

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 13, 2025 6:00 P.M.

City Council Conference Room 2A

1. Call to Order: 6:00 PM by Sarah McConnell

2. Roll Call. The following members were present: Sarah McConnell, Jill Rodriguez, Kelley Happ, Karen Gallo, Victoria Ross, Beverly Leonard and Alderperson JaNelle Powers.

3. Approval of Avian Committee meeting minutes

Rodriguez made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 8 meeting, seconded by Ross and passed.

4. Visitors and Comments from the Public:

Betty Volquardsen, our new member-to-be and Alderperson Cindy Yager were in attendance. Volquardsen is waiting for official appointment by the Mayor and Council.

5. Annual Election of Officers

Sarah McConnell was re-elected as president, following a motion by Rodriguez and seconded by Happ. Kelley Happ was re-elected as secretary; votes were unanimous.

6. Review of City Ordinances pertaining to the Avian Committee

The Committee agreed to change the reference on International Migratory Bird Day programs to take out the specific date of May 17 and replace with “celebrate the event annually.” We committed to being a Bird City member every year. We also agreed to review this ordinance annually.

The Avian Committee would also like to pursue the goal of making Lake Geneva a Dark Skies community. Alderperson Powers suggested that we work with the Planning and Zoning Committee. Also, she suggested we present the concept at the COW meeting on June 2. Happ agreed to get information on Dark Skies; Ross agreed to present it at the COW meeting. McConnell will send a brief plan to Alderperson Fesenmaier before the committee meeting.

7. Update from City Council

Alderperson Powers reported that there is a new appointment to the Cemetery Board and ongoing talks about the dredging project. Yager further commented that the Piers and Harbors Committee is still discussing the dredging project: the Geneva Lake Level Association is concerned about a complete inspection of the dam, which has not been done in years. The GLLA, in conjunction with other communities around the lake may help pay for this. The city’s dredging plan will be on hold until more is decided, possibly this fall and the city’s piers will not be installed at this time.

Yager reported that the city has officially hired our interim administrator, Dave DeAngeles, to the position of City Administrator. He has been working as the interim for the past year but will officially start May 31.

A short discussion of the “Pink the Lake” breast cancer fundraiser followed, with a question about the planned route and if it is along the lakefront, do they have permission use private property. Powers will follow up. Permits were issued for other events in the city this summer.

8. Budget Update and 2025 Financial Review:

Rodriguez reported there will be a bill for printing the birding backpack inserts. Other upcoming expenses will include printouts, art supplies and incidentals for the May 17 event and straw for the Martin houses.

9. Birdwatching Backpacks for the City of Lake Geneva

Rodriguez is finalizing printed materials and has requested help in assembling 10 birdwatching backpacks – tentative plan are to meet next week. There are two confirmed requests for backpacks -The Cove and The

Lodge - also VISIT Lake Geneva was interested. She suggested meeting with managers of other hotels when we have the product to display. These packs will be limited to hotels in the Lake Geneva area.

9. Climate Change Topics and Updates

- **World Migratory Bird Day Activities**

The Avian Committee will host a special World Migratory Bird Day speaker in the Smith Reading Room from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm on Saturday, May 17 at the library - Ross confirmed that we are all set to go. McConnell will welcome the guests and make the introduction. Volquardsen will speak about backyard plants that benefit birds. Library staff will read a book to children either outside if weather permits or inside. There will be bird houses for children to paint, as well as snacks. Leonard and Gallo will give tours of the bird houses if weather permits. Happ will photograph the event.

- **EV Chargers**

No updates. The new Administrator and/or the Plan Commission may work on this issue.

- Alliant Energy (Wisconsin Power and Light) is aware of our Swift Night Out annual event and will accommodate our plans as they expand services next to the Geneva Lake Museum

10. Purple Martin House Update

The Purple Martins have arrived and are busy building nests with twigs and mud. Some sparrows are also beginning to eye the houses for their nests, and our house watch volunteers are prepared to remove sparrow nests if necessary.

11. Next Meeting:

The Avian Committee agreed that their next meeting will be moved one week earlier than usual because of members' busy schedules. The meeting will be held on **Tuesday June 3 at 6 pm in Conference Room 2 A**. In addition, Yager announced the date of Wednesday, August 6 for the Committee's annual boat party.

12. Future Agenda Items

- Update from City Council
- Budget Update
- Hotel Birding Backpacks Update
- Climate Change Topics/Updates
 - EV Chargers in Lake Geneva
- Purple Martin House updates
- Swift Night Out plans
- Other
- Next meeting Date and Time

12: Adjournment:

Happ moved to adjourn, seconded by Ross and approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, 5/21/2025

Kelley Happ