

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Minutes

Tuesday, October 14, 2025 6 p.m.

Lake Geneva City Hall; Conference Room 2A

Members: President – Sarah McConnell, Secretary – Kelley Happ, Jill Rodriguez, Beverly Leonard, Karen Gallo, Victoria Ross and Alderperson JaNelle Powers

1. Call to Order: 6:03 p.m. by Sarah McConnell

2. Roll Call. The following members were present: Sarah McConnell, Victoria Ross and Karen Gallo. Happ arrived at 6:20. Jill Rodriguez, Beverly Leonard and Alderperson JaNelle Powers were excused

Others present: Betty Volquardsen and David Winger

3. Approval of minutes from September 9 and the Special Meeting September 17, 2025

Motion by Ross to approve both minutes, second by Gallo.

Voice vote approved, motion carried.

4. Visitors and Comments from the Public:

5. Financial Review and 2026 Budget Update:

6. Discussion/Recommendation regarding the proposed revisions to Sec. 98-707 Exterior Lighting Standards of the City of Lake Geneva’s Municipal code be sent to the Building & Zoning director for consideration and adoption by the City of Lake Geneva

Motion by Ross and second by Gallo to move item 6 to item 11.

Voice Vote approved.

7. Discussion/Update Regarding Swift Night Out

It was pointed out that our SNO event is usually held on the first Thursday in September. Next year it would fall on the day before the Labor Day weekend and there may be too many activities going on that weekend.

Motion by Ross, second by Gallo, to move the 2026 SNO event one week later, to September 10. After a brief discussion the committee agreed to check availability of location, and activities that could interfere with the change. The item will be moved to next month’s agenda.

8. Discussion/Update Regarding Bird City Application:

Ross reported progress on the application and that she will present a draft at the December meeting.

9. Discussion/Update Regarding Hotel Birding Backpacks

McConnell brought a backpack to the Fairfield Hotel and reported they were very excited to be included.

Questions remain about how the hotels will keep track of the materials and brochures.

10. Discussion Regarding Holiday Tree at Geneva Lake Museum

Tree decorating is November 18 and 19 at the museum. We will meet at 10 am Thursday at the Geneva Lake Museum to decorate the Avian Tree. Materials are at Rodriguez’s house.

6. Discussion/Recommendation regarding the proposed revisions to Sec. 98-707 Exterior Lighting Standards of the City of Lake Geneva’s Municipal code be sent to the Building & Zoning director for consideration and adoption by the City of Lake Geneva

Ross met with Building and Zoning Director Renee Hanlon to discuss replacing Lake Geneva’s current lighting ordinance section relating to Dark Skies with the Dark Skies organization’s recommended wording. If the City Council passes the changed ordinance we can be certified as a Dark Skies community. This would replace the exterior lighting portion of our code with the Dark Skies recommended ordinance. We will

redline the city's current ordinance and submit the new wording to Hanlon. She will include our presentation at the December 15 Planning Committee meeting. Dr. Amanda Bauer, the Deputy Director of Science & Education at Yerkes and Adam McCulloch, Education and Outreach Manager of GLAS (Geneva Lake Astrophysics and STEAM) also plan to attend the December 15 Planning meeting to talk about the importance of dark skies.

In a discussion about enforcement of such an ordinance, it was suggested that the Village of Williams Bay's ordinance and enforcement policies could be used as a template. It was further decided to leave in the section about private action.

Motion: Ross moved that the Avian Committee send to the Building and Zoning Director a request that the wording of Sec. 98-707 of the City's Municipal Code be replaced in full with the attached wording recommended by DarkSkies.org. The motion was seconded by Happ

Vote: The vote passed unanimously.

Ross will submit the application for zoning text amendment

11. Discussion/Recommendation Regarding Climate Change Topics and Projects

No discussion at this time

12. Discussion Regarding Purple Martin Houses and other Birding Projects

Gallo reported that all the Purple Martin houses and gourds have been power washed/cleaned, supplied with clean nesting material and are ready for winter

13. Discussion/Recommendation Regarding Partnerships and Grants

The Bird City/White Pelican Farm grant was submitted – we should hear by early November if we are successful. The Avian committee has \$500 we can dedicate to this project. Working with the Hillmoor Commission, the Friends of Hillmoor and the Geneva Lake Conservancy, we have a potential site in mind along the stream bed near Route 50. Next steps about selecting and preparing the site will be taken if we receive the grant. Winger reported there is an RFP for Zone 4.

14. Discussion/Projects Regarding Local Parks and Hillmoor Property

See discussion above

15. Discussion/Projects Relating to Educational Mission

No discussion

16. Next Meeting Date and Time

The next Avian meeting will be held on **Tuesday November 11 at 6 pm in Conference Room 2 A.**

17. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Ross, second by Happ.

Voice vote carried at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Kelley Happ

Secretary, Avian Committee