

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 8, 2023, 6:00 P.M.

City Council Conference Room 2A

1. **Call to Order:** 6:04 PM by Sarah McConnell

2. **Roll Call. The following members were present:** Carol Zimmermann, Sarah McConnell, Jill Rodriguez, Karen Gallo, Beverly Leonard, Kelley Happ and Alderperson Cindy Yager. In addition, Avian Committee volunteers Nancy Wolff and Jeff Gardner were present

3. **Approval of Avian Committee meeting minutes from July 2023**

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

4. **Comments from the Public**

We had visitors!! Leonard introduced Nancy Wolff and Jeff Gardner, both volunteers with the Avian Committee, who were here to learn more about the Purple Martin program and share their experiences helping with the birdhouses. Leonard spoke about re-confirming our mission to promote Purple Martins and battle sparrows that often try to get their nests and eggs in our boxes first. Avian Committee members confirmed that they are committed to the Martin populations and will need to dispose of invasive sparrow nests and eggs when we find them in the Martin houses or gourds. Gallo expressed concern about two of the houses that had nests but now have no birds using the houses. Leonard noted that Neil Waswo (Public Works) suggested putting perching rods on fences or other posts instead of on separate poles.

Wolff stated she was here to hear about Purple Martins, and to get a total count of new hatchings. Karen Gallo is the “Keeper of the Count” and will make a final count when all the information from various houses is complete. Gardner said he was new to the program this year and finds it fascinating, and enjoys talking with passersby who are interested. We reiterated our thanks for their ongoing help.

5. **Items of Interest**

Rodriguez gave an update on the progress of a Rotary Club Butterfly Garden project to be located in Library Park behind the Library. She met with Roy Diblik of Northwind Perennial Farm, who donated his labor costs to help plan the garden. The Rotary Club has the budget to purchase the plants – some will be purchased this fall and more in the spring.

5. **Budget Outline**

The committee discussed the upcoming budget presentation to the city. Yager stated that she would send out notice when she learns of the date of the meeting, so that we have time to prepare our budget request. Rodriguez mentioned that we still have carry over from last year and we should think about spending it on some of our projects, such as hotel kits and signage. It was estimated that new Storybook Trail signs would cost between \$200 and \$300 each, for a total of close to \$3000. Perching rods for our Martin houses are about \$50 each, plus pole. Leonard suggested we might also need some other repairs for the houses over the winter/spring, adding up to about \$350. Both Rodriguez and Yager suggested using our carry over money for ongoing projects.

Zimmerman made a **motion** to authorize the spending of \$350 for perching rods and incidentals for the Martin houses and \$2000 for 10 new signposts for our Story Book Trail before the end of the year. The motion was seconded by Rodriguez and passed unanimously. Leonard and Gallo were authorized to order the Martin supplies, McConnell and Happ will order signs.

Yager also brought up the subject of the Park Manager position and the ongoing discussion of who this position reports to, Park Board or Public Works. (The Avian, Tree, Parks and Cemetery Committees are currently under Parks and Recreation). Zimmermann suggested that the Avian Committee make a formal request that City personnel come to our September meeting to make a presentation about the Park Manager position before it goes to City Council for final vote. McConnell agreed to send an email to Dave Nord to request this presentation.

Yager also talked about funds for Parks in the City's impact fee accounts dating back to 2003, which by law, must be spent within 20 years. These are significant funds that will need to be spent each year.

6. Swift Night Out Update

Plans are in place for the upcoming Swift Night Out on September 7. Zimmermann has prepared rack cards and flyers to be passed out. Gallo will take some to the museum; Rodriguez to the library and Happ to Visit Lake Geneva. Happ prepared a press release and, with suggested changes, will send it out to media and numerous other partners and interested individuals and groups.

We also agreed on the need to check out Swift activity near the chimneys the week or two before our event, as there has been quite a bit of swarming activity. We have ongoing concerns about whether or not the birds will still be here to put on their show. Yager agreed to check out the activity near the chimney about August 30; Zimmermann will check the area on Monday, Rodriguez will check Tuesday and Happ will check on Wednesday (Sept. 6). Avian Committee members will meet at the Museum by 4:30 p.m. on September 7 – food trucks and activities begin at 5.

7. Purple Martin Colony Update

See discussion under Item 4

8. Calendar Project Review:

Very brief review of our calendar and status of upcoming projects to be sure we are on target.

9. Update on Potential Grants

No more information at the present time.

10. Partner Updates

No new information.

11. Christmas Tree at the Museum

Rodriguez has just received paperwork for this project and will prepare it by deadline. Our theme this year is cardinals, so we can plan ahead for decorating ideas.

12. Next Meeting:

Next Avian Committee meeting is on Tuesday, September 12 at 6 pm in Conference Room 2 A

13. Future Agenda Items

- Update Financial Review for 2022/2023
- Projected Avian budget and plans for City Budget Meeting
- Swift Night Out Recap
- Purple Martin Update
- Brief 2023 Calendar/Project review
- Update on Potential Grants
- Partner Updates
- Christmas Tree Event at Geneva Lake Museum
- Other

15: Adjournment:

Zimmermann moved to adjourn, seconded by Rodriguez and approved. Meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, 8/29/2023

Kelley Happ