

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 12 2024 6:00 P.M.

City Council Conference Room 2A

1. Call to Order: 6:00 PM by Sarah McConnell

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

3. Approval of Avian Committee meeting minutes from February 2024. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rodriguez, seconded by Leonard. The motion was passed.

4. Comments from the Public

Viki Ross, a resident of the Symphony Bay subdivision, attended the meeting to request an Avian Committee member speak to her group this fall and to express interest in the work of the Avian Committee.

Peg Esposito, from Friends of Hillmoor, attended the meeting to talk about the possibility of becoming a “Bee City USA.” She explained how the group’s goals of encouraging pollinator friendly activities, including natural plantings and avoiding use of pesticides, benefit the environment. They would like to partner with the Avian group as we are affiliated with the city but will complete their own application for the Bee City status. McConnell thought we would have to get an approval from Dave Nord to go forward. Happ moved and Yager seconded a motion to encourage the Friends of Hillmoor to go forward with Bee City application process. It was approved.

5. Bird City Application

McConnell reported that we have not heard from Bird City Wisconsin regarding our 2024 application. Our application was completed on time in January, but we were not able to upload it as they had changed the formula. She will call and find out the status of our application.

Yager pointed out that the responsibilities of the newly hired Park Director include fund raising, and that we should talk with her about possible grants and grant writing.

6. Financial Review and Update for 2023-24

Despite our request, we did not get an updated budget report including final 2023 expenses. We need a detailed balance report. We know what we requested for 2024, plus we have some carry over from 2023, but we need details of what was spent. Rodriguez will request that we receive an updated budget report each month.

7. 2024 Calendar, Strategic Planning and Projects

Last fall the committee purchased 10 permanent signposts for the Story Book Trail and the Public Works department recently installed them at Four Seasons Nature Park. We discussed finding a new story for the signs, as we want to continue our message of bird migration and connection with our natural environment. It was suggested that we work with the library to find a book we could use, or we already have three years’ worth of good stories from the Learn to Soar project. We agreed to re-use the school students’ story about the Purple Martin pair this year. This is part of our World Migratory Bird Day celebration, and we will pick a Saturday in May to invite the public to join us welcoming back our feathered friends. To give the students recognition for the story, it was suggested we ask St. Francis school to put out an e-blast to students and their families who worked on the 2021, 2022 and 2023 books.

Rodriguez talked about another project on our long-range plan – providing birding backpacks for local hotels. These would be similar to the kids’ backpacks we have donated to the library to check out, and they contain bird books, maps of local birding spots and a good pair of binoculars. The Tourism Commission cannot give us funds for supplies, but Rodriguez suggested we ask them for money to market this project.

8. Monarch Palooza at the Library

Rodriguez updated the committee on the butterfly garden the Rotary Club is creating at the library. There will be a “Soft Opening” of the garden on May 9 at 2 pm, then a grand opening “Monarch Palooza” celebration from noon until 2 pm on June 22, with a ribbon cutting ceremony, speakers and information about monarch butterflies. Because the Monarch population is down nearly half, it is important to teach families about attracting and helping our Monarchs thrive. We all agreed that this could be a good time to show off our Martin boxes to the public. If the timing is right, we could lower the Martin houses to show nests, eggs or babies.

9. Ways to Recognize our Volunteers

We have four volunteers who have helped with our Martin houses and we would like to recognize their assistance. It was suggested we recognize them at a City Council meeting – possibly in July, and present each of them with a gift to show our appreciation. McConnell suggested framing one of Nikki Marsicano’s lovely bird prints as a gift. We would also like to recognize Carol Zimmermann for all her contributions to the Avian Committee at the same time. Leonard suggested a proclamation from the city to be read.

10. Other: New Member for the Avian Committee

We will be looking for a new member of the Avian Committee to take the place vacated by Carol Zimmermann, but we agreed to wait until our May meeting to make a recommendation, after the city-wide elections in April.

11. Next Meeting:

The Next Avian Committee meeting is on **April 9 at 6 pm in Conference Room 2 A**

12. Future Agenda Items

- Update Financial Review for 2023/24
- 2024 Calendar/Strategic Planning/Projects
- World Migratory Bird Day Celebration
- Bird City Application Status
- Partnerships, Funding Opportunities and Potential Grants
- Monarch Palooza at the Library/ Purple Martin “open” house
- Recognition for Our Volunteers
- New member for the Avian Committee
- Other
- Next meeting Date and Time

13: Adjournment:

Rodriguez moved to adjourn, seconded by Happ and approved. Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted 4/2/2024
Kelley Happ