

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 10, 2023, 5:00 P.M.

City Council Conference Room 2A

1. Call to order: 5:05 PM by Sarah McConnell

2. Roll Call. The following members were present: Carol Zimmermann, Jill Rodriguez, Sarah McConnell, Kelley Happ and Beverly Leonard. Alderperson Cindy Yager and Karen Gallo were excused. There were no members of the public in attendance.

3. Approval of Avian Committee meeting minutes from December 2022

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

4. Comments from the Public

There were no comments.

* Members agreed to table the discussion about grants (Items 5 and 6) to a later time in the meeting and proceed to Item 7.

7. Bird City Application

The application is complete, edited, and looks good. Zimmermann emailed it to David Nord and asked him to submit the application, along with the payment, to Bird City Wisconsin. Good work team.

8. Bird City Presentation

Representatives from the Lake Geneva Avian committee will present our Learning to Soar program at the Bird City Annual Conference on March 24-25 in Oshkosh.

9. Update on City Projects

No update at this time.

10. Purple Martin Updates

No updates at this time

11. Learning to Soar Update –

Zimmermann presented a draft calendar of key dates for classroom sessions, the migratory bird game event, field trips and trail launch in preparation for our Learning to Soar program at St. Francis School. This includes:

- Friday, Jan 27: Arts & Crafts meeting in preparation for the Great Backyard Bird Count in February.
- Friday, March 31 is the tentative scheduled date for the Migratory Bird Game. Zimmermann will check dates with Jill Lorenzi to confirm. Parents will be encouraged to help with this – perhaps switch roles so that the Avian Committee members will lead the teams and the parents can provide “help” – medic, weather, etc.
- Wednesday, April 19, school field trip to Four Seasons
- Thursday, May 18 World Migratory Bird Day/Trail Launch celebration

12. Planning for 2023

In addition to the dates above, members added important general dates to the Google Drive 2023 calendar:

- February - discuss the 2023 Bird Walk with the Geneva Lake Conservancy
- April – address the upcoming Purple Martin readiness and house preparation
- September - Swift Night Out - selected the date of September 7 – the first Thursday this year. We agreed to ask the Schlitz Audubon Society to provide the bird program again, as it remains very

popular. McConnell will request this date at the Geneva Lake Museum. We also agreed to start the program at 6:15, so that it is complete by the time the birds begin to swarm. Food trucks can be scheduled at 5:30. We agreed that only one food truck is needed; we will contact JoJo's for this, and perhaps Avant. Last year the ice cream truck never showed up. Ask them again?

McConnell suggested publicizing our Martin project through the library, both to teach about Martins and to solicit helpers. We could coordinate talk about the houses with a peek inside to see if there are eggs.

It was noted that the old house located east of the gourds fell apart. The Leonards have donated a new house to replace this – thanks Bev! Leonard also suggested using a telescoping mirror to check the tall houses – she explained that it is easier to peer inside and not risk chicks tumbling out.

5. Story Book Trail:

The committee discussed the priority for permanent storyboards at Four Seasons and our plans for raising the estimated \$10,000 to purchase them. Happ will continue work on the S. C. Johnson grant, with the help of Yager. This is a rolling grant, but we need to submit it soon. There is no way of knowing how successful this request will be. Rodriguez will also work on a grant with Alliant. First she will email or call them to see if we are eligible to apply. Their grants start at \$5,000. See notes for Alliant Password. In looking into a new grant from WE Energies, we discovered we need 501(c) 3 status. Rodriguez will confirm our eligibility. Happ will check out the Trail signboards used at Hermannson's Woods and Bong Recreation Area. Zimmermann has requested a meeting at 10 am on Friday, January 20 at her house to work on signboard grants. Happ will contact Yager to let her know.

6. Work on Grants for Hotel Bird Watching Kits:

Avian Committee members agreed that we would need about \$1,500 to \$2000 for bird watching kits to distribute to area hotels. We would like to apply for a \$5,000 Tourism grant to cover costs. The kits would include binoculars, a bird book, and maps of good birding areas, housed in a clear plastic bag. We're estimating that binoculars would cost \$50 to \$70 each; \$10 for a good birding book and \$10 for a customized plastic bag. We also need printed rack cards for the hotels and would also need to pay a graphic designer to create a map of bird watching sites. Rodriguez stated that we don't need to add an event to request tourist funds, but can consider it an enhancement to what hotels in Lake Geneva offer to visitors.

Happ will check with Audubon Society about their sling bags. Rodriguez will look into rack card possibilities. It was also suggested we look into the State of Wisconsin Covid Grants.

13. Next Meeting Time and Date:

Tuesday, February 14 at 6 pm in conference Room A

14. Future Agenda Items

- Update Financial Review for 2022/2023
- Learning to Soar update, including Story Book Trail
- Geneva Lake Conservancy Bird Walk Update
- GLAS Dark Skies Interface
- Update on Potential Grants
- Swift Night Out Update
- Purple Martin Update
- Brief 2022 Calendar/Project review

15: Adjournment:

Happ moved to adjourn, seconded by Zimmermann and approved. Meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, 1/26/2023
Kelley Happ