

Avian Committee

Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 6:00 P.M.
City Council Chambers

Minutes:

1. Call to order: 6:08 P.M. by Alderperson Flower

2. Roll Call. The following members were present: Cindy Flower - Alderperson, Carol Zimmermann, Sarah McConnell, Beverly Leonard, Jill Rodriguez, Karen Gallo, Kelley Happ. There were no members of the public present online or in person

3. Approval of Avian Committee meeting minutes from January 5, 2021:

Motion to approve minutes by Rodriguez, Zimmermann, second by Zimmermann. The motion was passed.

4. Strategic Plan for Avian Committee Activities:

Carol Zimmermann developed and shared a strategic concept and timeline plan with tasks/events, timelines and task leaders. The committee worked through this plan to set goals for the coming year, as well as establish timelines too help focus our efforts throughout the year. The timeline included a number of items, including these items discussed below:

- a. Cookies for a Cause: Rodriguez reported that the program from Simple has been temporarily suspended because of COVID restrictions. She has submitted an application on behalf of the Avian Committee with hopes that the program will be resurrected soon.
- b. Swift Night Out: Moved timeline up to July to review plans, create teams, contracts, food trucks publicity and curriculum. McConnell has confirmed the date on September 9, 2021 with the Schlitz Audubon Center as featured speaker.
- c. Purple Martin Project: Timeline begins in March. Leonard will watch the migration patterns and report when they will be expected back in Lake Geneva area. The new lakefront sign and the birdhouse prep will most likely occur in April. Leonard discussed the idea of adding more martin houses or moving those that are not attracting birds. It was agreed to keep evaluating this as more birds come and spread out, and re-address this for the 2022 budget. The Avian Committee plans to distribute information to the public and press about Committee's Purple Martin Project, about the houses, and the successes in fledging young martins over the past several years. The Committee agreed this should be tied in with the Migratory Bird Day publicity and festivities in May. Gallo will lead an effort, with Leonard, to plan public outreach events, such as an educational walk as the martins repopulate their houses along the lakefront, and plan a talk at the library as COVID conditions dictate. Leonard, Gallo, McConnell and Happ committed to prepping and tending bird houses this year.
- d. Learn to Soar: Zimmermann is all set with a Unit 1 lecture on bird identification for participating schools and/or groups that is geared for virtual learning. Unit 2 is the migratory bird unit and is scheduled for late April. We can't be sure at this time about the need to present this in virtual format as well. Teachers want a project-based learning program and want the Avian Committee to help devise a project at Four Seasons Nature Center. Zimmermann suggested we plan our spring bird walk at Four Seasons this year. Rodriguez reported that the Rotary Interact Club is eager to do outdoor projects as well. McConnell brought up the concept of creating a storybook trail at Four Seasons, with stories and activities at various stations, possibly partnering with the library. Plans for the World Migratory Bird Day celebration are still

up in the air; need to come up with ideas that students and scouts can do. Zimmermann is working with a scout outreach coordinator and has proposed plans for scout badges including an animal habitat badge and a citizen-scientist journey. These are best geared for fifth through eighth grade students. She is targeting scouts at Woods and Eastview schools this year. This will align with what students at St. Francis School are doing this year as well. Zimmermann suggested we form a task group to re-design the bird game in light of the COVID restrictions.

- e. Environmental Education Foundation Grant: Keep feedback open. More information in March or April, as our needs are formulated.
 - f. Four Seasons: Still interested in improving signage at Four Seasons. Stephanie Klett (Visit Lake Geneva) has offered to help us with signage ideas. We need to look at existing vegetation ordinances and meet with the Park Board to discuss. Also find a way to work with the Geneva Lake Conservancy and their Grow Native plant sale this spring. Committee members will get ideas and collaborate with partners to move forward on plans for Four Seasons. Rodriguez will speak to Park Board (Mary Jo Fessenmaier), Happ will work with Geneva Lake Conservancy. McConnell will work with Neil Waswo about possibly moving the city sign. Zimmermann suggested we start an email chain to keep everyone abreast of current information. Also discussed reviving our plan to plant native gardens at their Lake Geneva Museum. This is on hold for now due to COVID restrictions, as well as the museum's plans for an electronic sign. Our involvement is mostly to work with the city on their ongoing interest in native gardens. Flower suggested getting the city to move forward with money for a plan – maybe a trial run at the museum and to plant native in all their garden areas. We need to be mindful of maintenance costs.
 - g. Christmas Bird Count: Zimmermann received a note from a constituent who wants help to promote the Christmas Bird Count. Committee agreed to help.
 - h. Team leaders are requested to add ideas and update timelines: Zimmermann will update the Committee Planner. March starts to get busy with plans and updates. Teams are tasked with working together or with partners/students to carry out projects identified in the timeline.
5. Bird City Application update: David Nord has filed the application.

6. Future Agenda Items:

- a. Suggested inviting Mary Jo Fessenmaier and Neil Waswo
- b. World Migratory Bird Day
- c. Purple Martin publicity
- d. Four Seasons updates and plans
- e. Learn to Soar - Potential projects for students and scouts, updates and adaptations

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 2, 6 p.m.

Adjourn: Zimmermann made a motion to adjourn at 7:25 p.m., seconded by McConnell. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted
Kelley Happ
2/21/2021