



City of Lake Geneva, 626 Geneva St, Lake Geneva, WI 53147-262.248.3673-www.cityoflakegeneva.gov

Avian Committee Agenda
Tuesday, June 9, 2026 - 6:00 PM
Lake Geneva City Hall; Conference Room 2A (2nd Floor)

Members:

President: Sarah McConnell

Beverly Leonard, Jill Rodriguez, Karen Gallo, Victoria Ross, Kelley Happ, and Alderperson Linda Frame

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of the minutes from May 12, 2026
4. Comments from the public limited to 5 minutes, limited to items on this agenda
5. Review Financial Reports
6. Discussion/Recommendation regarding Policy and Ordinance Initiatives
 - a. Exterior Lighting Standards/Dark Sky Ordinance
 - b. Climate related topics pertaining to birds
7. Discussion/Recommendation regarding Annual Events and Applications
 - a. Swift Night Out
 - b. Avian Educational Activities
8. Discussion/Recommendation regarding Projects and Partnerships
 - a. Hotel Birding Backpacks
 - b. Purple Martin/Kestrel houses
 - c. Native Plant Grant Project
9. Adjournment

A quorum of the Council may be present; however, no official Council action will be taken.
Requests from persons with disabilities who need assistance to participate in this meeting should be made to the City Clerk's office in advance
so that the appropriate accommodations can be made.

Avian Committee Minutes
Tuesday, May 12, 2026 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 Linda Frame

1. Call to Order: 6:00 p.m. by Sarah McConnell

2. Roll Call. The following members were present: Sarah McConnell, Kelley Happ, Jill Rodriguez, Victoria Ross, Beverly Leonard and Alderperson Linda Frame. Karen Gallo was excused.
Others present: David Winger; Betty Volquardsen

3. Approval of minutes from April 14, 2026

Motion: Ross moved to accept the minutes, second by Rodriguez

Voice Vote: Minutes approved

4. Comments from the Public:

Volquardsen commented on the Dark Skies project, suggesting the committee make a side-by-side comparison to help educate the public on the changes the committee is proposing. She also suggested we use the most restricting language applicable and include standards and enforcement in our proposal.

5. Annual Election of Officers:

Motion: McConnell was nominated to serve as chair for the coming year by Rodriguez, second by Leonard.

Vote: Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote

Motion: Happ was nominated by McConnell to serve as secretary; second by Rodriguez.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously by voice vote

6. Review of City Ordinances pertaining to the Avian Committee

Motion: Ross moved that the Committee meet on the following dates for the Committee Year 2026-2027: 06/09/26; 07/14/26; 08/11/26; 09/08/26; 10/13/26; 02/09/27; 03/09/27; 04/13/27 and 05/11/27. The motion was seconded by Rodriguez.

Voice Vote: unanimous

7. Financial Report Review:

There were no new expenses for April. Rodriguez requested that we verify that our available funds including our carryover from last year. We have not yet received this report.

Ross will be submitting reimbursement request for materials.

Motion: Rodriguez moved to accept the Financial Report. Second by Ross.

Vote: Approved unanimously

8. Discussion/Recommendations regarding Policy and Ordinance Initiatives:

a. Exterior Lighting Standards/Dark Sky Ordinance.

Motion: Ross moved that the Committee ask for a continuance of the May 18, 2026 Public Hearing on Text Amendment 98-707 so the Committee can address the Staff Recommendations provided on 05/05/26.

The motion was seconded by Rodriguez

Discussion: Ross wants to map the differences in the current ordinance and what the Committee proposes to change, and to postpone the presentation until next month's Plan Commission meeting in June. It is important to Ross that the changes apply to public property as well. She will prepare a new recommendation, based on feedback. Winger will help with the new recommendation.

Voice Vote: passed four aye, one nay. Motion passed.

b: Climate Related Topics: Discussion

It was recommended that we be more specific on our agendas about topics and whether they are recommendations or discussions.

9. Annual Events and Applications: Discussion/Action/Reports

a. Swift Night Out:

Date is Thursday, September 10, 2026 at Geneva Lake Museum.

JoJo's will bring the food truck, beginning at 5 pm; Community Bank will be asked to provide the ice cream truck as per last year.

The Audubon program will begin at 6 pm.

b. Bird City Application: Lake Geneva was awarded the High Flyer status on May 8. Thanks to Ross for all her hard work in preparing and updating the application.

c. World Migratory Bird Day Report/Action: Tuesday@2 Talk at the Geneva Lake Museum was held on May 12. An excellent talk by Carol Elkins of the Geneva Lake Conservancy and Adam McCulloch of GLAS helped us educate the public about bird migration and what we all can do to help. At least 50 people were in attendance. Thanks to the Geneva Lake Museum for being so accommodating. Happ will send a report and photos to Ross for next year's Bird City application.

8. Projects and Partnerships: Report/Action:

a. Hotel Birding Backpacks: Rodriguez submitted the final report to Tourism about the Hotel Birding Backpack project and how we continue to support and market it. We discussed the need for a follow-up survey

b. Purple Martin/Kestrel houses: Purple Martins have returned to Lake Geneva, as have the mayflies, so there is plenty of food. The cold/hot pattern in early spring seemed to be hard on our returning birds – not enough bugs so some of the Martins may have starved. Leonard reported that there are 9 houses, including the gourds, but the most activity is at the “beach house.” She also reported that the cables with locks will be changed out. Leonard welcomed some fabulous new volunteers, as well as thanked the returning ones.

Kestrel House – Happ has purchased and will provide the Kestrel house pole to Public Works, who will set it in the ground. Then the rest of the structure will be constructed by a few volunteers

C. Native Plant Grant Project:

Action: McConnell, Leonard and Volquardsen will travel to the White Pelican Farm Friday 5/15 to pick up plants. Members will remove plastic weed cover, apply newspaper and mulch (150 square feet – 25' x 6' plot) on May 18 at 10 am

9. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by McConnell, seconded by Rodriguez

Voice vote carried at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Kelley Happ

Secretary, Avian Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Avian Committee Members
FROM: Victoria Ross
DATE: June 2, 2026
RE: Exterior Lighting Standards Revisions Update

The comments received from Staff have been put into a chart showing “Original Text,” “Proposed Text,” “Staff Comments,” and “Committee Recommendations.”

Staff Comments regarding “Outdoor Lighting Requirements,” “Residential Use,” and “Non-Residential Use” have been sent to Adam McCulloch for input. Once his comments are received, I will bring those to the Committee for review.

Attached are all remaining items for review. The comments in the “Committee Recommendations” column reflect only my thoughts as a starting point for our discussion. In my opinion, we need to strike a balance between maintaining the integrity of the Dark Sky initiative and what will be acceptable to the City for enforcement.

Original Text	Proposed Text	Staff Comments 05.26	Committee Recommendations/Comments
<p>(1) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to regulate the spillover of light and glare on operators of motor vehicles, pedestrians, and land uses in the vicinity of a light source in order to promote traffic safety and prevent the creation of nuisances. A further purpose of this section is to regulate outdoor night lighting fixtures to preserve and enhance the area's dark sky while promoting safety, conserving energy, and preserving the environment for astronomy and to reduce collisions and save birds lives during spring and fall. [Ord. No. 14-12]</p>	<p>Purpose This outdoor lighting standard is intended to protect the health and welfare of all residents within the City of Lake Geneva, enhance its character and quality of life, prevent inappropriate and poorly installed outdoor lighting, reduce lighting conflicts between property owners, prevent the increase of potentially harmful sky glow, and preserve the naturally dark sky for the benefit of residents, visitors, wildlife, and the environment. The <i>Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting</i> will guide the City of Lake Geneva's outdoor lighting decisions to reduce Artificial Light at Night (ALAN) produced by inefficient or unnecessary outdoor lighting. This will preserve and enhance the area's dark sky while promoting safety, conserving energy, and preserving the environment for astronomy and reduce collisions and save birds' lives during spring and fall.</p>	<p><i>The Five Principals for responsible Outdoor Lighting</i> must be properly referenced and added as an addendum to the Zoning Ordinance if it is to be used as a guide for decision making. What is the source of this material?</p>	<p>In the Sec 4.0 Definitions, the Five Principles of Lighting are defined, and the sources cited.</p> <p>Source 1: The Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) is a non-profit, technical organization founded in 1906 that serves as the recognized authority on lighting science and engineering in North America.</p> <p>Source 2: DarkSky International (formerly the International Dark-Sky Association) is a U.S.-based non-profit organization founded in 1988 to combat light pollution and protect the nighttime environment.</p> <p>What exactly is being requested of the Committee?</p> <p>-----TEXT-----</p> <p>4.0.H. Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting: Co-authored and published by DarkSky International and the Illuminating Engineering Society: 1) Use light only if needed; 2) distribute light only where it is needed; 3) use light that is no brighter than needed; 4) control light so it is on only when needed; and 5) use warmer color light when possible.</p>

Original Text	Proposed Text	Staff Comments 05.26	Committee Recommendations/Comments
<p>1.2. Applicability A. The requirements of this section apply to all private exterior lighting within the jurisdiction of this chapter, except for lighting within public rights of way and/or lighting located on public property.</p>	<p>1.2. Applicability. A. This standard applies to all sources of outdoor lighting installed or replaced within the City of Lake Geneva after [enactment date]. This includes, but is not limited to, newly permitted development and construction projects involving homes, dwellings, signage, billboards, buildings, facilities, properties, landscape, parking lots, hardscape, non-habitable structures, and monuments.</p>	<p>A. Staff would like to make clear an exception for public properties from these standards.</p>	<p>The Committee does NOT support this recommendation. There is no reason the City itself should be exempt from the standards it expects the residents to abide by. The City needs to be a leader. Additionally, the City is not required to make any changes to current structures. Only when building new structures, or upgrading current structures, would compliance come in to play.</p>

Original Text	Proposed Text	Staff Comments 05.26	Committee Recommendations/Comments
<p>4.h. Nonconforming lighting. All lighting fixtures existing prior to the effective date of this chapter shall be considered as legal conforming structures, (see Section 98-207). However, such nonconforming fixtures are encouraged to be extinguished by 11:00 p.m. All replacement fixtures shall fully comply with the requirements of this section.</p>	<p>1.2. Applicability</p> <p>B. Existing outdoor lighting lawfully installed prior to [date] and not meeting the requirements of this standard shall be considered legal and repairable but non-conforming. All non-conforming <i>Luminaires</i> may continue to be used and maintained until one of the following occurs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A determination by the Building & Zoning Director that an outdoor light source constitutes a hazard to public safety or constitutes a nuisance. 	<p>B. Staff has a concern with the applicability of this requirement. The ordinance must provide some guidance to the Director in making that decision. This language gives very broad discretion to the Director.</p>	<p>The Committee is comfortable changing the Proposed wording of 1.2.B to the language of the Original Ordinance text of 4.h. (Column 1)</p>

Original Text	Proposed Text	Staff Comments 05.26	Committee Recommendations/Comments
No Exemption for State or Federal Law in Original Ordinance	<p>'1.3 Exemptions</p> <p>'A. Lawful: Lighting requirements mandated by a legal jurisdiction with broader authority (e.g., federal, state, or territorial) than the City of Lake Geneva, including but not limited to:</p>	No Staff Comments	The Committee Recommends the Proposed Language remain, which seems to agree with Staff recommendation.
<p>'(5) Exempt lighting. The following are exempt from the provisions of this section:</p> <p>'(a) Security lighting</p>	<p>'1.3 Exemptions</p> <p>'B. Safety: Luminaires installed for the benefit of public safety, including but not limited to:</p> <p>'1. Security Lighting as determined by a Chief of Police or his designee.</p> <p>'2. Temporary lighting used by authorized first responders during emergency procedures.</p>	<p>'1.3 Exemptions.</p> <p>'B. Both the current Ordinance and the Text Amendment are overly broad with respect to "Security Lighting". The Text Amendment goes further than the current Ordinance in giving the Chief of Police unspecified latitude in determining "Security Lighting" As stated above, Staff find giving broad discretion to a city official without providing them guidance to base their decisions on is problematic.</p>	<p>The Committee Recommends revising the Proposed Language to read:</p> <p>'1.3 Exemptions</p> <p>'B. Safety: Temporary lighting used by authorized first responders during emergency procedures.</p>
No Exemption for Historic Lighting in Original Ordinance	<p>'1.3 Exemptions</p> <p>'C. Historic: Luminaires replicating time period historical character and lighting effect that are protected by historical registration, or otherwise permitted by an authority having jurisdictions.</p>	C.An historic lighting fixture exception should be included an any lighting ordinance	The Committee Recommends the Proposed Language remain, which seems to agree with Staff recommendation.
<p>'(4) Requirements:</p> <p>'(a) (i) Exceptions are as follows:</p> <p>'(2) Driveway/walkway, identity sign or decorative lighting. Unshielded lighting at entryways, including driveways and walkways and lighting for property identity signs, gates, fences, and post top entrances is permitted, and the fixture is not required to be angled downward, provided that each UL-rated fixture has a light output of 1,600 lumens or less.</p>	<p>'1.3 Exemptions</p> <p>'H. Decorative Lighting: Decorative lighting should be fully shielded (directing light down only), use warm-colored LEDs (ideally 2700K or lower, but not to exceed 3000k), is low-intensity (under 1000 lumens), and is used only when needed (with timers/sensors).</p>	H."Decorative Lighting" is not defined in the Text Amendment. Is any lighting that meets the CCT and lumen output listed considered "Decorative Lighting". This is vague and needs definition otherwise enforcement is very discretionary.	<p>"Decorative Lighting" is also not defined in the Original Ordinance, but for clarity, the Committee recommends revising the Proposed Language to:</p> <p>'1.3 Exemptions</p> <p>'H. Decorative Lighting: Decorative lighting (any illumination installed that serves no distinct safety, security, or task-performance purpose) should be.....</p>

Original Text	Proposed Text	Staff Comments 05.26	Committee Recommendations/Comments
<p>'(6) Prohibited lighting. The following lighting shall not be permitted with the City:</p> <p>(b) Rope Lighting, except by conditional use permit.</p>	<p>'1.4 Prohibitions</p> <p>'C. Rope Lighting</p>	<p>'C. Staff prefers the Text Amendment provision which does not complicate the issue with a CUP provision.</p>	<p>The Committee recommends the Proposed Language remain, which seems to agree with Staff recommendation.</p>

Original Text	Proposed Text	Staff Comments 05.26	Committee Questions
<p>'(7) Sports lighting. "Sports lighting" refers to light fixtures used to illuminate courts, arenas, riding arenas, fields, tracks and other recreational areas generally utilizing high light output fixtures, higher light levels and are mounted on higher than average freestanding poles. For sports lighting, the following shall apply:</p> <p>(a) Light fixtures shall be shielded as designed and installed.</p> <p>(b) Light levels shall not exceed the appropriate Illuminating Engineering Society of America (IES) recommended level of spectator/play for the activity.</p> <p>(c) Sports lighting shall be set to automatically shut off when there is no scheduled play and shall be extinguished no later than 11:00 p.m. Lower light levels for off the field lighting may be provided for an additional 30 minutes for safe egress.</p> <p>(d) The mounting height for sports lighting shall be no greater than one-fourth the distance to the nearest property line from where the sports lighting is located.</p> <p>(e) Sports lighting trespass shall not exceed 0.5 footcandle of illumination at any point on the property line.</p> <p>(f) Designs for all sports lighting shall be submitted to the City prior to installation to assure that the requirements of this section are satisfied.</p>	<p>'2.4 Organized Sports Lighting The following requirements supplement the General Outdoor Lighting Requirements set forth in Section 2.1 and apply to outdoor lighting installed for organized athletic facilities, including fields and courts intended for scheduled competitive play, training, or spectator events. Incidental park lighting, pathway lighting, playground lighting, and general area lighting not intended for organized athletic use are not governed by this section.</p> <p><i>1. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the lumens generated by sports lighting luminaires shall be confined to within 10 meters (33 feet) or a distance of one pole height, whichever is greater, of the playing field or the spectator track or bleacher area, whichever is greater.</i></p> <p><i>2. Lighting installations for non-aerial sports shall emit no direct light above horizontal (90 degrees from nadir). Lighting installations for aerial sports may emit up to eight percent (8%) of the total lumen output above horizontal, as demonstrated by certified photometric analysis.</i></p> <p><i>3. When the recommended sports field Light Level is higher than 100 lux, installed lighting shall not exceed 10% more than the Light Level recommended by the applicable ANSI/IES lighting standard, or a state approved alternate, as published by [enactment date].</i></p>	<p>2.4 Staff is not versed enough in the sources cited by the Text Amendment to make a comparison between the current Sports Court lighting standards and what is being proposed. If the Plan Commission shares Staff's curiosity it is suggested that the applicant provide an example of the differences using an existing facility for comparison.</p>	<p>The Committee does not see where the source cited by the Text Amendment is any different that the source sited in the Original Text – Illuminating Engineering Society of America (IES)</p> <p>Items 6,7,8, and 9 of the Proposed Text are the same as '(c), (d), (e), and (f) of the Original Text, respectively.</p> <p>The Committee recommends replacing Item 3 of the Proposed Text with (b) of the Original Text, as the Original Text is more restrictive.</p> <p>The Committee does not see where Items 10 and 11 of the Proposed Text require any special considerations.</p> <p>STILL NEED TO BE ADDRESSED: Items 1, 2, 4, and 5.</p> <p>Are items 1 & 5 redundant of each other? Can they be combined?</p> <p>Item 4 references the IES as the standard, which is the same as the Original Text. What is the issue, specifically?</p>

4. *The correlated color temperature (CCT) of outdoor sports lighting shall be the lowest practicable for the sport, class of play, and viewing requirements as defined by applicable ANSI/IES standards and shall not exceed five thousand seven hundred (5,700) Kelvin. Lower CCT values are encouraged where feasible to reduce glare, skyglow, and ecological impacts.*

5. *The maximum luminous intensity from any luminaire lighting a sports field shall not exceed 10,000 candelas (cd) as measured along a perimeter that is 46 meters (150 feet) from the edge of the field, at 1.5 meters (5 feet) above grade.*

'6. Sports lighting shall be controlled by automatic systems and shall be extinguished when no scheduled play is occurring and no later than eleven o'clock (11:00 p.m.). Reduced lighting levels may be permitted for up to thirty (30) minutes following the conclusion of scheduled play to allow for safe egress.

'7. The mounting height for sports lighting shall not exceed one-fourth (1/4) of the distance from the luminaire location to the nearest property line, unless an alternative height is approved through the City's review process based on site constraints, safety considerations, or compliance with applicable athletic standards.

'8. Sports lighting trespass shall not exceed 0.5 footcandle of illumination at any point on the property line.

'9. Designs for all sports lighting installations shall be submitted to the City for review and approval prior to installation and shall include certified photometric plans demonstrating compliance with this section.

'10. Upon installation, all sports lighting systems shall be tested, aimed, and calibrated to confirm compliance with the

	<p>approved photometric plans. Once verified, the lighting installation shall be deemed compliant for the operational life of the system, except where fixtures are replaced, optics are modified, substantiated complaints demonstrate noncompliance, or public safety considerations require adjustment.</p> <p>'11. Existing sports lighting installations lawfully installed prior to adoption of this ordinance shall be considered nonconforming but may continue in use. Substantial modifications or replacements shall require compliance with this section to the maximum extent practicable.</p>		
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Original Text	Proposed Text	Staff Comments 05.26	Committee Questions
<p>No Enforcement or Penalty language exists in the Original Ordinance.</p>	<p>‘3.1. Enforcement and Penalty</p> <p>‘A. Enforcement: Unless otherwise noted in this standard, the Zoning Board of Appeals, or designee, shall be responsible to implement, administer, and enforce this standard, including investigations of alleged violation. A private right of action may also constitute enforcement of the requirements within this standard.</p> <p>The Zoning Board of Appeals charged with enforcing this chapter shall have the authority to grant partial waiver of specific standard requirements for up to one year if a property owner demonstrates that compliance creates unreasonable hardship, as balanced against the potential impacts of non-compliance, or results in conditions that are materially detrimental to health, safety or welfare.</p>	<p>‘3.1.A. Staff recommends that the Administrative Authority be given to the Building and Zoning Director to remain consistent with all Zoning Administration.</p> <p>Staff further believe that the Zoning Ordinance variance process is applicable to this section without need of language here to that end.</p>	<p>The Committee is comfortable with naming the “Administrative Authority” as the Building and Zoning Director.</p> <p>The Committee recommends replacing the 2nd paragraph with the following:</p> <p>“Any request for a variance or partial waiver shall be subject to the provisions provided by the municipal code Section 98-910 Variances.”</p>