

Committee of the Whole MINUTES
Monday, August 5, 2024
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

Meeting was called to order by Chair Fesenmaier at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Council President Fesenmaier, Council Vice President Yager; Alderpersons Ames, Straube (arrived at 6:06), Frame, Esposito, and Hoiland

Absent: Ken Howell

Approval of the Committee of the Whole minutes from July 1, 2024. Motion by Ames, second by Frame, to approve the Committee of the Whole minutes from July 1, 2024. Unanimously carried.

Comments from the Public limited to 5 minutes. None

Presentation by Visit Lake Geneva; Stephanie Klett, President/CEO and Deanna Goodwin, Vice President of Marketing and Communication

Highlights from “The Economic Impact of Tourism 2023” presentation:

Direct visitor spending for the state of Wisconsin is \$15.7 billion.

Walworth County direct visitor spending is \$728 million.

(Alderman Straube arrived.)

Visit Lake Geneva paid for a deeper dive into the data to separate out the Lake Geneva Region defined as City of Lake Geneva, Linn Township, Lyons Township, Fontana, Williams Bay, Town of Geneva, and City of Delavan.

Lake Geneva Region direct visitor spending is \$527 million.

Since 2019, direct visitor spending in the Lake Geneva Region has increased 25%.

Almost 60% of this money is spent on lodging and food/beverages.

Most people visit during the second and third quarters of the year i.e. spring and summer.

In 2023, 4677 jobs are attributed to tourism in our region.

Klett explained about the “halo effect” which is when people visit a place and love it so much they keep returning or relocate to that spot.

Both Klett and Goodwin finished the presentation by commenting how proud and excited they are to partner with the Tourism Commission and the City of Lake Geneva.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance, License, and Regulation – Chair Howell

Fesenmaier reported about contracting with GovHR for City Administrator. She introduced New City Interim Administrator David DeAngelis who began his service today. Fesenmaier also noted the Budget Timeline delineating the process including a full-day budget workshop in which residents can ask questions after each staff/committee segment.

Personnel Committee – Chair Yager

Yager reiterated the welcome to DeAngelis and added that he will assist with finding a permanent City Administrator at some point. Yager also let us know that work is being done on the committee applications and a new welcome letter for members. The City Clerk position will likely remain unfilled until after the August election. Staff will review applications and choose applicants for the Personnel Committee to interview.

Public Works Committee – Chair Fesenmaier

Fesenmaier listed the projects in front of the committee including the immediate need for current Main Street repairs, requesting the speed limit in front of Hillmoor be reduced to 25 m.p.h., discussion of identifying more and noting on pavement on-street bike lanes, the Wis-DOT Hwy. 50 project, request for mayor to reach out to Geneva Township Chair regarding Cobb Park and Center Street solutions, and continued solutions for Townline Road intersection at Edwards Boulevard before or as part of the state's resurfacing plan. In response to Alderman Straube's question about picking up leaves/branches from recent storms, Fesenmaier assured her and the public that Mayor Krause, and new Administrator DeAngelis (who was busy taking notes), will look into the situation that is occurring city-wide.

Piers, Harbor, and Lakefront – Chair Frame

Frame explained that bids have been let for the seawall replacement (too extensive to perform just repairs). The committee has not decided yet about replacing the piers in the lagoon. They heard presentations at the June meeting about a floating pier system and in July about a steel-pier structure for which they are planning a field trip to a factory. Another option/surprise will be coming up in August. Dredging will still be done this year.

COMMITTEE, COMMISSION and BOARD REPORTS**Utility Commission – Howell and Fesenmaier**

The Commission accepted the 2023 Financial Report and Management Letter and voted to opt in to Lexipol (used by the Police and Fire Commission and recently the City) for organizing current and creating new policies.

Tree Board – Esposito

Talked about cicadas which have now come and gone. Everyone loved the popular Cicada Palooza event. Continuing to look at ways to protect the downtown trees, and staff is treating City trees for the spongy moth.

Police and Fire Commission – Straube

Police purchased body armor. Three officers were sent to help in Milwaukee at the Republican National Convention. Costs were reimbursed. Laryngoscopes were purchased for the rescue squad vehicles to replace outdated ones. The Commission is discussing land connected to Symphony Bay for the location of the future safety building. Both departments continue to do a fantastic job protecting and providing service for the residents and visitors.

Plan Commission – Esposito

Esposito said the recent meeting dealt mainly with some building projects in the ER-1 Zoning District that requested SR-4 setbacks through a conditional use permit.

The short-term rental ordinance revisions (in the packet) from the ad hoc committee will be scheduled for public hearing on Monday, August 19, at the regular meeting. Hoiland explained that the recommended changes will go directly to the City Council, not to the FLR Committee, as other ordinance changes are required to do. The ordinance changes would not be implemented until after the peak season. City Attorney suggested some minor changes in a memo.

Fesenmaier mentioned that FLR in November 2023 had recommended contracting with Avenu, a company that would help with identifying and tracking short-term rentals in the city limits.

According to Hoiland, the ad hoc committee focused on the ordinance changes only. The new code enforcement officer is doing a superb job and depends on resident reporting. Fesenmaier said she would ask FLR Chair to put the Avenu recommendation back on for August 20 meeting. Fesenmaier then read [Wisconsin State Statute 66.1014](#) which defines “Residential dwellings” as “any building, structure, or part of the building or structure, that is used or intended to be used as a home, residence, or sleeping place by one person or by 2 or more persons maintaining a common household, to the exclusion of all others.” She asked the Council to have the City Attorney give a written opinion on the statute reference above relating to definition and regulation of short-term rentals. By consent, the aldermen agreed.

Board of Park Commissioners – Yager

There was a presentation from a representative from the UniverCity program who also presented to the Hillmoor Ad Hoc Committee. The program has a minimal cost and uses University of Madison students to create project solutions to different areas/topics of concern in the City. The Park Board needed more research to be done.

Library Board – Ames

Youth programs continue including a reading from the Mailboat Dog series on the Belle of the Lake. Adult and youth materials are continually added to the collection. Metal detectors were added as STEM kit options for check out. The PopUp library continues outside Piggly Wiggly on Fridays and at the Farmers Market on Thursdays. Book Clubs continue with a location change to Niche for the evening adult sessions. July saw an additional 129 library cards issues.

Historic Preservation Commission – Esposito

The Commission wants to encourage people to attend and speak at the August 19 Plan Commission meeting because historic Maple Park is being inundated with short-term rentals. Wisconsin History Makers Tour has a display called “We Like to Dive Right In” at the east end of Library Park until the end of September. Local shipwreck information has been added to the backs of the displays. The Archeological Survey on Hillmoor will likely begin next week. The survey is paid for through a state grant. The Commission is writing a grant that will fund a re-survey of the homes in Lake Geneva for their historic significance. To the north of Parking Lot D, the Commission funded a reset/cleaning of bricks marking the footprints of the railroad engine house, turntable, and water house as shown on the nearby plaque with map. The Three Graces Statue, relocated temporarily to the museum, is still in need of restoration with possible return to its original spot in Flat Iron Park.

Avian Committee – Yager

The Committee has submitted an application but is not sure of its Bird City status at this time. They received money from the Rotary Club and submitted a grant to the Tourism Commission for ten birding backpacks to be located in City hotels for guest checkout and use in the area.

Tourism Commission – Howell and Fesenmaier

Fesenmaier reported that the Tourism Commission is hosting a separate website created to list City hotels and lodging. The URL will be required on websites and marketing materials by grant recipients. Commissioners have added Evaluations to their agenda, so that as grants are reimbursed for marketing expenses the after-event evaluation is discussed. Fesenmaier noted that the reports submitted by Visit Lake Geneva, our Riviera coordinator, and the BID continue to be top notch with an abundance of data showing media reach and trends.

Cemetery Board – Frame

July meeting was cancelled. Wisconsin Alliance of Cemeteries Conference will be held at Grand Geneva in August. Board members and staff will attend.

COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES SERVING ON OTHER BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**Visit Lake Geneva – Yager**

Businesses continue to join Visit. New social media manager position created. Lots of ribbon cuttings held monthly to welcome businesses to the area.

Geneva Lake Museum – Hoiland

Open 7 days per week through Labor Day. In July, the Museum counted over 2000 visitors. Swift Night out is September 5. Dragon Days Fantasy Festival will be held citywide September 26-28. Fundraiser Bingo at Hawk's View on October 17.

Geneva Lake Economic Development Corporation – Hoiland and Yager

No July or August meeting.

Geneva Lake Environmental Agency – Fesenmaier

Recently completed the aquatic plant survey on Geneva Lake. Looking at wake enhancement restrictions due to concerns about erosion and spread of invasive species. GLEA runs the Clean Boats, Clean Water program at all the boat launches funded by a DNR grant which makes sure boats and trailers are launching without invasive species attached. The CD3 machines located at the launches also assist in this goal. Fesenmaier is also requesting that Chair Howell reschedule on the August 19 FLR meeting agenda a revision to our ordinance regarding Chapter 30 language regulating invasive species by our local police officers. The revision has been sent to the City Clerk and Administrator.

Esposito asked about beach testing. Fesenmaier explained that GLEA is looking at causes for the higher numbers recorded this summer and last at the east side of Riviera beach: open lids on the dumpsters, waterfowl on the Riviera roof, and other contamination sites.

Geneva Lakes Family YMCA – Straube
No July meeting.

Geneva Lake Use Committee – Frame
No July meeting.

Business Improvement District – Ames
No July meeting. Lemonade Crawl, new free event, is August 20. Registration required.

Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency – Mayor Krause
No July meeting.

Announcements:

Reminder to vote before, by absentee ballot, or in person on Tuesday, August 13.
New video equipment is arriving at the end of August with staff training shortly after.

Motion by Ames, second by Frame, to adjourn at 7:25 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Alderman Fesenmaier
City Council President

Next meeting: Monday, October 7 at 6:00 PM