



Prospect Heights Public Works removed the piles of buckthorn that Seth had cleared on Willow Road, as well as at the piles of buckthorn around the Slough and the north end of Hillcrest Lake. Thank you very much, Public Works!

Seth expressed sincere appreciation to Mark Roscoe and the Public Works' crew for their responsiveness and assistance.

#### Prospect Heights Public Library/Park District Events

##### Nature Speaks Program

Dana reported that our next speaker is Dan Shilling, and his presentation will be during our Earth Week activities on April 22, 2021 (Earth Day). Dan's presentation is entitled "Aldo Leopold: Founding Voice of Environmental Ethics."

Dana is working on the summer, fall and winter speaker options.

Mary Lou Mellon of the Bird Conservation Network continues to conduct her monthly bird talk presentations through the Prospect Heights Public Library. An average of 110 people attend this series. The series is recorded and replayed five times as an encore.

Mary Lou's next presentations are scheduled on Monday, March 29, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. – Birds of Britain; and on April 19, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. - "Birding Columbia: A 4WD Adventure in the Andes." Mary Lou's presentation of April 19 is part of our Earth Week activities.

#### Outcomes: Presentations on Slough Board Walk Project and Funding

Dana advised that the PHNRC presented our Slough Boardwalk Project to the City Council on February 22, 2021 and the Prospect Heights Park District Board on February 23, 2021. We felt it was well received.

We can proceed with the aggregate work for funding from ComEd. The submission date is March 26, 2021 for the Green Regions Grant. Agnes and Dana will complete the proposal by this Saturday and will then send to all Commissioners for review and modification.

The next step is to send the proposal to Christine Ferraro because the Prospect Heights Park District submits the proposal for the Green Regions Grant to ComEd. Notification of receipt of funding will be either in late June or early July 2021.

The Prospect Heights Park District Board has not yet formally approved our plan; only a few questions were presented. The PHPD Board will discuss at their next meeting. Christine Ferraro said to proceed.

The theme of the Green Regions Grant application is Pollinator Habitat and Climate Change. They encourage the construction of boardwalks in nature trails to immerse the public into those pollinator habitats. They encourage partnerships, which is our stronghold - the City, Boy, and Girl

Scouts, four High Schools, volunteers, the Nature Speaks Program with the Public Library, and the PHPD. We show that we take the money a long way, and we can multiply it exponentially by the work we accomplish.

Our back-up plan needs to be discussed. Our clear alternative is to talk with the PHPD and City about keeping their donation, speaking with our anonymous donor about his donation, and anything else out there and base any work that we could accomplish with the money we have on hand.

The Grant covers 50% because it is a matched grant. Theoretically, we could do everything we proposed just 50% of it without matching funding.

Ed said we have a strong track record of success. We have overperformed on all our ComEd Grants. Dana likes our chances. We are submitting a strong Grant proposal.

This is tied with an Eagle Scout Project. The Eagle Scouts will be soliciting donations. John, Felix's Dad, with the Boy Scouts said he may have some leverage at Home Depot for materials.

At what point should we sit down and plan? We have been debating the width of the path. The path itself winds and squiggles. Are we straightening the path? Each segment must go up and down on pipes. Dana responded there is a lot to think about, and we have plenty of time to think about it and discuss.

The State Permit #6 is specific in what you can and cannot do to qualify to use that Permit to complete the project. The minimum width of the boardwalk is 32 inches as opposed to 24 inches.

Three qualifiers of the Permit are (1) restrictions exist on how much regrading you can do; (2) the board walk must follow the terrain, and (3) the boardwalk must be moored in position so that it cannot break lose and clog anything up.

Dana stated it will take some engineering and on-site inspection to determine how to complete the Project. Some sections will have a slight angle and be four feet instead of eight feet in length. We are not creating a curved board walk. The board walk will be straight and angled.

The path meanders through various areas that flood, which will severely impact the board walk material. The board walk will lift in a high rain event.

Dana said we must survey the site, particularly the areas impacted by high waters during rain events.

Dana said having a section of boardwalk that runs perpendicular to the flow of the water is different than where it is running parallel. Therefore, maybe only the sections where the boardwalk is perpendicular to the flow of the water would be fashioned to run up and down the posts, and maybe not necessary where the flow of the water is parallel.

Another option: Areas where there is not a severe level increase in water, we would use four, 16-inch rebar J-rods to anchor it down in four corners; therefore, the boardwalk would be stationary and stay permanent in that area.

Agnes said from her own personal survey, when the land is under water, it is completely under water. There is not a section that is not underwater during a high rain event. Our concern is that the boardwalk does not get damaged or washed away.

Dana spoke with John of the Boy Scouts about the project. John is a master carpenter. Felix, his son, suggested we set up at 9 Marion and build a production area to construct the armatures of each boardwalk section. The Boy Scouts will then carry the lighter frames out to the site, install and apply the treads in place. This may all occur in one weekend.

During the actual Boy Scouts workday, younger children could be planting plugs along the boardwalk.

We want to recruit the Girl Scouts, High School students, notify our regular volunteers, and children for the Boy Scouts workday. It will be a massive volunteer workday, like the one conducted at the Morava Center Nature Preserve where 44 people volunteered.

Seth inquired what consists of the Budget? Is it materials or materials and labor? Agnes said with a Grant, it is what we are asking for and what money we are providing. When completing the application, we incorporate all our volunteer hours and show how much time and volunteer hours we can put into the effort. For example, if we are asking for \$5,000, we state we will provide \$30,000 worth of labor and plugs into the Project. Regarding labor and plugs, we do 90% more than the actual monetary value.

Seth said when we receive a certain amount of funding from the PHPD, City, anonymous donor contributions, etc., matching them out and arriving at \$10,000, are we indicating materials could cost \$10,000? Dana said yes, it can be close to this amount.

Seth inquired if there is a possibility that the Boy Scouts may lower the cost of the material through raising money? Yes.

Dana said we must not leave any stone unturned. By our nature of existence, we cannot solicit donations. We can accept them but not solicit donations.

Could someone start a GoFundMe Me Page? Absolutely.

Is it part of the task of the Boy Scout conducting the Eagle Scout Project to raise money for his Eagle Scout Project? Yes. The Eagle Scout Project ties into the Slough Boardwalk Project, but it is not part of the Green Regions Grant.

Seth asked if we feel our costs are \$10,000 and the Grant is \$5,000, this means we must raise \$5,000? Dana said we have \$5,000, and ComEd could match the \$5,000.

Seth continued and said ComEd might contribute \$5,000, the anonymous donor is providing \$3,000, the City and Park District are contributing \$500 each, and is it possible the Eagle Scout might raise X-hundred dollars as well? Yes, but that would be part of his Eagle Scout Project but not incorporated into the Grant proposal. The Grant references that the Scouts will look to solicit donations from the big box stores.

Dana and Agnes are currently writing the Proposal for Commissioner review and then sent it will be forwarded to Christina for her review and comment before she submits the Grant Proposal.

Seth requested discussion on the width of the board walk, which is proposed to be 32 inches, and the idea of a creating a path from the main path to provide a water view.

Can the boardwalk with be more than 32 inches to consider strollers on the path, the comfort of people walking on an elevated surface that is 32 inches. Would 34 or 36 inches be preferable? What do other places do, like Volo Bog?

John said at The Grove in Glenview, their board walks over water are 4 to 5 feet in width and ADA compatible. Four feet would be a must in John's opinion. John feels that 32 inches is inadequate because you need room to pass and feel secure.

Dana stated with the State Permit #6, if you are going to be hogging out enough space to place 36 inches into the trail, it gets questionable on when and how you become ADA compliant. There is a requirement that is driven by terrain where you can only get so much in without modifying the habitat.

You push the envelope when you expand the width of it because you must modify the terrain to accept that. Therefore, it moves away from what the Permit tells you what to do. The terrain dictates.

Agnes said there is also an acreage issue for wetlands as governed by agencies, such as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and MWRD. For the square meter of the land present, you are allowed a Boardwalk, but it can only encompass a certain amount of the land that is available. Dana said we are concerned about modifying the terrain to accept a four- foot- wide boardwalk.

John stated the trampled path is 24 inches. Dana said the genesis of a 32-inch boardwalk was from the Boy Scouts who said you get three treads out of an eight-foot piece of material. However, if you create a four-foot Boardwalk, costs go through the roof.

The Park District will inspect the Project before and after completion of the Project.

Seth wanted to be clear that we should do what is right and not on the cheap. We must do it right the first time. If it means a bit more money, we could come up with the money. We should review regulations and best practices.

Seth asked to discuss the configuration of the path. Seth said there are parts that are wet all the time where others are partially wet at various time. It could literally be a difference of 100 feet.

Seth also mentioned the extension of the path he proposed to Agnes, which is a little T off the main path.

Seth suggested that all Commissioners review the area and seek opinions and ideas.

Agnes will send pictures of boardwalks, like Volo Bog, concepts, and ideas. Commissioners will physically review of the area the weekend of March 13-14 to see where the path starts and where it ends.

### 2021 Budget

Our 2021 Budget was submitted, and the City Council has held budget meetings.

Peter Falcone said the PHNRC 2021 Budget or full funding was presented during the City Council Meeting of March 8, 2021. Wendy Morgan Adams, Alderman Ward 3, was in full support.

The City Council has not decided on any budgets. At the March 22 City Council Meeting, the Capital Improvement Plan and the Enterprise Fund will be presented, which does not affect the PHNRC 2021 Budget. Our turn comes in April.

Peter Falcone recommended the PHNRC be present at the City Council Meetings of April 12 and April 26, 2021 (final passage) to answer any questions.

### District 214 Micro-Internships

Dana reported that two High School students, Allison Biewenga (John Hersey High School) and Lauren Stieninger (Prospect Heights High School), will be interning with the PHNRC from March 31 to May 26, 2021 on Wednesday and Friday mornings for two hours (8:00-9:30 a.m.). This is a micro-internship with us (30 hours). A regular internship is 60 hours. Allison and Lauren are part of the senior program of which Colin and Felix participated in and will receive class credits.

Allison and Lauren also have the option to attend our regularly scheduled volunteer workdays on Sunday mornings.

The focus of the micro-internship is education on ecological restoration, plant identification, etc., because of the length of 30 hours. Agnes will lead, and Seth will join.

Agnes proposed if Commissioners have any ideas or other things to be incorporated in the micro-internship program, please inform Agnes.

Dana said our relationship with District 214 is starting to make inroads through students seeking service hours. We have had four students present at the last workday – three from Hersey HS and one from Buffalo Grove HS. We are pleased to see an increased interest.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Earth Day (April 22, 2021) and Earth Week Activities (April 18-24, 2021)

The Earth Week Activities for this year are currently planned as follows:

- April 18, 2021: PHNRC Volunteer Workday (9:00am – 12:00 pm)
- April 19, 2021: Birding Columbia: A 4WD Adventure in the Andes (Mary Lou Mellon)
- April 21, 2021: Tour of the Remnant Sedge Meadow (5:00 p.m.)
- April 22, 2021: Nature Speaks Program: “Aldo Leopold – Founding Voice of Environmental Ethics” (Dan Shilling)
- Other Dates: Weathering permitting, tours of PHNRC worksites.

### 2021 Summer Interns

Dana reported that Blair Ripley would like to be our 2021 Summer Intern. Blair did an outstanding job last summer. Blair is a diligent, conscientious worker plus an experienced herbicider. Blair will be entering Graduate School, too!

Dana said we have a possible second summer intern and have several options. Dana said we could open the network and conduct interviews. Also, Colin is a serious candidate for the second summer internship position.

Colin has been with us for about six months, and he is one of the co-founders of the District 214 micro-internship program. Colin is obsessed with natural areas management work! Colin is serious with his work, is known to us, and is comfortable working with us.

We know where Colin’s heart is, and Dana felt he would be a good fit in working with Blair.

When we have the funding, we can offer the second summer internship position to him. We can start with a full interview. We want to make it clear to him that the summer internship program is work. Our workdays are a lot of fun, but the internship is eight hours of work per day.

Commissioners agreed that Colin should be interviewed and offered the position.

### Path Maintenance at Worksites

None currently.

John commented that a dog waste problem exists at a few of our sites, particularly the Pine Street entrance of the Nature Preserve and the Slough trail along Hillside, making it difficult to comfortably walk the paths. John has contacted Christina, suggesting a sign to please pick up after your dog and to provide waste bags for use.

The PHPD have ordered two signs for the Slough trail and along Hillcrest Lake and two signs at the Nature Preserve by the Pine Street entrance and by the Storyboards.

The PHPD have previously placed a box with doggie bags, but they became vandalized.

### Seed/Greenhouse Program

Agnes stated that Seth placed all the seeds in the Greenhouse yesterday, March 10. All the seeds are now tucked away – half in the Greenhouse and half outside. The Greenhouse had a small problem with the window blowing off in the high winds.

Managing the Greenhouse is now in order by checking three to four times a day to ensure the correct temperature and humidity to ensure the seeds germinate properly.

### Spring Prescribed Burns

Agnes reported that we did not receive the rain forecasted.

The Forest Preserve Districts will be performing prescribed burns tomorrow and Saturday. We still have time and are looking at the weather. Conditions must be low humidity and light wind.

Agnes will be taking days off and every day that would be a good burn day. Agnes will be off Saturday, Sunday and Monday, March 20 - 22. Next weekend looks to be dry, so we are aiming for Saturday, March 20. Wednesday, March 17 is questionable. Friday, March 19 is a possibility.

We have three weeks remaining for the burn season. The deadline is April 15, 2021, but we may hit it sooner. Also, plants, insects and wildlife are emerging, which we do not want to interfere. We also do not want to waste fuel. The ground is wet, but the fuel is dry.

Dana said smaller, tactical burns could be performed.

Agnes will communicate with Commissioners on possible dates as the weather permits. Dana will send a calendar with Agnes' open days.

### ComEd Remnant Prairie

Dana spoke with Aaron from Stantec. Stantec utilized their brush hog at the entire Remnant Prairie then Agnes, Seth, and Peter herbicided with Peter herbiciding another day. We must get the stumps, and Eva offered to help. It is absolutely wonderful that Stantec accomplished this size of brush control for us.

### PHNRC Treasurer's Report

John Kamysz did not have anything new to report on our current budget. PHNRC is still operating on their 2020 budget. Until we have a new budget, our differential is flat.

### Proactive Nature Management Plans

Nothing to report; however, this topic will remain on our meeting Agendas.

Seth inquired if it makes sense to remove the buckthorn along Hillcrest Lake. Agnes said yes. However, not along Willow Road because it may be flattened when the MWRD Project begins.

The areas remain extend right around the corner from Hillcrest Drive at Willow Road then north to the plantings by John's house and the corner by Owen (overhanging the water).

Seth has some free days and will work these areas.

#### City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation

Jill summarized her notes from the following two February meetings:

##### City Council of Prospect Heights, Illinois – February 8, 2021 Meeting

Mayor Helmer placed on the Agenda for the Feb 8 City Council meeting to discuss Elected Official Term Limits. However, Alderman felt they were not provided enough notice. Aldermen said that since our town is not Home Rule, this topic requires a petition and then a Referendum for voting by the citizens of Prospect Heights. It is too late for the current election year. Filing must occur three months before the election. The percentage of votes required for passing is 10% of those who voted in the last Mayor election.

Alderman felt the City Council needs to vote on a term limit ordinance. The key is finding people who have a desire to serve the city. An individual holding office that is doing a great job would have to leave his office because his term was up. However, finding a qualified person to fill the vacant role may prove difficult.

Aldermen were not particularly opposed to term limits but do not feel it needs to be discussed at this time. Therefore, this topic will be revisited and placed on a future City Council Meeting Agenda.

A public hearing on Prospect Pointe/Muir Park TIF will be held via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on February 10, 2021.

Peter Falcone said Vehicle Sticker season has started. Those with pets, please remember to renew your Pet Licenses.

Mark Roscoe said residents were delivering lunch and cookies to Public Works as appreciation for the Department's snow removal.

##### City Council of Prospect Heights, Illinois – February 22, 2021 Meeting

The Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission provided a presentation on Improved Access and Enjoyment Plan for the Slough.

The MWRD will be finalizing their responsibilities for the Willow Road Project for approval in April. Purchasing the McLellan property was mentioned.

Richard Tibbitts complimented the Public Works Department but requested snowplow drivers to slow down a bit as mailboxes have been damaged.

Dan Peterson said there is interest in smaller retail spaces in our town. Hopefully, cases will be brought to the PCBA in the next month. There is an uptake in interest in vacant lots, such as 105 East Camp McDonald Road, where City Council acted at the last meeting to vacating right of way enabling the lot to be sold as two conforming lots.

Cheri Graefen, Finance Director, provided a Financial Report as of January 31, 2021, saying we are three-quarters of the way through our year. Cheri said the City is doing well against budget comparisons and within 76% of total revenues. The City has kept fiduciary spending down to conserve cash flow and is on target. We will be looking at 2021-2022 budget in the next few weeks.

Jim Hess substituting for John Driscoll reported that Governor Pritzker signed into law the Criminal Justice Reform Bill which requires use of body cameras state-wide by Jan 21, 2025 specifically for a city the size of PH. This entails expanding police training on use of force, prisoner intervention and abolishes monetary bail.

#### Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of February 23, 2021

The Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission provided a presentation on Improved Access and Enjoyment Plan for the Slough.

Board Member Betty Cloud expressed concerns of liability for the Park District. Dana responded that the boardwalk design is like those utilized in other conservation areas, such as Volo Bog and River Trails. Installation of a boardwalk will make the walking trails safer.

The Park District stated they will make application on behalf of the Boy Scouts for completion of the Boardwalk Project.

Is signing a waiver possible to reduce liability to the Park District? Dana said all the PHNRC volunteers have signed a waiver before working with us, and the waiver was provided by the City's Legal Department.

Sixty to seventy percent of the property at the Slough is owned by the Park District; the balance of the property toward the north end is City property.

The Park District will provide \$500 toward the Boardwalk Project. The Park District will ensure that insurance is in place.

The Grant is due March 26, 2021.

Update: Nothing new to add to my notes in comparison to the PHPD Board Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2020.

#### Announcements to the Public

Seth offered the following for public education.

Lawn mowing season will soon begin. Studies show that mowing your lawn every other week is preferable for moth, butterfly, and other pollinator populations. Also, mow your lawn at a higher level. Pick up some of the grass and plant native pollinators. In this way, you are helping the habitat, and you have less lawn to cut.

Seth said many educational webinars are offered that may be of interest:

April 22 – 2:00-3:00 p.m.: Mount Prospect Public Library: Echo Landscaping – Native Plant Selection. The link to the MPPL Calendar of Events is:  
<https://mppl.evanced.info/signup/Calendar?et=42.10.27.15.17.18.29.28.4.13.19.12.80.43.100.78.102.14.111.70.112.57.103>

University of Illinois Extension Forestry is conducting lectures during the month of April on herbiciding invasive species, creating woodland habitat for wildlife, and navigating the back country for hiking. Following is the link to the Forestry's website: <https://extension.illinois.edu/forestry>

Dana said the Leopold Foundation has outstanding educational webinars. Following is The Aldo Leopold Foundation website link: <https://www.aldoleopold.org/>

#### Visitors' Comments

None.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

#### Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission is April 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the meeting. Therefore, the meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS  
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary