



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

CITY OF LAKE GENEVA HILLMOOR AD HOC COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2023 - 4:00 PM
LAKE GENEVA CITY HALL; POLICE TRAINING ROOM (UPPER LEVEL)

Members:

Mayor Charlene Klein, Deborah Beagle, David Quickel, Skip Atwell, Henry Sibbing, Adam St. Marie, Cherie Borowicz, Michael Krajovic, Fred Gahl, Celine Lillie, Karen Yancey, Paula Porbucan, Lawrie Weed, Norine Smyth, and Peggy Schneider

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of the September 28, 2023 and October 26, 2023 Hillmoor Ad Hoc Committee minutes as prepared and distributed
4. Report from Geneva Lake Conservancy on their initial work day. Future dates will include 11/18/2023, 12/2/2023, 12/16/2023, 12/30/2023, 1/13/2024, 1/27/2024, 2/10/2024, 2/24/2024
5. Report from Friends of Hillmoor – Future work days 11/16/2023 and 11/19/2023
6. Review of the draft letter to Council regarding the YMCA proposal
7. Conversation with City Attorney Draper/ questions from the committee
8. Input on December meeting dates.
9. Next Meeting Date & Time: November 30, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.
- 10. Adjournment**

*This is a meeting of the Hillmoor Ad Hoc Committee.
No official City Council action will be taken; however, a quorum of the Council may be present.*

9/28/2023 AdHoc Committee

Call to Order: 4:02pm

Roll Call:

Present:

Mayor Klein

Dave Quckell

Skip Atwell

Henry Sibbing

Adam St. Marie

Cherie B.

Michael Krajovic

Fred Gahl

Celine Lillie

Lawrie Weed

Norine Smyth: Betty V.

Peggy Schneider

Karen Yancey

Absent:

Deborah Beagle

Paula

Motion to Approve: Seconded: Approved

Presentation by Keith Rhebb and Rhebb

- Prior to Keith Rhebb and Rhebb's renovation of the Golf Course in Winter Park the City was paying 250k-350k a year to pay for the Golf Course. They rebuilt the course for 1.2 million dollars and paid it off quickly. Now the course makes 250-350k a year and that goes back into the City.
- There are 5,000 9 hole golf courses in the U.S and Winterpark is in the top 34 and I see

Lawrie: Was there an existing golf course in Winter Park? And their Operating Costs?

- Yes.
- There were about 4 staffers
- If I am guessing on their operating costs it's probably about \$400,000

Fred: Give us an idea of what you've seen in 9 hole golf courses and the change in demographics of what you're seeing

- Yeah, a lot of people now don't have time for 18 holes, they want to spend time with their families. It's really the way golf is going in some ways. You can also play an 18 hole on 9 holes with different T's.

Dave Quickel: How many other golf courses are there would you say around Winter Park

- So you have a lot of private clubs you can't get to. If you are trying to start at golf it's stressful to try to start at a private club. We are finding people are playing more at the Winter Park course because it's more relaxed and more enjoyable for them.

Mayor: So what I understand is that you and Riley are there in the construction of the course.

- We do the design build for the course. We don't just design it and hand it off. We are the people on the dozer and if field people have questions we answer them immediately on site.

Mayor: Can you talk about the environmental impact of weed control and stuff like that?

- We are very conscious of that and the different regulations

Celine: Can you guess what the cost would be to restore the 9 holes at Hillmoor

- That's always a question we get but I always throw that back and ask what number do you think that is. What number would you say you aren't comfortable with?
- You have natural drainage on the site that you can take advantage of?

Adam: What would we need to do in order to have an assessment of a low to high number.

- I don't see it less than 5 million or more than 10 million
- This could get more expensive depending on the club house but it doesn't need to be. It could be a minimalist golf course.
- It was a golf course previously and could be again.

Celine: How many months would you say that Winterpark is active?

- It's year round.
- They are charging \$18 a round for locals and \$22 for out of town. It's way under value for what they are charging. They should be charging around \$40 a round. Winter Park is doing about 45-50,000 rounds per year.

- People are driving near your golf course to Sand Valley. Golfers would drive by and stop there. Golfers plan their trip around golfers and drive accordingly.

Betty: Could you help us understand the pesticides on the property?

- Homes probably use more than golf courses. Golf courses are regulated in their use.

Betty: It's not the pesticides that bother me, it's the insecticides that bother me.

- I know people we work with are stewards of the environment and take care of the environment.

Mayor: We printed out some information on that. There are over 200 pages we can get to have a lot of information on it for anyone who wants more.

Hank: Keith, you said, do you remember saying, "You could see something really great here." What were you picturing?

- I pictured people who haven't played seeing this beautiful land. I called Riley and said I think this is Winterpark 2.0. This is what we were looking for.

Lawrie Weed: From start to finish how long did this renovation take?

- Three months. You do have challenges with the growing season.

Hank: There has been discussion in the community here that no one wants to play golf anymore. Can you speak to how this golf course could serve a community?

- I could go on for an hour on that. Covid changed the way the industry is. It's never been busier. People are getting outside. Walking golf courses are a big part. You could use the golf course as a revenue stream for conservation. You could do local fundraising tournaments.

Hank: Is it possible for you to put together a written proposal for the renovation of the golf course? Is it possible for you to even show us a potential revenue?

- There are other people who have the expertise in projecting the numbers of revenue streams. The sense I have is that you have things going for you since you have a golf course there. We don't want you to spend money on things you don't need. Winterpark saved money because they were part of it. Their staff was part of our team working, the arborist, the City owned boring equipment for the pipe we put underground. The staff from the Park's Dept. came in and helped us do sprinklers there. The City took ownership.

Michael: How many total acres did the 9 hole golf course sit on? How does this City handle the liability of people walking on the sidewalks?

- It was about 34 acres.
- The golf course has been there for 100 years.

Presentation by Nancy Aten and Dan Collins - Landscape of Place

Karen Yancey: The number one thing people said they wanted was a nature preserve. So I wanted to have some professionals come in to present.

Pattern Discussions are one way to start a Master Plan. Example: Gathering Ground - 38 acres that they wanted to engage a design for. Their pattern is that "Farming is Learning". The second big pattern was, "How do they embrace change?" They wanted to be an "illustration on earth" was their pattern.

How are these patterns created? We sit and talk about them. Each place is unique and has a unique vision.

Guiding Principles can also be used to make a master plan that is cohesive with a community. For one project we started with what they felt was the most important part of their property, the creek. So we worked from "Begin at the Creek". Everything became a question of "is it good for the creek"?

Climate Resilience needs to be a part of this planning. Our solutions need to be mindful of that.

Then we get to the "How do we make this happen"?

Menomonee Valley is another example in Milwaukee. Guiding Principles here were Ecological Function, Learning, Intrinsic Value of nature.

Adam: What negative impacts should we be aware of from pesticides on the environment?

- That can be mitigated by plants and berms to move water.

Karen: The strips can mitigate some of it but not all of it?

Mayor: But if they are using best practices hopefully they can mitigate all of it.

Hank: Thank you for that. You said at one point it needed to have money coming in, have faith in the future,

Mayor: We can get the pdf of your presentation.

Mike: Can you elaborate more on which plant species you use as you climate strategize?

- One strategy is to pick widely adaptive species. Another is genetic diversity. The third is to move species here that live in the south that are expected to live in our conditions but that one is a riskier proposition but is in keeping with a lot of practices going on.

Mayor: I have a question regarding your company itself. What you showed us today is natural restoration, have you incorporated any building elements?

- We have collaborated with other architects on those structures. We are not architects but we can site plan. So we will often partner with architects to broaden the solution.

Karen: There are some walking paths that could generate some income and cost much less to make than some of these other more developed based concepts we have been discussing.

Fred: What's the cost? What would it cost to hire you?

- I don't think we can answer that without some thought. The project in New York was about a \$200,000 property but it was 38 acres.
- Unlike the golf course our product has such a wide range of outcomes. If you just wanted meadows that's very simple, if you want something like the walkway through Geneva Lakes Conservancy. Which cost about \$20,000 not including design fees.

Karen: We are going to the committee to ask for permission to remove invasive buckthorn which is easiest to do in the winter. We will be asking for volunteers to help with that.

Hank: You are focused on the ecological factors. It would seem this could marry with a golf course and you would be a part of that?

- Yes.

Cherie: Are there basic prices for you to make a plan?

- No, we would need more information.

David: Would our grant cover any of this?

Fred: What's the largest project you've done?

- 4,000 acres is the largest.

Next Meeting Thursday Oct. 12, 2023

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn 5:45pm

Call to Order: 4:00pm

Roll Call, Present: Mayor Klein, Dave Quickel, Skip Atwell, Cherie Borowiec, Michael Krajovic, Fred Gahl, Celine Lillie, Karen Yancey, Paula Porubcan, Lawrie Weed, Norine Smyth (Betty Volquardsen), Peggy Schneider.

Roll Call, Excused: Deborah Beagle, Henry Sibbing, Adam St. Marie.

Motion to Approve Minutes from cancelled Oct 12th meeting by Cherie; Second by Mayor Klein; Approved.

Report from the Friends of Hillmoor regarding their mission, workday plans, fundraising, etc. (Betty Volquardsen)

Mission: same as stated in 2017 – to protect and enhance the land and water resources at Hillmoor.

Goal: bring local community into the conversation. This is being done with meetings, get-togethers, events, and now workdays on site.

Lake Geneva resident demographics – 18-20% are 18 and under; 60% 19-65; 20-22% 65 and over. We need more input from this 60% group including families and young adults.

Oct. 9th, City Council approved work planned by Friends of Hillmoor. This work includes:

1. Ecological Restoration along Hwy 50
2. Tree Trimming and brush/limb debris removal.

Both #s 1 and 2 will be done by private company with funds raised by Friends of Hillmoor.

Difference between Ecological Restoration and things like Buckthorn Removal. Ecological restoration is a much broader, more comprehensive activity that includes health of land, soils, animals, birds, insects, water, fish, etc. the entire ecosystem. Things like buckthorn or other invasive species removal is an example of one part of these comprehensive/larger restoration efforts.

3. Volunteer Clean Up Workdays. Oct. 19th and 22nd. Two hours each day. 6 people first day, 12 people second day. First day – cleaned up trash (car tires, lumber, glass, plastic, wheel burrow, etc.; cleared cart paths; noted that City had previously mowed over buckthorn in many areas along cart paths (but unfortunately did not treat with herbicide immediately following – this encourages buckthorn to return and return more vigorously). Second day – cleared cart paths, front parking lot area, hauled out trash and brush debris using personal vehicles.

Manicured vs. Natural Landscapes (the former not productive to ecological health, the latter important to ecological health).

Many funding sources available for ecological restoration work, including programs for rain gardens, roadside and boulevard natural plantings, “green infrastructure”.

Argument that pesticides/herbicides used on golf courses are same used on residential lawns, so therefore not “harmful”: This argument is incorrect. The poisons currently used on

residential lawns are killing pollinating insects, which negatively effects ecosystems down-the-line... crops, birds, fruits, water quality and runoff, etc.

Current Disc Golf Course use: leave as is, a natural place for people to enjoy, community use of young adult demographic, 30-40 disc golfers out on Tuesday league nights.

Next Hillmoor Workdays: Nov. 16 and Nov 19. Passed out completed Project Evaluation Form that Friends of Hillmoor have completed as part of request from City to approve their activities.

Paula: asked Mayor Klein, given completed and future work on Hillmoor by the Friends, (and also upcoming by Geneva Lakes Conservancy) can we ask Police Dept to update their assessment of risks on the property, as it pertains to allowing public access to the property?

Mayor: Yes, I will look in to that. Another issue is that there is an ordinance/requirement that a perimeter (of a certain width?) needs to be mowed around the property.

Laurie: Can we get a dumpster out there for volunteer work crews to use?

Mayor: Pubic works offered to come and pick up things for Friends, Geneva Lakes Conservancy will be taking advantage of this offer.

Michael: is most of the garbage gone by now? Do you need a dumpster for this?

Betty: Yes, most of the garbage is gone and no dumpster is needed.

Mayor: Friends also contracted with tree trimming company, so they will be removing brush.

Karen: Geneva Lakes Conservancy and Friends of Hillmoor are working together to combine their 2 plans for restoration work at Hillmoor, so that they compliment one another. Friends will concentrate on the "front half" of the property, Conservancy on the "back half. There will be overlap and shared mission/goals/plans.

Betty: Yes, this is correct. And the Habitat Restoration subcommittee is working on this.

Letter of Intent from YMCA to Purchase 38 Acres of Hillmoor Property

Mayor: The City has received a letter of intent/proposal from the YMCA, to purchase 38 acres of Hillmoor property to build a new facility.

Karen: what happen to the plan to purchase and use property at Veterans Park?

Mayor: Don't know, not part of this letter. Also, the letter does not say how much they want to pay for the 38 acres.

Fred: No, we do not want to sell. No group should bypass the Ad Hoc Committee. We haven't decided anything one way or the other, too early in the process. We just got the property and we don't want to turn around and sell it.

Betty, Karen, Cherie, Paula: Agree

Karen: Can we make a recommendation to the City to reject?

Betty: Agree

Celine: We need to remind City, and ourselves, of the purpose of this Ad Hoc Committee. To make recommendations on the uses of the property.

Karen: Agree, we are here to develop a plan.

Cherie: Not picking on the YMCA, Hillmoor should not be for sale to anyone.

Laurie: I recommend that we have Celine draft a letter from the Ad Hoc Committee reminding them of the role of the Ad Hoc Committee and recommending no sale to the YMCA.

Celine: I will do this.

Michael: I haven't made up my mind one way or the other any single project because we don't have all the info yet. For example, what does the YMCA plan – sports fields? What is the process?

Mayor: Letter of Intent states that the YMCA wishes to negotiate with the City on a price, but does not say anything about usage or structures, etc.

Michael: for example, maybe the YMCA can do 10 acres, and build out the roads and utilities that the City needs, assist with access and facilities for the Amphitheater, etc. maybe these things could all be negotiated.

Mayor: Its on the December City Council agenda, if Council says NO then dead issue, but YMCA can continue to come back with amended changes, etc. If Council says YES, then issue goes to Plan Commission, etc.

Celine: Would it come to Ad Hoc Committee for comment?

Michael: another consideration, what about leasing vs. sale, and what revenue City might need to do other projects on the property?

Dave: YMCA may be interested in trading valuable property it now owns in the City. What about the City "giving" Hillmoor property to WE Energies rather than selling?

Fred: we should have a referendum to ask residents if they want to sell Hillmoor property to the YMCA.

Dave: the YMCA did this.

Michael: the survey did not give all the details that residents would need in order to make this type of decision.

Fred: Do we want to sell 38 acres? No. But we are open to incorporating a YMCA facility into the Master Plan.

Betty: Yes, we are looking at 10-20 possible uses for the property.

Celine: an interim response, don't sell right now, we are still working on our master plan recommendations.

Karen: agree

Celine: I will have draft recommendation to Ad Hoc Committee for our Nov. 9th meeting.

Cost of Maintaining the Disc Golf Course

Mayor: Public works says that cost to maintain all city parks is about \$330,000, and while not broken out by park, they estimate \$100,000 to mow and maintain disc golf course.

Karen: disc golf appeals to the youth demographic

Celine: mowing and maintenance of the disc golf course benefits the property, it preserves the asset, promotes safety, it's a good thing that should continue.

Michael: people also use this part of Hillmoor for walking, biking, walking dogs, etc., not just disc golf.

Betty, Laurie, Karen, Cherie, Paula, Mayor, Michael: Agree, keep spending this money.

Mayor: we need to let the disc golf club know that they need to get Event Permits for their tournaments, etc.

Living Amphitheater at Hillmoor

Mayor: Some people have approached saying that since George Williams campus is closing, and by extension closing Music By The Lake venue, that a Hillmoor amphitheater could easily take its place. Also, a reminder that \$10,000 has been offered from a donor to help pay for an amphitheater.

Betty and Cherie: No, keep the amphitheater small.

Karen: Can we do this in stages? Start small, and then add in various things (amenities, size, etc.) over time?

Mayor: spoke with folks who built and manage a small amphitheater in Indian Creek Nature Preserve, in Iowa. They have comparable project, spent \$75,000 to build venue. 300 capacity.

Betty: Phoenix Park in Delavan, includes grassy areas for blankets as well as rock benches to sit.

Mayor: could be expanded in future, talked to firm in charge of Music by the Lake, they say no decision has been made regarding closing that venue.

Celine: what about bathrooms, utilities, lighting, electricity, water

Mayor: would be part of Hillmoor's master plan. At the Iowa venue, bathrooms are in nearby Nature Center. E.g., if we had an ice rink, or some other recreational space at Hillmoor, then there could be a shared support structure, etc.

Michael: a band shell with lawn seating, done at higher elevations, would be less buggy, closer to HWY 50 is less costly also for bringing in road and utilities. Parking easier closer to hwy 50. Also, less noise pollution and other impact on the quiet natural areas in the back half of the property.

Fred: even George Williams/Music by the Lake has no parking. They have to shuttle people in. Phoenix Park has a nice set up. Also, Midwest Artist Series could help fund this.

Cherie: Yes, lots of people would want to donate to this type of project.

Michael: should have stage face East or South, projecting sound toward to commercial area.

Geneva Lake Conservancy Work Days, Etc.

Karen: Correction on Agenda... first work day is Nov. 4, not Nov. 14. Nine days planned, from Nov through Feb., 9am to noon.

So far, we have about 12 people signed up and several boy scout and girl scout troops interested. Will park in city lot east of Serv-Pro, and access Hillmoor from the north end. We have a management plan for this area. Will be removing invasive species from the wetland areas where future trails and boardwalks are planned. We may do some wetland species plantings as well.

We are also working with Friend of Hillmoor on a comprehensive Management Plan for the entire property.

We would like the various City Departments to then be familiar with this Plan so they can better plan their own projects in a way that assists with short and long term restoration efforts, and to coordinate their work with those of the Conservancy and the Friends.

Mayor: Good, we look forward to hearing from you on Nov. 9th regarding how your first work day went.

Update on CLG Grant Application for Archaeological Survey

Paula: Draft application was submitted to the Historic Preservation Committee, the Mayor, City Attorney, City Administrator, and City Council members. This includes the three proposals by potential subconsultants. I will go to Historic Preservation Committee meeting on Nov. 14th to discuss, answer questions, make edits, etc. The final application should be something that the Preservation Commission recommends approval for to the City Council.

In talking with Jason Tish (grant administrator) suggestion made that we ask for \$35,000 rather than \$30,000, to cover any unexpected costs.

Discovered that application needs to go to the Finance, Licensing, and Regulation Committee for approval and signature. If we get the grant, the City is required to pay the consultant first, and is then reimbursed by the State with the grant monies. So, the \$35,000 needs to go in to this year's budget. I will go to the FLR Committee meeting on Nov. 7 and answer any questions. Grant application is due December 18.

Would the Ad Hoc Committee like copies of the draft application and subconsultant proposals?

Karen, Celine: yes, you can include it within our packet for the next Nov. 9th meeting.

Betty: a reminder to subcommittees to fill out the project evaluation form.

Michael: a reminder that subcommittees will not be able to enter all the info in some or many cases, without additional funds for studies etc. Just enter what you can.

Betty: group working on Community Center, Restrooms, Playgrounds is meeting and looking at design options, costs, etc.

Cherie: Big playgrounds are not best fit for Hillmoor right now. Very costly, e.g., \$500,000. Instead, small facilities spaced along trails might be better fit.

Betty: agree

Michael: Our group is close to ready to present, end of November meeting.

Mayor: what should we do about Thanksgiving meeting date:

Karen, Laurie: lets meet November 30.

All: agreed

Motion to Adjourn, Seconded, Adjournment: 5:30pm.