heights Park District

PHNRC (Commissioners and Interns) will be managing a nature camp for the Prospect Heights Park District during the 10<sup>th</sup> week or last week of summer camp in August for three days from morning until 3:00 p.m. Three to 11 children are anticipated to attend.

Dana read the copy that PHNRC placed in the PHPD brochure for this program.

PHNRC will manage the Nature Summer Camp on August 12, 13 and 14 from 9:15 am to 12:00 pm. The program will be held two days at the Nature Preserve, perhaps August 12 and 14, and one day at the ComEd Prairie or August 13.

PHPD will provide transportation to the ComEd Prairie.

PHNRC will not be paid for managing the nature camp, and we will not have to provide lunch.

Commissioners are requested to present ideas for the curriculum, like a scavenger hunt for prairie plants and conducting creek water samplings.

#### Bird Walks

The PHNRC and the Prospect Heights Park District will, once again, host two bird walks in the Spring. Expert birders Mary Lou Mellon and Lee Ramsey from the Bird Conservation Network will lead a walk around the Slough for us to experience the wonder of birds and learn how to spot and identify birds, learn where to look for birds in our community and, also, how to adjust binoculars for your eyes.

The Spring Bird Walk dates are Saturday, April 27, 2019 from 7:30-9:30 a.m. and Saturday, May 11, 2019 from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

## NEW BUSINESS

### 2019 PHNRC Budget

Included in the discussion on the 2019 PHNRC Budget was a discussion on the Grant Application for the Board Walk.

PHNRC presented their 2019 PHNRC Budget to the City Council at the City Council Budget Workshop on Monday evening, March 11, 2019. PHNRC was requested to revise the budget by reducing the requested amount.

Dana provided copies of the budget to Commissioners for review. Included were line items on Funding from Other Sources for the 2018-2019 period. Funding sources were all donations, including a \$30 check from Lauren Eisinger, our youngest volunteer.

The revised budget will show a request for funding of two and not three summer interns and removal of the possibility of a Grant request. Coverage of operational costs is essential for our continued efforts to build green space in Prospect Heights.

The Grant was to fund the proposed building of a Board Walk. Ald. Rosenthal had requested the PHNRC to develop a plan for improved access of the Slough and Hillcrest Lake by residents. Although the possibility of a Grant is eliminated, the PHNRC would still like to proceed with the Project and enlist assistance from either Eagle Scouts or Wheeling High School Ecology Program students. A great deal of potential exists with this type of project.

ComEd had recently encouraged us to apply, again. However, PHNRC received the ComEd Grant two years' consecutively; therefore, we felt it was not fair to other organizations to apply this year.

Budgets are not negotiated. PHNRC was encouraged to speak with our elected officials. By doing so, we learned that City Council felt our presentation was inarticulate. Therefore, we must provide a two-year history of our funding, what we accomplished with said funds and include information on any supplemental funding. We must review all budget line items, explain what they are, why it is needed and why we are using a particular vendor.

Regarding intern positions, we need to do a position analysis that states the importance of the position, why it is so essential, what unique skill sets or certifications are required, etc.

Lastly, we need to prioritize our request and not what is essential, what is marginal and what is our dream.

The PHNRC 2019 Budget is anticipated to be reviewed, again, by City Council at their meeting of March 25, 2019.

Funding Donation – Lauren Eisinger

Agnes read the note of appreciation written by Lauren Eisinger’s mother, Theresa, that accompanied Lauren’s donation of \$30.00 to the PHNRC:

Dear City of Prospect Heights,

For the past several years, my daughter, Lauren, has been volunteering with the Natural Resources Commission. She has gained a great deal of knowledge and is proud to be part of something that creates beauty and serves our community. She asked to donate a part of her birthday money for their benefit.

Sincerely,  
Theresa Eisinger

Commissioners were truly appreciative of Lauren’s donation and signed a Thank You Note to be mailed to Lauren.

Spring Prescribed Burn Updates

Agnes stated that Spring Burn season is upon us. Our permit is still active (one year), and a resolution has been passed. Therefore, windows of opportunity may be presented during the weeks of March 18 and 25, 2019.

Spring Prescribed Burns will be conducted at the Slough, Nature Preserve and Tully Park. A Fall Prescribed Burn was conducted at St. Alphonsus, and the Park District manages the burn at the golf course.

Proactive Nature Management Plans

Commissioners wish to look forward and, therefore, be proactive for projects, such as the recent beavers at Somerset Park.

Seth said we have received requests from different sources of interest, like Ms. Cory Born from the Arboretum of South Barrington, which is a shopping center that is seeing beavers in the creek behind their property. Seth provided information and concepts.

What is City policy? What is the MWRD’s involvement and policy?

PHNRC approached the PHPD about naturalizing Somerset Park. Christina Ferraro will get back to us.

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation Reporting

Ad Hoc Willow Road Project Committee (Hillcrest Lake)

The Ad Hoc Willow Road Project Committee held their first meeting on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall Chambers. Dana, Jill and Peter Hahn attended.

The Ad Hoc Willow Road Project Committee is an advisory panel to the City Council and shall have the responsibility to do the following:

- Secure input from the Prospect Heights community regarding the implementation of the Willow Road project by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago ("MWRD") and the City;
- Provide for an exchange of ideas between the City residents, the elected leadership and the City staff of what should be the vision for a Willow Road project;
- Provide feedback to the City and MWRD regarding the project; and
- Provide reporting to the community and to the elected officials of the activities, hurdles, and opportunities for the project moving forward.

Members are Alderman Scott Williamson, Alderman Patrick Ludvigsen (Chairman), City Administrator, Joe Wade (Recording Secretary), Resident Tim Kupczyk and Resident Nick Colombe.

Dana said the meeting underscored that most residents are not endorsing the project.

Mr. Kupczyk asserted that the area adjacent to his project that is scheduled to be one of the proposed detention ponds is a wildlife refuge. This is not true. Wildlife is found at the Slough where the food sources, such as insects, are found. However, the property in question is currently not of ecological value because it is the shallowest part of Hillcrest Lake and is simply buckthorn on the land. There are no fish present in that part of the Lake.

John is a resident on the west side of Hillcrest Lake and did not see the letter that Mr. Kupczyk distributed to residents to obtain their signature. John has requested several times to be involved in the Hillcrest Lake Home Owners Association, but his requests to join have been ignored. John questions the accuracy of the representation of Lake residents' opinions.

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Willow Road Project Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2019.

McDonald Creek Commission Meeting – February 26, 2019

Jill Moskal, as PHNRC representative for the McDonald Creek Commission (MCC), listened to the official recording of the McDonald Creek Commission (MCC) meeting of February 26, 2019.

Update on Beavers: Spring Valley Nature Center had a population of beavers and let them stay. There were in the area about one year ago and have moved on. Beavers are not long-term residents.

MCC 2019 Goals and Plans: MCC is proposing to monitor the rise and fall of the creek flow, its velocity and volume, and develop a chart of rainfall, duration of rain storms, its affects and to get baseline information by monitoring stream flashiness, (i.e., measure depth and flow one hour after rain and one day after rain). MCC will research Grant funding for professional equipment to ensure continuity and resolve human reliability.

McDonald Creek is an important part of our infrastructure.

Jon Kindseth mentioned that a new bill has been proposed at the State level for non-home rule communities and their ability to collect stormwater fees and pay for stormwater projects. The City of Prospect heights has identified 20 flooding projects, the top five of which are problematic. Perhaps the City can approach Springfield with these five projects to seek funding to tackle them in a short timeframe.

McDonald Creek Brochure: MCC is considering updating the McDonald Creek Brochure with a link to FEMA maps to inform residents on where they can find information about their property lines and educate them on the environment they are living in.

Creak Clean-Up Week – April 20 – 28, 2019: MCC has scheduled a Creek Clean-Up Week from April 20 – 28, 2019, a Saturday to a Sunday or two full weekends. This timeframe was chosen in celebration of Earth Day, April 22, 2019.

Cathy created a draft flier for the Creek Clean-Up Days requesting residents to cut their zone of the Creek. The flier mailing will include the McDonald Creek brochure. The flier will be mailed to residents by April 15, 2019.

MCC hopes to accomplish the entire community, which is 100+ residents who live along McDonald Creek.

MCC will offer to supply a litter pick-up device, gloves, garbage bags and loppers and be on site to assist residents with the clean-up.

MCC will ask PHPW on the recommendation of a landscaping company or tree removal service to be on site for two hours on each Saturday and Sunday of the Clean-Up Week and a crew of six men to assist residents in trimming vegetation and removing larger debris. This would be especially helpful for elderly residents.

MCC is hopeful the community will favorably respond to the Creek Clean-Up. MCC would like to recognize those residents who participate to build enthusiasm and community pride.

MCC plans to schedule another Creek Clean-Up Week in the Fall.

An exact date would be confirmed after Rick Hartke and Jon Kindseth meet with Mark Roscoe of PHPW.

MCC Meeting Days and Times: MCC discussed perhaps meeting bimonthly except when working on a special project and perhaps changing the meeting start time from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. However, MCC decided to continue to meet on a monthly basis starting at 6:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: The next MCC Meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

#### Earth Week Structure (Earth Day is April 22, 2019)

Dana is preparing a press release for our proposed Earth Week activities and will consider including the dates for the MCC Creek Clean-Up Project, April 20 – 28, 2019.

Our Earth Week activities will begin with the Nature Speaks Program scheduled the evening of April 16, 2019 with Terry Miesle, presenter; inaugural visit of the Wheeling High School students' program on April 24, 2019 from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.; our regularly scheduled volunteer workday on Sunday, April 21, 2019; the scheduled Bird Walk with the PHPD on Saturday, April 27, 2019; and McDonald Creek Clean-Up, April 27 and 28, 2019.

#### Wheeling High School Update

Wheeling High School has partnered with PHNRC. Starting April 24, 2019 from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. and coinciding with PHNRC Earth Week activities, Wheeling High School will be sending two groups of approximately 26 students on alternating Wednesdays to attend two-hour sessions, at present. The sessions will consist of one hour of educational content taught by PHNRC commissioners and one-hour of field work.

Agnes feels this is a great opportunity for students to get the theory and then place it into practice. The program will reach across disciplines and involve the arts in addition to math and the sciences.

Seth outlined the program. Students can participate in numerous projects involving habitat restoration, natural resources management, data collection and analysis, educational less planning and teaching module development, artistic design, etc. These projects can provide volunteer opportunities for the students, as well as being useful at a future time for college and job applications.

PHNRC hopes that students will continue to volunteer with the Commission when the academic year has concluded. We certainly feel that future interns may result from this program.

Dana complimented Seth on a tremendous job in reaching out and establishing a connection with Wheeling High School. It is a huge win for Prospect Heights.

Education has always been a large part of the PHNRC's strategic plan. Seth said that PHNRC has been very successful in creating educational opportunities with Prospect Heights School District 23, the Prospect Heights Park District and local youth groups. Currently, PHNRC is hopeful that our contact and work with local high schools will improve and create great opportunities for the students, the Commission and ultimately the residents of Prospect Heights and surrounding communities.

Visitor's Comments

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission is scheduled for Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the meeting. Therefore, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS  
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary