

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 6:00 P.M.

City Council Conference Room 2A

1. Call to order: 6:07 PM by Sarah McConnell

2. Roll Call. The following members were present: Carol Zimmermann, Jill Rodriguez, Sarah McConnell, Kelley Happ, Karen Gallo, Beverly Leonard and Alderperson Cindy Yager

3. Approval of Avian Committee meeting minutes from April 2022

Motion to approve minutes by Zimmermann, seconded by Rodriguez. The motion was passed. The City canceled the May meeting of the Avian Committee.

4. Comments from the Public

There were no comments.

5. Financial Review

There was no review at this meeting

6. Grants Review

Yager reported that we did not receive the grant from S.C. Johnson & Company in which we asked for funds to purchase permanent signs for our StoryBook Trail. She explained that their guidelines had changed and no longer included educational and community activities in their criteria.

Rodriguez reported that we did not receive a grant from Gage Marine. We put on hold requesting funds from Alliant and WE Energies to see if we would get grant money from Gage or Johnson.

Rodriguez also applied for a \$3000 grant from the Rotary Club for the creation of a butterfly garden behind the Lake Geneva Public Library. She mentioned that Lake Geneva Safari Company might also be interested in contributing. Rodriguez also suggested we approach the Park Board about use of the land for the project. She will get plants from Northwinds Perennial Farm and hopes to create a “Monarch Palooza” in the spring.

7. Purple Martin Colony Updates

Gallo and her team of volunteers report that we have 88 martin eggs to date, and Leonard observed nesting attempts at the gourds and new house. The colony is looking very good. The Committee is grateful to our volunteers who help with the monitoring project throughout the spring and summer.

Gallo reported that she injured her hand when one of the cables holding the house parted. She reported this to the city. The question of the city’s liability for volunteers’ injuries came up and Yager said she would pursue this issue and get back to us. McConnell mentioned that two years ago we had talked about replacing the original cables, which we did with stronger cables. Rodriguez suggested that in the next budget we allocate money for maintenance of the houses, along with a schedule for replacement of cables. We do spray all the cables with WD 40 in the spring. Leonard volunteered to contact Public Works and ask for help in inspecting the cables.

8. World Migratory Bird Day Celebration

Responses “Fabulous”- Zimmermann. “Best Year Yet” – McConnell. The Lake Geneva Avian Committee celebration of World Migratory Bird Migration Day culminated in the Learning to Soar StoryBook Trail project. Committee members felt the third StoryBook Trail episode was a great success. Thanks to all who helped and to all who attended the unveiling of the third year story. And a special thank you to Stephanie Klett (Visit Lake Geneva) for giving such a positive and heartfelt talk to all the students and groups who attended.

9. Learning to Soar

The Committee received a very nice thank you note (and cute illustrations) from the fifth grade students.

We agreed on the need to think about the Learning to Soar project and reassess and plan how best to proceed in the year(s) to come.

10. Bird Festival Update

Zimmermann reported that the bird walk and student presentation to the Geneva Lake Conservancy was great. Fifth graders in the Learning to Soar project presented a program to Conservancy members and guests with fun facts and figures about birds and migration. The kids were great. It was felt that the weakest part was the bird walk through Bromley Woods because there was no guide to help with the young birders. It was suggested there be fewer time slots for bird walks so more expert guides can be available to help each of the groups.

11. Swift Night Out Update

McConnell reported that everything is in place for the September 7 Swift Night Out at the Geneva Lake Museum. It is believed that the Chimney Swifts begin congregating in the last week or two of August, and we hope to have selected a date that will capture their activities in the tall chimney. The Eagles and Friends program from the Schlitz Nature Center will be excellent. McConnell suggested we give museum folks some talking points about the swifts and our program in July so they can share the upcoming event with their guests.

Several food trucks are scheduled.

12. Planning Calendar for 2023

At the Lake magazine will be featuring the Avian Committee and its long list of accomplishments. We were given a list of questions and asked to respond. Carol will share her thoughts on Google Docs and invited Committee members to edit and share responses.

13. Partner Updates

Zimmermann will be working with Tai Thompson, Community Outreach at the Geneva Lake Conservancy, to help place a new Purple Martin house near the GLC's fishing pond.

14. Other Items of Interest

- Eagle Scout bee project at Four Seasons Nature Center. It was reported that Tom Earle (Public Works) has volunteered to help.
- Grant writing ideas
- Purple Martin colony event. It was advised that we should not open the martin houses to show the public at this time, as there may be young birds that have hatched and are moving around.
- The First Congregational Church asked the committee to lead a nature/bird walk. Jill Rodriguez and Sarah McConnell volunteered to help. It was suggested by Rodriguez that we're not really set up to do hands-on events like this and we should give them names from the Lakeland Audubon Society.
- Cindy Yager has invited the Avian ladies to a day of fun on her boat. Date was set as July 19 at 10:30. No work – just enjoy the lovely lake and good company.

15. Next Meeting Time and Date:

Tuesday, July 11 at 6 pm in conference Room A

16. Future Agenda Items

- Update Financial Review for 2022/2023
- Swift Night Out Update

- Purple Martin Update
- Brief 2023 Calendar/Project review
- Update on Potential Grants
- Partner Updates
- Other

15: Adjournment:

Zimmermann moved to adjourn, seconded by Yager and approved. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, 7/5/2023

Kelley Happ