

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 13, 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, Victoria Ross and Alderperson Cindy Yager. Beverly Leonard was excused

3. Visitors and Comments from the Public:

Betty Volquardsen, a member of the Board of Friends of Hillmoor and Peg Esposito, also Friends of Hillmoor, attended the meeting to express interest in partnering with the Avian committee for mutual benefit in a project or event, such as migratory bird day activities or making bird boxes. She also explained that the group has started an archeological survey at Hillmoor. There will be two days of community outreach to share results of their findings. More information is available on Friends of Hillmoor Facebook page. Parks Director Samantha Ingo was also in attendance.

4. Approval of Avian Committee meeting minutes from July 9, 2024. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rodriguez, seconded by Ross. The motion was passed.

5. Election of Officers

The Avian Committee voted for officers for the upcoming year, as per the new City of Lake Geneva documentation process. Sarah McConnell was elected to serve as Chairman and Kelley Happ will serve as Secretary. Both were elected unanimously.

6. Financial Review and Update for 2023-24

The committee reviewed budget information. Ross asked about the column entitled donations and Rodriguez explained that we hope to get donations from partners for various projects we have in mind.

7. Partnerships and Potential Grants:

Avian members expressed interest in working with Friends of Hillmoor on future projects or events.

8. Purple Martin Updates

Gallo reported that our lakefront Purple Martins will be leaving in mid to late August on their southward migration. She also reported that all the houses had successful nests and that they were able to count more than 100 new fledglings. The gourd houses were also successful in producing nestlings this year. It was mentioned that Martins further north in Wisconsin had serious issues with weather and that many houses were decimated.

9. 2025 Budget Process

Yager and Rodriguez advised the committee that the Avian operating budget request is due to the city by September 13. Rodriguez offered to prepare a one-page narrative and budget request, based on our current needs and funds. The presentation meeting is scheduled for 11:00 - 11:45 am on September 19. Yager asked about including a request for funds for maintenance of the Story Book Trail signs and Martin houses.

10. Volunteer Recognition

We set a tentative date of September 23 to recognize our birdhouse volunteers at a Common Council meeting. Our volunteers, Nancy and Jeff, put in many hours checking the houses at least once a week, removing invasive species and cleaning the houses at the end of the season. Yager will contact the mayor about the date and about a city proclamation. McConnell will bring appropriate folders for the document.

11. Swift Night Out

Our annual Swift Night Out celebration for migrating chimney swifts is Thursday, September 5. McConnell said we are all set for the evening, with the Geneva Lake Museum, the food trucks, Schlitz Audubon and their raptor friends. Now we can just hope the birds will still be here. Happ will make the posters, rack cards (250 each) and yard signs (5) for the event.

12. Hotel Birding Backpack Project

Rodriguez has drafted an application for a Tourism grant for the project and will present it to the Tourism Council the second week in September. We will be asking for \$3000. They will not grant funds for the physical backpacks and contents but may be willing to give us money for marketing Lake Geneva as a birding destination. With these possible funds we could hire a graphic artist to create local bird location maps and further develop materials introducing visitors and community alike to our Bird City. Ingo presented a draft of a Lake Geneva Parks brochure which she is developing.

13. Birds/Climate Change Topics

The new Bird City Application requires us to have programs addressing birds and the effect of climate change, so we will have to adapt our activities to include this topic. Rodriguez will talk to the Library about their upcoming program at The Ridge and see if we can partner with them. Ingo will check to see if Parks or the DNR has ideas for speakers. Ross suggested we could make this a part of migratory bird month.

14. Other

Rodriguez informed the committee about Monarch butterfly tagging at the library.

15. Next Meeting:

The Next Avian Committee meeting is on **Wednesday, September 11 at 6 pm in Conference Room 2 A**

16. Future Agenda Items

- Partnerships, Funding Opportunities and Potential Grants
- Swift Night Out Wrap-up
- 2025 Budget Presentation
- Recognizing Our Volunteers
- Birding Backpacks
- Climate Change Topics/Updates
- Parks brochure
- Christmas tree decorating at the Geneva Lake Museum
- Other

17: Adjournment:

Ross moved to adjourn, seconded by Rodriguez and approved. Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, 9/5/2024
Kelley Happ