

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 9, 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, Victoria Ross and Alderperson Cindy Yager.

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

4. Visitors and Comments from the Public:

Mary Jo Fesenmaier and Peg Esposito attended the meeting: they had no comments.

5. Financial Review and Update for 2023-24

The committee reviewed budget information. We have not spent much to date and have a healthy budget balance.

6. Bird City Application

McConnell e-mailed the Bird City Wisconsin Committee again and asked about our status - are we a High Flyer community again this year? She reported that again they did not respond. Yager advised the committee that our new Parks Supervisor, Samantha Ingo, will be the new contact person with Bird City; it will no longer be the City Administrator.

7. Partnerships and Potential Grants:

Last fall the committee purchased 10 permanent signposts for the **Story Book Trail** and the Public Works department has installed them at Four Seasons Nature Park. We agreed to select a past book and re-format it to fit the new signs, as we are not creating a new book this year.

Hotel Birding Backpack Project - Rodriguez reported that the Rotary Club has committed \$1000 for our Hotel birding kit. McConnell has been pricing various bags to contain the kits – sling backpacks or clear plastic ones that show the contents. These kits would be similar to the ones we have donated to the library for guests to check out, and they contain bird books, maps of local birding spots and a good pair of binoculars. Rodriguez suggested we make 10 kits, even if we don't use them all right now. She has contacted several local hotels and their response was enthusiastic. Estimated cost for 10 kits is close to \$1000, or \$100 per backpack. The Tourism Commission cannot give us funds for supplies, but Rodriguez suggested we ask them for \$3000 to market this project. With this money we could hire a graphic artist to create local bird location maps. We could also print up a calendar of our Avian activities, rack cards and boost our Facebook presence. This will promote birdwatching in the Lake Geneva area and specifically at our local parks and along our lakefront. No vote was taken at this time, as we will need to fine-tune details.

8. Monarch Palooza and Cicada Day

Despite downpours, both events were a great success. Attendance was great at the Butterfly Garden Opening and Rodriguez reported that everyone was in good spirits. The Library was packed for the event and they provided rain tents outside for the butterfly release. Avian committee members in attendance gave out bird buddy bracelets and stickers to children. It was suggested we have a Kids' table at Swift Night Out this year and give out the bracelets and bird stickers. McConnell commented that the new Butterfly Garden looks great.

Rodrigues also reminded the committee of the Eagle and Friends event at the Library on July 20 and of two additional programs on butterflies at the Library.

There was also a reminder that we need publicity for Swift Night Out.

9. Ways to Recognize our Volunteers

We have four volunteers who help each summer with our Martin houses and we would like to recognize their assistance. Leonard said she had already purchased movie tickets for one of the volunteers, Jeff Gardner and we agreed it would be nice to take Nancy Wolff out to lunch to thank her. Gallo will thank her cousin Brad Robbins on behalf of the Avian Committee as well. We would also like to recognize the volunteers at a Common Council meeting – perhaps at the meeting on September 23. McConnell will write a letter to the Mayor and ask for the volunteers to be recognized by proclamation. We will provide a certificate.

10. Birding Backpacks (see Item 7)

11. Purple Martin/Climate Change Topics

First report was on our Purple Martin Program – WE HAVE LOTS OF BABIES! Gallo reported a count of 36 babies in her houses, and Leonard reported 98! Babies were seen in the new gourd houses for the first time, and the Warren Street location was productive as well. Congratulations to all our Martin “parents”.

The new Bird City Application requires us to have programs addressing climate change, so we will have to adapt our activities to include this topic. Ross mentioned planning climate change seminars with speakers each year. She has some good ideas for speakers. Rodriguez will talk to the Library and Friends of Hillmoor about any climate change programs they are planning and see if we can coordinate efforts with them. McConnell will bring wording from the Bird City application.

12. Next Meeting:

The Next Avian Committee meeting is on **Tuesday, August 13 at 6 pm in Conference Room 2 A**

13. Future Agenda Items

- Partnerships, Funding Opportunities and Potential Grants
- Purple Martin Updates
- 2025 Budget Process
- Recognizing Our Volunteers
- Swift Night Out – September 5
- Birding Backpacks
- Climate Change Topics/Updates
- Other

13: Adjournment:

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

Respectfully submitted, 7/29/2024/2024

Kelley Happ