

**VILLAGE OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE
PARK COMMISSION
Village Hall Auditorium
9915 39th Avenue
Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin 53158
April 6, 2011
6:00 p.m.**

A regular meeting of the Pleasant Prairie Park Commission was held on Wednesday, April 6, 2011, 6:00 p.m. Present were Michealene Day, Glenn Christiansen, Monica Yuhas, Steven Kundert, Jim Bandura (Alternate #2) and Cindy Schwab (Alternate #1). Rita Christiansen, Troy Holm and William Mills were excused. Also present were Tom Shircel, Assistant Village Administrator; Jean Werbie-Harris, Community Development Director; John Steinbrink, Jr., Director of Public Works; and Ruth Mack-Stoner, Executive Secretary. Four citizens were present.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. MINUTES - MARCH 1, 2011**

Michealene Day:

In your packet we have minutes of March 1, 2011. If you've read the minutes are there any additions or corrections?

Monica Yuhas:

I'll make a motion to approve.

Steven Kundert:

Second.

Michealene Day:

All in favor?

Monica Yuhas moved to approve the Park Commission Meeting minutes of the March 1, 2011 meeting presented in their written form: Seconded by Steven Kundert. Motion carried 6-0.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Consider recommendation to the Village Board of Trustees to approve The Nature Conservancy Chiwaukee Prairie Land Management Agreement.**

Jean Werbie-Harris:

Madam Chairperson and members of the Park Commission, I have before you a staff memorandum and some handouts with respect to Chiwaukee Prairie Land Management Agreement between The Nature Conservancy and the Village of Pleasant Prairie. This agreement is approximately a five year agreement, four and a half, running from May 2011 through December of 2015.

The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to the preservation, protection, restoration and maintenance of the natural areas and ecological systems and the plant and animal species that they support for aesthetic, scientific, educational and public awareness purposes. The Conservancy is requesting a five year agreement with the Village to manage it's conservancy property in the Chiwaukee Prairie. A similar agreement was approved by the Park Commission in 2005.

As part of the larger management efforts in Chiwaukee Prairie, The Conservancy wishes to preserve and protect and maintain these natural features and ecological values of the Chiwaukee Prairie and to undertake some programs and activities such as biological and physical inventories, scientific research, educational field studies and vegetative management. And this would be on Village owned land in Chiwaukee Prairie.

As shown on the attachments and on the slide, the Village owns properties which are adjacent to The Conservancy's preserve that are located south of 116th Street and west of 1st Court. The referenced areas contain outstanding examples of prairie natural communities supporting plant and animal species that are rare in Wisconsin. Their goal is to manage and maintain the values of the Village's properties by the use of techniques and methods consistent with preservation and protection and restoration. Such ecological management techniques will include, but not limited to, cutting down brush and trees, especially non-native buckthorn, controlling invasive plants such as ground vetch, sweet clover, thistles and buckthorn by cutting or through the use of herbicides and completing prescribed burns and collecting seeds. They also may conduct research on the property.

This is a matter that was before the Park Commission last fall. I've taken it upon myself to work through this agreement with The Nature Conservancy, and the staff is recommending approval of the management agreement for that term to extend through December 2015.

Michealene Day:

Thank you. Any questions from the Commission? Hearing none, can we have a motion to approve the agreement?

Glenn Christiansen moved to recommend to the Village Board of Trustees the approval of The Nature Conservancy Chiwaukee Prairie Land Management Agreement: Seconded by Jim Bandura. Motion carried 6-0.

- b) Consider formation of a sub-committee to put together a proposal for the formation of Community Garden in the Village.**

Jean Werbie-Harris:

Madam Chairperson and members of the Park Commission, Village staff has put together a memorandum that you have before you that responds to and comments on a recent request and recent discussion that we've had with respect to creating a community garden in the Village of Pleasant Prairie. After doing some brief research, I learned that there's a lot more to know and to learn about creating a community garden than what we originally anticipated. And in order for us to be successful as the Village inputting together such a garden, I felt that it would be appropriate to invite some people who have some great extensive knowledge on community gardens, one of which is Barb Larson from the UW-Extension. We also have Kate Field with us, and she's also with our Recreation Commission. And, as you know, we still have Mr. Kim with us. He's the individual that had some interest in starting up a community garden. And then we had an Eagle Scout that also had some interest in trying to put this together for us.

Initially what I did as part of the staff memorandum and working with John was that we kind of looked at some of the other community gardens in the area, one of which is in Racine and is shown on the overhead. It gets into a lot of details, and there are a number of things that I don't think we even anticipated or considered initially when we started talking about a community garden. And maybe we need to establish some policies, procedures, have a sub-committee that actually looks at this in detail and consult with some experts as to what makes a good and successful community garden. We don't want a weed patch, and we want people to benefit and we want others to be the beneficiaries of the things that are grown at this community garden. And to maybe choose an area in the Village in the first instance that has a little bit more visibility and use education as part of bringing the whole process to light to the community.

One of the things I wanted to mention to Barb and Rose Skora was that they gave me copies of a document that was basically a 2011 Farmers Market Book, and it talks about all the freshly grown products in Kenosha County. We've gotten 500 of them from UW-

Extension and 400 of them are gone since the last Plan Commission meeting between the RecPlex, the Village hall and the other sites. I think we do have a real interest in the community to learn and to understand about gardening and to establish a community garden that could benefit not only the Village but the residents and those that have interest in it.

So with that I'd like to introduce Barb Larson. She's going to sit over there and introduce herself for the record, and she's going to talk a little bit about community gardens. And, again, we have an expert from our Rec Commission that works at Gateway to talk about it as well. And hopefully this will be educational for all of us.

Michealene Day:

Thank you. Welcome, Barb.

Barb Larson:

Thank you. And thank you for inviting me. I'm Barb Larson. I'm the horticulture educator with the University of Wisconsin Extension in Kenosha County. I've worked with community gardens for many years. I would encourage you to continue along the path in which you are headed which is to do some planning. The most successful community gardens that I've seen in 20 years of working with community gardens are the ones that, first of all, are led by the people that are going to be using the community garden, so it really should be a community garden, and then ones that are well planned. And so every community garden is very different, and the community members determine what that is and how they want to do it.

But there are several things to think about ahead of time, and one of the ones I actually shared and I think Ms. Werbie shared with you is a new publication from our soil specialist at the University of Wisconsin in Madison about developing a community garden and the concern about soil contaminants and how do you check for those things. So that's one of the first things we always do or recommend you do is have it done. That may not be as big an issue here in Pleasant Prairie as it is in some areas, but it's still something to think about.

So as you're looking at possible locations for community gardens, you want to do a long range site analysis of it, and that's more than how things have been used in the last five or ten years, but as far back as you possibly can. Was it farm field? Was it every an industrial site? All of those kinds of things become very important when you're looking at it.

Then there's the standard horticultural type things that we always think of the gardening things, what is the sun, what is the drainage on it? You certainly don't want someplace that you're going to have something where there's water backing up into it or possible

contamination from wetlands or flooding like we saw last year. We had a lot of vegetable gardens that became contaminated that were along the rivers because of flooding problems. So those are all additional site analysis kinds of things to do.

What most people immediately think about is doing soil testing and that also is important, and we recommend just a general soil test, and then a additional heavy metals test so that looks for lead and other kinds of contaminants in the soil. It's not so much a concern that the plants might take up those heavy metals, although that is an issue and a concern, but it's also that as people are working in the soil they can get that on their hands, get it into cuts and all of those kinds of things. So what we often think of is lead but, as I said, there's other kinds of heavy metals we think about, too. You may think, okay, this isn't a real problem. Well, think of leaded gas and sometimes there's still contamination along areas, so that's why that recommendation is there.

Depending on what the site analysis or the long-term history shows, some sites also have to be checked for volatile chemicals in it. Those, again, I wouldn't think that would be a problem here but that would be something else to think about. Then we go onto things like how is the garden going to be run? How is it going to be administered? What about liability? Are there general policies? Are there going to be rental fees? Is it open to whoever? So there's much of this is really a community development kind of thing once you get that much more than a horticultural type of thing.

Do you want raised beds? Who is going to till it? All of those types of issues? About water. Water access is the other major thing with community gardens. Would the Village choose to provide water access? Thick spigots, whatever? Would they instead look at cisterns, rain barrels, water collection kinds of things? So that's basically some of the things to think about.

I didn't bring a lot with me. The other thing is I said I didn't want to kill a lot of trees, so I did share with Ms. Werbie a publication from the Missouri Extension on the establishment of a community garden. And a lot of it has to do with the community development types of things and organizational types of things. I'd be happy to answer questions.

Monica Yuhas:

Barbara I have a couple. Regarding the soil test and the heavy metal soil test that you were talking about, how does that get performed, where does the testing take place and how long does it usually take to get results back?

Barb Larson:

A soil test is once you decide where your site is, depending on the size of the site and how many different as you look at it and we assess the site may require more than one

soil test, but a general soil test as you look at it, your section, you take samples, representative samples from various places in the area and the mix it up so that there's a composite sample. There are many soil testing labs. Usually what I recommend is that it's sent to the University of Wisconsin soil testing lab, and they will also test for heavy metals. The basic tests are about \$25 or \$30 per test so they're not extraordinarily expensive at all. And results usually within two weeks.

Jean Werbie-Harris:

Are there a lot of community gardens throughout Kenosha County right now, or are individual associations or subdivisions doing these? Or, are they found more in urban areas, or what can you tell us?

Barb Larson:

Community gardens can be anywhere. They do tend to be more in urban areas. Right now we don't have a lot in Kenosha. Most of the community gardens I'm aware of tend in association with churches and other groups like that. So it's usually only for their members or a little bit in the neighborhood. There is a group that has been trying to form a community garden in the City of Kenosha, and they've been struggling because of leadership. It is a major time commitment, so it's really important to have community leaders like Mr. Kim and others who really want to step into those leadership positions.

Michealene Day:

Isn't there one or there used to be one at the County building on Highway 45 and Highway 50?

Barb Larson:

There was. And that's where my office is, and there is a demonstration orchard there. There was a garden there that was used mostly for youth gardening kinds of project.

Michealene Day:

Okay. Driving there all the time I thought I saw something there. Any other questions for Ms. Larson?

Jean Werbie-Harris:

I guess what I wanted to mention is that as part of the staff comments that John and I put together we came up with almost 40 different questions, none of which I think we need to have answered this evening, but maybe it begs the question that we do need to do a little bit more research and talk to people who have been successful in putting these together to

make sure that we're going to be successful. My initial concept was to give a call to Kate Field who sits on our Recreation Commission and, again, is working with Gateway in the Horticulture Department study area. I'd like to introduce her and have her address community gardens and to see how we could work together and kind of do some type of collaborative between the Park Commission and the Rec Commission that could impact us Village wide and get us towards the goal of eventually creating a community garden.

Kate Field:

Hi, I'm Kate Field.

Michealene Day:

Welcome.

Kate Field:

Thank you. I really appreciate Barb coming here tonight and talking about all this, but I hope she hasn't discouraged you and made it sound like all this because I'm ready to jump in. So I'm glad she set the stage of make some plans. I would say even just start small. We don't have to do something this grandiose to begin with. We can start with something small. I think a lot of the concerns with lead in the soil and soil safety has to do with eating things. But what about flowers? Anybody like flowers? Just me? So I'm always looking at the front of the RecPlex and thinking, man, we could grow some great flowers and things right there. Just start small in a small little patch. There's some containers. We could do some things with growing things in containers and then you're not worrying about soil and it's kind of contained and it's really simple.

It would be nice to have some classes run through the RecPlex whether it's for adults or for children or for seniors. There's an opportunity there to work with the RecPlex and make it into a program session. And then you have that structure around it there. At Gateway I teach horticulture there, landscaping and greenhouse is kind of my specialty. And we also are in the process of installing an urban farm. So we're doing a lot with raised beds and vegetable growing with students there. We work a lot with Harborside. I think Kenosha Unified's whole system is trying to put in gardens at different schools so they're trying to get that organized. So there's definitely strong demand and interest for this kind of activity in the community.

Michealene Day:

Okay, thank you. Any questions for Ms. Field?

Jean Werbie-Harris:

The first comment is Harborside is actually working in the Village of Pleasant Prairie.

And they've taken over Hansen Greenhouses on 104th Street, and so we just issued some permits to them, and they'll be working with students in order to establish planting beds and a number of things there that they eventually will want to harvest after they've grown and sell them at the farmer's market, the farmer's market in downtown Kenosha. And at some point we hope that that farmer's market will expand out to the RecPlex area as well. So it sounds like this is kind of a natural thing for us out here in Pleasant Prairie with respect to there's genuine interest and there are needs. I think people would be interested probably in taking some of those gardening classes and getting this volunteer base that we really need to establish in order to be successful wherever we decide to put the community garden. Maybe we start at the first instance out at the RecPlex and then we move to a larger plan at Ingram Park when that's a little bit more established within the year.

But I would also like to ask if Mr. Kim would like to make any comments or the Eagle Scout that's present with his family. If they would like to make any comments or what their thoughts are with respect to it.

Michealene Day:

Young man, I'm sorry I didn't catch your name and I apologize it. Would you like to come up and talk to us and tell us what your thoughts were with this community center or community park? No, okay. One of the things we were thinking of doing tonight was establishing a sub-committee to help investigate the possibility of doing a community garden. Would you be willing to sit on that committee and help us plan this?

Josh Dupuis:

Yes.

Michealene Day:

Okay, but we do need your name because I don't know it.

Jean Werbie-Harris:

Your name and address for the record.

Josh Dupuis:

Josh Dupuis.

Michealene Day:

And could you spell your last name for us?

Josh Dupuis:

D-U-P-U-I-S.

Michealene Day:

And your address?

Josh Dupuis:

2823 52nd Ave.

Michealene Day:

52nd Avenue, thank you. Did we get that? Okay. Yes, sir?

Patrick Upton:

I'm not his father. I was just going to ask him when he first joined Boy Scouts . . . advise him on his Eagle Scout project. I'm also on the District Committee for Eagle Scouts.

Michealene Day:

Could we have your name and address, please?

Patrick Upton:

I'm Patrick Upton, U-P-T-O-N, at 5235 39th Avenue. Just an overview of this. I advised three or four kids in Pleasant Prairie on other Eagle Scout projects that we've done, and I kind of know how we kind of do things and everything. For this committee to understand what an Eagle Scout project is, it's a project worthy of an Eagle Scout. Now, some of these projects like Ms. Field has said are just huge. That would be out of the question. This is a project that he would probably do in the course of maybe two or three weekends. You know what I mean? We worked with Keep Kenosha Beautiful. We've done projects like this as well where we've done plantings, done gardens and things like that. And it's a mutual thing of him coming up with an idea, you guys coming up with an idea and you guys coming together with the thing. He also would do a lot of the fundraising. And where Pleasant Prairie could come in is they could donate soil, wood chips and things like that.

But a lot of the things that get done with this project are all done by him. It's all done by him. I'm just here to advise him. And he would get boys to come out and help. If you guys have people in the community and you guys want to come and help. And we've

also done stuff with Chiwaukee Prairie and things like that. But I just want you guys to understand what an Eagle Scout project is. It's for him—he's going to do all the work. So it's him working with you guys and coming up with a plan and him fulfilling the plan to make you happy with what you want him to do. That gives you a better idea of what you should expect from him and what he should expect from you.

Barb Larson:

I actually worked with an Eagle Scout last year, and he built raised beds at the Kenosha Achievement Center. So I think maybe they're looking for that kind of a project. So once a community garden or an area would be decided on that could a project they might do or similar.

Michealene Day:

Okay, Mr. Kim, did you have any comments?

Mike Kim:

No, I'm just really glad that we've had these comments.

Jean Werbie-Harris:

Mr. Kim, come up to the microphone.

Mike Kim:

Mike Kim, 12030 28th Avenue. I just want to say that I'm really glad that the Village is taking this up. I did do some research on different community gardens in Illinois predominantly because that's where I work. So I do have some answers for the many questions that Jean and John had. So I could supply those answers or my thoughts on what could be done.

Michealene Day:

Mr. Kim, would you be willing to serve on this sub-committee as well?

Mike Kim:

Oh, yeah, I'm very interested in doing that.

Michealene Day:

Okay, thank you. This is a great project. I think it would be wonderful for the Village if

we can get this going. I'm very grateful that Barb and Kate came and helped us and explained some of the issues and problems, liability and things like that we never even thought of. And staff came through with 42 questions but I'm sure there's a bazillion more to come up with. I would really like to form some kind of a sub-committee this evening if we could get it started and work with staff and get community ideas. I'm going to impose on Ms. Field. Would you be willing to serve on the sub-committee?

Kate Field:

Certainly.

Michealene Day:

And, Barb, would you want to serve—

Barb Larson:

Yes.

Michealene Day:

Or would you like to advise?

Barb Larson:

I would be happy to.

Michealene Day:

We've got two. Cindy, you work in the landscaping area, right?

Cindy Schwab:

Yes.

Michealene Day:

Would this be something you'd like to work on?

Cindy Schwab:

Definitely.

Michealene Day:

I'm getting volunteers all over the place. Anyone else on the Park Commission that would like to serve on the sub-committee?

Monica Yuhas:

I would. Since I've been in discussion with Mr. Kim from day one on it I'd like to follow it through.

Michealene Day:

Okay, we have five with the student advisor would be six. Would that be sufficient to get us going, Ms. Werbie?

Jean Werbie-Harris:

Sure.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

I would also like to volunteer for it as I'm in charge of the parks and Director of Public Works. I have mentored about half a dozen Eagle Scouts or through their badge and I'm familiar also. My staff has a lot of the tools and requirements for tilling the land, providing the labor and soil stuff like that. So I would probably have myself along with my Park Foreman Kevin Myers who does have a degree in horticulture who would be very active probably out in the field area assisting everyone also. So I think that's the beginnings of a great team without a doubt.

Michealene Day:

Great. I did not mean to take anything away from anyone else if anyone else would like to be on the subcommittee it would be great. The more the merrier, and I did not mean to say it's closed without hearing anybody else if they would like to help. I just knew that Cindy was in the landscaping so I just grabbed her right away. But if anyone else would like to help volunteer we'd love it. Okay, I think we have a pretty good team going on. Did anyone else want to make any comments about this?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

One of the things I would like to do I guess since we're all very new with each other, maybe at the end of the meeting we'll get together and exchange phone numbers, proper spellings of names and e-mails and I can head up a couple of options of dates and at least have a list of everyone on the committee so we're all familiar with each other and we do have a way to contact each other.

Michealene Day:

Terrific.

- c) **Consider and schedule a date for the Park Commission to tour park and open spaces in the Village.**

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Madam Chair and the rest of the Park Commission, we have talked for several months or probably even going on over a year now about taking a tour of some of our Village parks. Some of our parks are very accessible to many people as in Prairie Springs Parks. Some of our smaller parks people really just don't get there unless they are local at that park. A couple years ago we did go through the development of our Park and Open Space Plan, almost five years ago. Since that time we have gone through and acquired land and began some of the grading on some of our newer parks as in the Village Green Park on 165, Tobin Creek Park and some different areas like that.

We have gone through and we have built a bridge across one of the tributaries along with assistance of the Tremper High School construction project, if you'd like to take a visit out there. And also some of the different sites that we're looking at for our future Park and Open Space Plan update which you guys will be receiving whatever bids do come in within the next month. So we can either go through staff and provide maps and have people go out independently, or we can try to structure a date when we can maybe use one of the Village vehicles or bus or something like that and make a tour, or a combination of both depending on everyone's availability.

Michealene Day:

It would be my opinion that we should do it as a group, because you would be able to point out the pluses and minuses and ideas. I think it would be better that everyone has a different point of view and sees different things. I think it would be good to go as a group.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

And I would be happy to do that. I guess if we decide to do it before a Park Commission meeting, directly after a Park Commission meeting if we do have a small agenda. It's still light until almost eight o'clock in May, we may have some time. Or, if you'd rather do it on a weekend, on a Saturday or a Sunday I can definitely make myself available.

Michealene Day:

I think I would like to do it before a Park Commission meeting, but I don't know what the rest of everyone feels.

Jim Bandura:

That may be difficult for the people that are working.

Monica Yuhas:

I would like to keep it on the night that we meet if we could do it at six o'clock.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

It's probably going to take, depending on how many sites or if we visit all the sites, it probably would take a good hour and a half I'm guessing.

Monica Yuhas:

So if we were to start by six fifteen we'd have plenty of daylight to see everything.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We could definitely be done before it's dark out. Yes, you are correct.

Michealene Day:

So we would have it on a night that we would have a meeting. We would probably have to publish that we're not going to have a formal meeting.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We could still have a formal meeting depending on how long the agenda is.

Michealene Day:

But it would start later.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

That's correct, it would start right after the meeting. So if we have an agenda that's over by twenty after six or six thirty we still have enough time to go through. And if we need to structure it over May and June potentially depending on how it works out we'll take as many as we need to go through and do it. Because there may be people that are absent on one date that would like to go and not others, something like that.

Michealene Day:

Since you actually set up our agendas, you and Ruth, John you don't, Ruth does it.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

You are correct. We can actually have that right after our meeting in May. We can go through and structure it. I'll try to make the route as efficient as possible. If you guys would like to see all the parks including like Mompers Woods and things like that we can probably go through and hit them. Or, we can just break it up and do it over a couple months. I'm not saying we have to do it all at one time either. Even if every quarter we go out and take a field trip and visit a couple sites and kind of walk through the areas versus doing a drive by.

Michealene Day:

Why don't we plan on like an hour and a half, and then if we don't see what we need to see we can plan on the next time.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Alright. Maybe what I'll do is I'll structure the field trip as any sites that could be potentially bad mosquito sites later in the summer we'll hit those right away in May. And the other sites that are a little bit more open and less mosquito prone we can hit those in June and July.

Michealene Day:

Why don't you suggest what we should wear because we don't want to leave—some of us tend to wear high heels and that would not be a good thing to go do.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Alright, I would definitely recommend blue jeans and tennis shoes. Just regular street clothes that you would wear around the house on a weekend. And we'll plan on maybe going down to the bridge at Prairie Springs Park and maybe down by Mompers Woods and viewing the three sites which will be a part of the Park and Open Space plan update. So it's kind of fresh in your mind when we talk about it when we start that project in June. So I will arrange for our transportation and we will go from there then right after the Park Commission meeting in May.

Michealene Day:

Terrific.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Michealene Day:

You're welcome. Any other questions? Any Commissioners comments?

6. ADJOURN

Monica Yuhás moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Steven Kundert. Motion carried 6-0.