

CITY OF PROSPECT HEIGHTS  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
July 8, 2021

Present:        Agnes Wojnarski, Chairperson        Seth Marcus  
                  Peter Hahn                                        Jill E. Moskal, Recording Secretary  
                  John Kamysz                                       Dana Sievertson  
                  Ed Madden

Attendees:     Peter Falcone, Assistant City Administrator

NOTE:         Meeting held virtually via Zoom. Meeting ID: 862 5887 0309

OPENING ITEMS

Call to Order

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

Roll Call

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

Meeting Minutes of Regular Meeting of May 13, 2021

The minutes of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission Board Meeting of June 10, 2021, were approved. No corrections or additions were noted.

OLD BUSINESS

Volunteer Workdays

Dana reported that our workday of June 27, 2021, was cancelled due to heavy rains that flooded the Slough and Hillcrest Lake worksites. On this workday, a new trail was planned to be formed on the east side of the Slough. Since then, the interns have formed half of the trail. John felt that the trail zigzags and needs to be smoothed out.

Agnes reported that our workday of July 11, 2021, will be conducted at Hillcrest Lake where we will continue installing native plants at the North Finger. Our summer interns drilled 2,900 holes for placement of the native plants.

Agnes said an extra volunteer workday may be scheduled for sedge seed collection at the Remnant Sedge Meadow on Wednesday evening, July 14, 2021 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

### Arlington Countryside Storm Sewer System Project

Dana and Agnes met with Joe Wade on Tuesday, July 6 at City Hall regarding the Arlington Countryside Storm Sewer System Project. Joe said an informational meeting is being prepared that will address all PHNRC's concerns and will be scheduled in late August. We will have an opportunity to learn of the plans.

### Prospect Heights Public Library/Park District Events

#### Nature Speaks Program

Our next Nature Speaks Program is scheduled for September 23, 2021 from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. via Zoom where Allison Sacerdote-Velat will present an unbelievable presentation on buckthorn. The presentation is titled: "Direct effects of an invasive buckthorn metabolite on amphibian embryo survival and development." Allison will cover the full gamut of buckthorn – how, why, what, where. Allison provided a buckthorn presentation at Fermilab about four years' ago and has new material.

Dana has contacted two people for the winter Nature Speaks Program: Alice Bell, an English author who wrote "Our Biggest Experiment – An Epic History of the Climate Crises." Ms. Bell said the discovery of climate change arrived slowly over many centuries of lesser-known findings. Ms. Bell traces how we built systems, technologies and deeply embedded cultures for the burning of coal, gas and oil at scale to track how we discovered the climate crisis was happening in the first place. Ms. Bell makes a convincing case that to effectively deal with climate change, people must understand how the world go to this point. Ms. Bell feel that we have inherited many tools that could help us and others survive through modern climate science.

Dana had also contacted Dr. Robert Zarr, M.D., MPH, Founder and Medical Director, Park Rx America. For the past 19 years, Dr. Zarr has been practicing primary care pediatrics in a community health center in Washington, D.C. Dr. Zaar seeks opportunities to help his patients improve their lives and hoping to connect them with resources virtually in their "backyard." Dr. Zarr prescribes parks because, for one, the preponderance of scientific studies shows a connection between improved health and time spent outdoors in natural settings.

Dr. Zarr is the founder and medical director of Park Rx America (formally DC Park Rx), a non-profit organization whose mission is to decrease the burden of chronic disease, increase health and happiness, and foster environmental stewardship by virtue of prescribing Nature during the routine delivery of healthcare. Park Rx America (PRA) works closely with managers of publicly accessible land and water, as well as directly with healthcare providers and their respective organization to "make it easy" to prescribe parks and other protected areas to their patients real-time in the clinical practice setting.

#### Fall Bird Walks

Dana reported that the Fall Bird Walks have been scheduled on Saturday, September 25, 2021 and Saturday, October 9, 2021 with Mary Lou Mellon of Bird Conservation Network. The September 25 Bird Walk will be our anchor event for Illinois Prairie Week.

### Slough Boardwalk Project and Funding

Dana and Agnes reported that on July 2, 2021, Christina Ferraro, Executive Director of the Prospect Heights Park District, advised that the Grant of \$6,000 has been received!

Dana requested on July 7 to collect the contributions to the Slough Boardwalk Project. The contributors and funds contributed are as follows: Anonymous donor of \$3,000; Agnes and Dana – of \$1,000; Anonymous donor 2 of \$750; and Jill of \$250.

Ed expressed sincere appreciation to our volunteer and Commissioners for their personal monetary contributions for this Project.

Dana requested checks to be made payable to the City of Prospect Heights with a notation in the check memo section to state “PHNRC Boardwalk Grant Fund.” However, during the meeting, Peter Falcone cautioned not to write checks just yet. The Grant is technically to the Park District, so it must be determined how Christina Ferraro wishes to receive the other contributions. The City and PHNRC are managing the Pollinator Park Project at Hillcrest Lake. The PHPD is managing the Slough Boardwalk Project.

Regarding the status of the Project, Felix is securing Boy Scout approval of his Eagle Scout Project. An oversight person has been determined. Regarding a potential start date, Felix and John, Felix’s Dad, mentioned late August. The funds will be in place by August 1, 2021.

### Pollinator Park Project Update

Dana and Agnes reported that our volunteer workday of July 11, 2021 will be conducted at Hillcrest Lake at the North Finger.

Agnes stated the native plantings from last year look great, and the areas that were seeded are growing. This area must be mowed, manicured and fertilized on occasion. We did not receive rain early in the season, so seed has not yet germinated. Dozens of pounds of seeds have been planted, and 1,800 plants have been installed.

Dana has been watering the planted areas and used 128 gallons of water every day for the last four days and went back during a dry spell. The seeds and plantings are getting watered.

The workday of July 11 will make a huge difference for the far north end of the Lake. We will then work back towards Willow Road.

Interpretative Signage must be completed soon. Decisions on garbage cans and benches must be made. Previous discussions were to consider either landscape boulders or tree stumps.

Dana met with Mark Roscoe of Public Works, and he is not in favor of garbage cans stating that people throw their regular garbage in the cans causing the receptacle to overflow with garbage. The garbage can on Willow Road is a special can. The full can is removed and immediately replaced with an empty can. Mark Roscoe leaves the decision of whether to place garbage cans to our Commission.

Dana mentioned that a large Willow Tree log is located at the far north end by the Finger and used by people who like to fish. Corona and vodka bottles have littered that area then kids come along, break the bottles, and we must clean up the glass. Perhaps placing a garbage can in this location would be best.

Agnes suggested utilizing a small type of standing garbage can to discourage garbage dumping. Agnes will investigate this type of garbage can.

John said that residents' clear trash when they see it. Perhaps having no garbage cans will be fine. Agnes said she noticed that as soon as plantings are present, people throw things in the natural area. Signs to clean up after your pet are posted, but dog droppings are still present.

Ed said if we have garbage cans, they will need to be emptied and maintained.

Completion of the Pollinator Park Project and expenditure of the Grant funds is an 18-month period; therefore, the target end date is December 31, 2021 and not December 31, 2022, as previously reported. Providing a complete report of the Project must be by December 31, 2022.

#### Prospect Heights Park District Plant Giveaway

The PHNRC conducted a Plant Giveaway at the Prospect Heights Public Library on Saturday, Jun 19, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon.

The NRC collected about 25 new e:mail addresses and were pleased to know that young families are moving into our area. For example, a young couple purchased the former Ward home on Camp McDonald Road and Elmhurst Road specifically because of the prairie planted in their front yard and backyard (three-quarter of an acre) by the former owners.

The NRC also made three new contacts from the Plant Giveaway.

Our sincere appreciation to Terri Campbell for her assistance in arranging this community outreach event for us.

#### Method to Conduct Meetings Going Forward

Jill reported that the City Council will return to meeting in person in City Hall Council Chambers starting with their July 26 meeting. When asked, Peter Falcone said the City Council and PHNRC are bound by whatever our Governor states, which rule is that hybrid and Zoom meetings will no longer be allowed after July 24, 2021. If he does not extend his Governor's order, again, we will return to pre-COVID procedures.

The City Council will change who sits on the dais. The PHNRC currently has seven Commissioners; therefore, seating on the dais is adequate. Chairs for an audience will be spaced six feet apart.

Given the above, starting with our August meeting, the PHNRC will meet in Council Chambers.

### Independence Day Parade

PHNRC appreciated participation in the City's Independence Day Parade on July 3, 2021. The parade was well represented by several City factors and attended by many residents along the two-mile parade route. This was a great opportunity to bring the community together.

We appreciated attendees of the parade shouting out to us their appreciation for what we do in naturalizing and keeping green space in our town.

For the July 4, 2022 parade, Seth suggested we must do more to make it clear who we are and what we do. Ed suggested designing a one-sentence tag line for the PHNRC, such as: "Helping to restore natural areas in Prospect Heights."

Having a float would provide space for advertising and having all Commissioners and volunteers together. Further, we must start planning for the July 4, 2022 parade in January or February 2022.

The PHNRC tossed small snack bags to attendees containing candy and gum with informational brief on our Commission. Remaining unused bags will be utilized at the PHPD Summer Camp and PHPD Block Party in August.

### 2021 Summer Interns

Agnes said that our summer interns, Blair and Colin, are a great team and hard working. Much work has been accomplished. Seth commented that they are great workers and very interested in the work and the concept of restoration.

Agnes said the 2021 summer internship will be concluding soon. Colin will finish the first week of August and Blair the second week of August.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### Prospect Heights Park District Block Party

The PHPD will conduct their Block Party on Saturday, August 28, 2021 from 3:00 – 10:00 p.m. The swimming pool will be closed by August 28. Events planned are a Pet Pageant, Bingo, GOT TALENT competition, Kidz Zone with inflatables and a gaming truck with onsite video games and consoles, virtual gaming, online gaming. Etc. the two bands on stage will be Cowboy Jukebox (Country) at 6:00 p.m. and Run Forest Run (90's music) at 8:30 p.m.

Currently, Food Trucks confirmed are Mario's Kart, Kona Ice and maybe Culinary Gangster. A beer/wine garden will be available.

The Park District is aware that Mount Prospect is also conducting their Downtown Block Party on August 28.

We always appreciate participating in the PHPD Block Party for connecting with the community, giving away six-packs of native flowers and collecting e:mail addresses from interested residents.

Agnes, Dana, Jill and Seth are available to work our table at the Block Party. Ed will be present as much as possible. John is out of town, and Peter will be working.

### Prospect Heights Park District Nature Camp

The PHNRC will conduct a Nature Camp this year as part of the PHPD Summer Camp the week of August 9, 2021. Nature Camp will be conducted over three days, two-plus hours each day, perhaps 9:15-11:30 a.m., and an anticipated attendance of 65 children. The dates under consideration are August 9 – 13 with August 11 (Wednesday) for certain.

Park District Staff is available to drive Park District vehicles to and from the ComEd Prairie and Gary Morava Rec Center.

Commissioners discussed having five stations and the types of activities at each station, including creative section, sight and sensory, arts and crafts, nature walk, and skins and skulls. Two sites – ComEd Seeded Prairie and the Nature Preserve – as locations. Jill recently sent several suggested activities to Commissioners via e:mail, such as conduct a color search and create a bee habitat. Jill reminded Commissioners that young attendees expected a treasure hunt the last time. Dana said that Gabi also had ideas; therefore, Dana will summarize the information and present to Commissioners.

Commissioners discussed their availability to prepare and conduct the Nature Camp. Blair, our summer intern, will be present. We should reach out to our local artists.

### Illinois Prairie Week

Illinois Prairie Week is scheduled by the State of Illinois for the week of September 19, 2021. Jill sent a suggested timeline of activities for PHNRC to highlight this week:

<u>Sept 19 (Sunday) - 9:00am – 12 Noon</u>	Volunteer Workday
<u>Sept 20 (Monday)</u>	Commissioners Artwork Display and PHNRC representation in Library display cases for the month of September.
<u>Sept 21 (Tuesday) - Evening</u>	Slough 101 Presentation (Update)
<u>Sept 22 (Wednesday) - Evening</u>	Tour of the Slough and Hillcrest Lake – Pollinator Park Project Special invitations sent to City Officials, etc. Special Seed Collection Wednesdays – 5:00 pm to Dusk
<u>Sept 23 (Thursday) - 7:00 – 8:30pm</u>	Nature Speaks Program at the Library
<u>Sept 24 (Friday) - Early Evening</u>	Outdoor Reception at Hillcrest Lake for Residents and Artists
<u>Sept 25 (Saturday) - 7:30 – 9:30 am</u>	Bird Walk with Bird Conservation Network

Dana is unaware of the timing associated with the Library for the Artwork Display of Seth Marcus and Dave Ludwin (photographer) and utilizing the Display Cases. Dana will follow-up with Terri Campbell.

Dana felt the Slough 101 Presentation Update is doubtful at this time due to the amount of work to adequately prepare and securing Commissioners' availability for this commitment.

On September 25 at the conclusion of the Bird Walk, our local artists will be conducting an Art Camp entitled Wildflowers on Wood (canvas) at the Izaak Walton pavilion. Registration through the Park District is required; a fee of \$10 is charged; and total attendance is limited to 20 people.

Further discussion of Illinois Prairie Week at our August and September meetings will be held.

#### Path Maintenance at Worksite

The paths flooded at the Slough with the recent rain. Logs are across several areas of the paths, too, which the interns will clear.

The grass is tall at the ComEd Seeded Prairie, and Dana reported that although the paths are passable, he is hopeful the paths will be mowed soon.

Pete Hahn discussed the stones where the steps go across the creek at the Nature Preserve are located. Rocks or specific stones were placed at the base of the steppingstones a few years' ago for protection; however, the rocks or stones occasionally get moved around. Pete usually puts them back in order. However, it appears others visiting the Preserve are making their own path across the creek with these protective stones.

A permanent protection scheme should be devised. The steppingstones and stairs are showing erosion. The erosion is getting closer and closer.

What is the best approach? Commissioners need to review the area and arrive at a solution. Perhaps larger stones should be installed to prevent easy removal. Agnes will also speak with Dino at the Park District.

#### Seed/Greenhouse Program

Agnes reported that over 20,000 native plants were successfully grown this season. Constant watering was in order due to the drought.

Unfortunately, a backorder exists on purchasing planting pots. Currently, getting the plants from the pots installed into the ground are a priority.

For the Slough Boardwalk Project, between 5,000 to 10,000 plants will be installed in that area through September.

Commissioners' Site Monitoring Reports

ComEd Seeded Prairie (Dana Sievertson)

The ComEd Seeded Prairie is a serious thing of beauty! It is teeming with birds, pollinators and butterflies. It is its own vibrant eco-community, a buzz everywhere you look. Gone are most of the invasives we were so used to battling year after year. It is very cool, and when Dana stands there in awe, he still has difficulty believing what we accomplished. Dana encouraged all to visit the prairie and see how everything is really popping. In two weeks, it will be an explosion of flowers and colors.

Currently, Monarda, Cup Plants, Common Milkweed, Gray-headed Cone Flower, Wild Senna, Fleabane, Rattlesnake Master and Brown-Eyed Susans are blooming.

Dana strongly feels that the prairie benefitted from the mowing Stantec accomplished on our behalf. Imagine what a solid burn and more would do.

We are all very appreciative of Pete Hahn's time and energy in visiting our sites to herbicide and keep on touch of eradicating invasives.

Heron Pond (John Kamysz)

John said that the single path trail is overgrown, and the main trail is mostly mowed. Prairie flowers are starting to bloom. Buckthorn resprouts are growing but will be a constant item to eradicate. Overall, Heron Pond looks good.

Hillcrest Lake (John Kamysz)

Please refer to Pollinator Park Update on pages 3 and 4 of these minutes.

Nature Preserve (Gary Morava) (Pete Hahn)

Pete toured the Nature Preserve on July 5, 2021 and found numerous plants in bloom.

The creek is a low level of water, again, and branches are clogging the creek. Erosion continues and is getting close to the stairway leading to the steppingstones.

The stones that Pete has used to prevent erosion at the steppingstones have been rearranged in the creek bed. Pete left them as he found them this time; in the past, Pete has placed the stones back at the base of the steppingstones.

Removal of the stones at the base of the steppingstones has happened often. It is harmless if they do not dam the flow of water.

Two of our large oak trees that were planted about four or five years ago may need iron or manganese as their leaves are yellowing. Perhaps the tree inventory survey conducted by the Park District may be helpful in determining the cause and provide a cure.

In summary, the Nature Preserve is full of native plants and looks so much better than before.

Upon departing, Pete noticed two families starting to walk and then sit in the Nature Preserve. It is very nice to see residents use and enjoy the Nature Preserve.

Remnant Prairie (Seth Marcus)

No current Monitoring Report provided.

Remnant Sedge Meadow (Jill Moskal)

Common Milkweed is growing in several areas of the Sedge Meadow, even in the Cattails.

Dudley's Rush and Spike Rush are present. In fact, the Sedge meadow has 15 different types of sedges (Carex), such as Bulrush, Soft-Stemmed Bulrush, Dark Green Bulrush and Nodding Bulrush.

Agnes felt a special workday in the evening could be planned to start collecting seeds of sedges at the Remnant Sedge Meadow.

Saint Alphonsus (Ed Madden)

Ed reported that the prairie at St. Al's is doing well overall with full growth throughout.

Ed said the height of the plants seem to be lower than what he remembers in past years, but this could definitely be attributed to the drought.

Ed said that he is no expert in plant identification; however, Ed feels the prairie less diverse and more monochromatic than he remembers. However, they may just be where the various plants are in their growth cycle, and he is only seeing a brief snapshot of it at the moment.

Slough (Agnes Wojnarski)

Agnes said that Michigan Lilies are blooming everywhere and in new places, as well, where we cleared off Elmhurst Road where the new trails were installed.

The Slough still has a lot of invasives, and it is a constant battle to eradicate the invasives.

Redwing Blackbirds are prolific in population this year. Redwing Blackbirds are aggressive birds and very successful at protecting their young. Our interns have begun wearing their bike helmets because of aggressive Redwing Blackbirds.

Ed asked what we may do to discourage the Redwing Blackbirds. Are we planting native plants that attract them? No. Agnes said that Redwing Blackbirds nest everywhere on the ground—in ditches, along the highway, in cattails, phragmites, shrubs, bushes, grasses.

Dana reported that either a bird virus or disease is sweeping up from Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio and killing birds, like Blue jays, Blackbirds, and Robins. Over 50 counties in Indiana have been affected. The virus or disease crusts the birds' eyes. Authorities have asked the population to take down their feeders and remove their bird baths. No one yet knows the cause.

Tully Park (Jill Moskal/Wendy Dewar)

Jill reported that Steward Wendy Dewar is very appreciative for our summer interns in attacking the Canadian Thistle at Tully Park.

Two new and exciting discoveries at Tully Park: The stand of sedges planted by Wendy and Jill have migrated downstream and are now well established on the south side of the creek to the east of the bridge. Secondly, the Tall Blue Bellflower that blooms biannually is beginning to bloom along the west side of the park by the former Wolf's house. Within the next week, it will be spectacular!

Other native plants in bloom are Rudbeckia, Penstemon, Monarda, Tall Coreopsis, Joe Pye Weed, Boneset, little white flowers (maybe asters?) and other yellow flowers that we do know the name.

Wendy has also sighted bees and butterflies at the park.

Also, along the edge of vegetation on the North side of the park by the Siemen's house are several mint plants. Therefore, if one needs mint to add to lemonade or tea, feel free to gather some mint.

PHNRC Treasurer's Report and Budget 2021-2022

John Kamysz received the current budget numbers from Peter Falcone or the city.

Our net operating budget for the PHNRC is \$14,261.00 for the year. We spent some of that already. As of the printing of the budget, it was down to \$13,621.90 left to spend, and we have a few outstanding orders to be placed.

The Slough Boardwalk Project is identified as the River Walk Project by the city on page 2 of our budget. The Slough Boardwalk Project budget is \$12,000, and \$4,500 is the current amount for the Pollinator Park Project.

ROW (Right of Way)

Dana reported that last week, Abigail Darby Lewis, the Conservation Tools Program Director in the Keller Science Action Center of The Field Museum. Abigail visited our sites two years' ago and was excited about our progress.

Abigail contacted Dana and requested adding our name to a Commission that is part of the Chicago Wilderness and other organizations. The Commission has been organized to study a city-wide right of way access for green corridors. They are exploring this possibility with transportation and utilities' spaces, specifically, ComEd, IDOT, Nicor Gas, MWRD or anyone that has land or right-of-way. They are seeking partial remnant prairies or land available for turning over.

Abigail sent Dana an invitation to attend the Zoom meeting two days later. Dana attended and completed the survey on what we do. We have been invited to be part of this new initiative as someone who is working with the ComEd ROW Access.

Dana stated this is an honor for our Commission. Also, the City and Park District may be part of it. This is a great opportunity to be involved.

The objective is to provide natural habitat incorporation over a large scale. The Commission received a \$2 million grant from the Donnelly Foundation, a large philanthropic organization, to conduct the initial study and look at the possibilities of either acquiring right-of-way access land or working in partnership with people who have ROW access.

The ComEd property that is associated with our strip of prairie travels through Arlington Heights, Prospect Heights, Wheeling and Mount Prospect. The land is 45 acres in Prospect Heights.

We received a list of names of people involved in the project, such as the University of Illinois. All names are important players.

We would not be assuming a new project, just be part of the conversation. We can offer how we approach natural area management and offer advice. Everything we do is embedded in residential neighborhoods. Most of these areas are not similar. We are unique in that situation and what it takes to work.; namely, Community engagement.

Dana will advise of more specifics as he learns of them.

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation

Jill provided notes from the following June City Council and May PHPD Board meetings:

**City Council of Prospect Heights, Illinois – June 14, 2021 Meeting**

Presentation: Police & Fire Commission – Annual Report presented by Chairperson Sharon Hoffman. The Police & Fire Commission met on May 26 for an in-person meeting. It has been an extended time because of the COVID Pandemic. Last met in May 2019. Conducted 20 regular meetings, eight special meetings along with eight executive sessions over the past 24 months.

Regarding the staffing level, the Police Department has 23 full-time Officers, two Part-Time Officers and three Full-Time civilian staff and six part-time non-sworn staff. Two civilian positions remain unfilled. Two Officers' positions are open. The average age of the officers is 30 years, and the average age of the Safety staff is 35 years.

In the year 2019-2020, two series of recruiting testing was conducted. A third set will be conducted over the summer with interviews held in the fall. The programming has been adjusted for youth, and a modified food drive was held.

Participated in the December Holiday Parade.

Scott Saewert was reappointed to the Chicago Executive Airport Board of Directors.

D. Court Harris as reappointed as Chairman of the Chicago Executive Airport Board of Directors.

No public comments were registered.

Independence Day Parade: Joe Wade reported that traffic control and safety at intersections are concerns for the Independence Day Parade to be held Saturday, July 3, 2021. The starting point will be the St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish parking lot. Start time is 9:30 a.m. The parade route is 1.5 miles with walk and/or ride in an automobile. The parade will conclude at 10:30 a.m. with no lunch and no after parade event at District 23 Betsey Ross school.

Peter Falcone reported that the Public Works Department held a shredding event at the Prospect Heights Metra Station on Saturday, June 12, 2021. Over 360 vehicles visited in a three-hour period.

Chief Zawlocki reported June 3 was Movie Night in the Park outreach. The Police and Fire Departments participated in a golf outing on June 10 with 107 golfers present.

Building and Development: Dan Peterson reported that last week was an active week. The Quigley Conor Commercial had a second possible tenant for warehouse use. Vacancies are present along Rand Road. Applications for zoning and building permits are high regarding home improvements. Dan is interviewing candidates for the retiring, current Assistant Director position.

Public Works: Mark Rosco reported that the road patching project is occurring.

Next City Council Meeting: The next meeting of the City Council will be held on Monday, June 28, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.

**City Council of Prospect Heights, Illinois – June 28, 2021 Meeting**

Chicago Executive Airport Monthly Update by Director Kiefer: All positive news. Fiscal condition of the airport: Revenues over budget for the month, and expenses under budget. Operations were up 25% from last month.

Approved the PR Firm of Serafin & Associates for filling the vacant Executive Director position. Three finalists are contending for this position. Interviews will be scheduled in the next few months.

Dollars for Scholars will be conducted on August 16; Rock and Run the Runway will be conducted on August 21; a joint meeting will be conducted on September 22; and the Customs Building Ribbon Cutting ceremony will be held September 23, 2021.

Treasurer's Report by Finance Director, Cheri Graefen: For the month ending May 31, 2021, 8% of the year having passed, all funds combined, the City's total revenues represent 9.7% of budget and the total expenses reflect 4.1% of budget. The year is cautiously up to a good start.

Live Council Meeting Meetings: The Governor has extended the emergency directive to do zoom meetings. Date to end is July 26, 2021. Therefore, City Council meetings will return to City Hall Chambers and safeguards will be added for safety and comfort of Council members. The July 12 City Council meeting will be via Zoom. The July 26 City Council meeting will be in person.

The seating arrangements will be 10 people on the dais instead of 18 people with 3.5 feet apart for every person. Staff will sit on the floor at tables facing the audience. All have been vaccinated. Vaccinated persons are noted as on the honor system. Those not vaccinated must be masked.

Residents are invited to attend the City Council meetings, but seating in City Chambers will be limited to between 15 and 20 people. Overflow audience will be seated in another conference room.

Airflow: Air quality is excellent by use of air purifiers.

City Council Meetings will be conducted Live on PHTV.

City Administrator Report provided by Joe Wade: Covid Vaccine Clinic is open on Sunday at the River Trails Park from 11:00am to 2:00 pm and sponsored by Osco Drug.

Public Works Report provided by Mark Roscoe: Over the last week, received rain after a drought condition. McDonald Creek drained well. No homes were impacted. Only one neighborhood impacted – Lancaster and Royal Court area. Cause: blocked pipe by a Styrofoam block. Mark encouraged residents to look at their culverts and keep them clear of obstructions. Mark said the Public Works' crew regularly tours our city looking for problems.

Deputy Clerk Report provided by Karen Schultheis: Independence Parade will be conducted on Saturday, July 3, 2021. Congressman Brad Schneider will be the Grand Marshall. The staging area is the St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish parking lot. The parade concludes at Betsey Ross Elementary School, 700 North Schoenbeck Road.

Greater Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry will be a topic for discussion at the next Workshop Meeting. A date has not yet been determined.

### **Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of May 25, 2021**

Administrative/Operational Summary - Executive Director—as submitted. Executive Director Christina Ferraro also commented the agreement regarding parking, access and the field usage has not yet started due to other projects staff is handling. She also commented that the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant has not been released for next year which may affect the East Wedgewood Park project and hopes this occurs soon.

Committees of the Board: GMR Feasibility Committee: Commissioners Ellen Avery and Betty Cloud reported the committee has met with staff and discussed adding the pool component to the GMRC Feasibility Study which would increase the project cost. The staff will move begin working with Williams Architects to gather input from the residents, stakeholders, and staff to create a conceptual plan and revisit the recreation center conceptual plan. This will occur over the summer and the board will receive a report in the fall.

New Business Process to Fill Board Vacancy: Commissioner Jones reviewed the process to fill the board vacancy: Resumes will be accepted through June 14, and candidates will be interviewed June 22, 2021.

The next meeting of the Prospect Heights Park District Board is June 22, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at Gary Morava Recreation Center.

### **Prospect Heights Park District – Board Meeting of June 22, 2021**

Friends of Tully Park attended the PHPD Board Meeting of June 22, 2021, to present comments on the proposed purchase of a module soccer field for Tully Park.

A total of 62 people were present either to speak or support the Friends of Tully Park, including Commissioners from the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission.

Twelve speakers outlined reasons to cover the many subjects and concerns from Friends of Tully Park community research, presenting pertinent information. Topics covers were:

Tully Park is 1.5 acres. Placement of the module soccer field in Tully Park provides less than one-half acre of green space. Tully Park regularly floods after a heavy rain event. Tully Park is a landlocked piece of land and is remote. How would restrooms, garbage, parking, and maintenance of the module soccer field be maintained? What is the impact to the neighborhood with loudspeakers, LED screens and digital screens?

Flooding occurs in Tully Park; therefore, it is not suitable for a constructed court. If installed, it will negatively impact surrounding neighbors' property.

Impromptu soccer games, softball games, frisbee throwing, dog park and simply enjoying a peaceful, open green space is how Tully Park is currently utilized.

Tully Park is valued more because of the native restoration work from the past four years. Bees, butterflies, and frogs have returned due to the positive habitat change.

The PHPD Master Plan of 2017, pages 53 and 54, outlines facilities in order of importance. Maintaining communities and neighborhood parks as green spaces is listed. Placing a modular soccer field in Tully Park is not consistent with the PHPD's Master Plan.

When Friends of Tully Park approached the PHPD Board in 2015 to save Tully Park from becoming a parking lot, the Board agreed that Tully Park would remain a park if the residents would convert the Park to a nature preserve. Residents and volunteers have worked over 6,000 volunteer hours in six years during bad times, cold weather, and muddy conditions to change the Park. The Board made a commitment to the residents. The residents have upheld their commitment.

Please keep the community involved in future planning for our parks.

Focus group results: Listen to the neighbors! Open space/nature preserve first, soccer last. Tom Black spoke with Danny, the Youth Pastor, for two hours and requested he be transparent and honest with the community and listen to residents' concerns; be a partner. To date, Danny has not contacted or spoke with residents.

Safety. Currently, there is no access for emergency vehicles to the park; soccer players crossing Euclid Avenue, a four-lane highway with the average speed limit of 45 mph. Danny, the Assistant Pastor proposing the donation of the module soccer field, anticipates 150 to 300 people per day. The Park cannot be adequately patrolled by Prospect Heights Police.

The Bridge Community Church held a Memorial Day party which attendance was large and caused noise pollution well into the night.

The intended audience are residents of the Boxwood neighborhood located in Mount Prospect. Euclid School and the River Trails Park District offer spaces to place the module soccer field which is closer to their neighborhood.

The PHPD gave the impression that they regard Tully Park differently. The Friends of Tully Park feel The Bridge Community Church is trying to get a foothold to acquire the Park. However, other more suitable places to place soccer exists, and the Friends of Tully Park enumerated these areas.

The sponsor's (Danny's) misleading Power Point as he referenced the community was enthusiastic and excited about supporting this project. Nothing is further from the truth. Danny did not speak with the community to obtain their thoughts on how they would be affected.

The sponsor (Danny) also is falsely advertising his project on social media. Nowhere is The Bridge Community Church mentioned. An informational flyer is only available in Spanish and has not been distributed in the Tully Park neighborhood.

Friends of Tully Park also spoke with the owner of Chic-Fil-A, and he was unaware of this franchise's involvement with the project.

Potential property devaluation is possible.

Solutions, alternate site locations and attractive nuisances were presented.

Summary: Friends of Tully Park felt a strong focus on the trust they felt when they worked with the Park District four years' ago when the Bridge Church expanded and attempted to purchase Tully Park to turn it into a parking lot with lights streaming into neighbor's backyards and through home windows at night.

Tim Jones of the PHPD Board said the young man approved the PHPD with his idea and that he has raised \$130,000. He never spoke about lighting and restrooms but mentioned that advertising would be his advertising. The PHPD Board has not made a commitment or formally had an agreement. There are many steps between now and then. Tim Jones encouraged the audience to view the Board's Agendas, which are posted 48 hours before a Board Meeting.

The PHPD Board plans to have more conversation and discussion on this Project.

Joe Wade, City Administrator, spoke with the PHPD Board about the property at 214 South Wheeling Road in Prospect Heights. Several years ago, the MWRD instituted a program to buy out flood prone properties. It is a competitive process with submission of an application for participation. Joe mentioned that Cook County is the size of Norway.

An application has been made to purchase the property at 214 South Wheeling Road, located east of Tully Park. This property has flooded six or more times with damage to the structure.

Points to work through are:

1. Obtain agreement with the MWRD and City.
2. Obtain two appraisals.
3. Acceptance by the owner of the property.
4. Revamp the flood line.

The MWRD valued the property at \$341,000. The MWRD would purchase the property for 85% of the sale price. Factoring in closing costs, legal fees, City Engineer time, demolition, etc., the cost to the City would be \$45,000. The Park District would have an out-of-pocket cost of 15% of the property price or about \$50,000.

The Code is to have the property as open space. Joe stated that the Park District is in the business of open space.

The City would work with the MWRD and the property owner. This is an opportunity to acquire additional land that is adjacent to Tully Park. Is the Park District interested? If not, the project would go back to the City, but Joe does not see the City keeping the property.

Placing a parking lot on this land is not feasible since it is prone to flooding and concrete does not absorb water. Having a parking lot constructed with an impervious surface must be investigated. However, the MWRD maintains the property would be open space with no structure.

The MWRD Program is designed to open space area that normally floods.

The PHPD maintenance crews utilize the ComEd right-of-way to get to Tully Park to cut the grass.

MWRD has provided a proposed schedule to the city. Appraisals would be accomplished in August and September 2021. If the homeowner opts to go forward, a closing date would be appointed, and demolition would begin. All told, this would be a six-to-nine-month project.

### **Next Meeting**

The next scheduled PHPD Board Meeting is Tuesday, July 27, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at the Gary Morava Recreation Center.

### **Announcements to the Public**

None.

### **Visitors' Comments**

No visitors were present to comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission is August 12, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the meeting. Therefore, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS  
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary