

City of Lake Geneva Avian Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 8, 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, Kelley Happ, Beverly Leonard, Victoria Ross and Alderperson Cindy Yager. Karen Gallo was excused.

3. Approval of Avian Committee meeting minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the September 11 meeting was made by Ross, seconded by Rodriguez. The motion passed.

4. Visitors and Comments from the Public:

Visitor Peg Esposito joined the meeting about 6:30 pm.

5-6. 2024 – 25 Financial Review and Update:

Rodriguez reported that the \$1000 check from the Rotary Club for our hotel backpack project has posted. Leonard submitted a bill for \$450 for power washing all the martin houses.

McConnell proposed that we cover some costs for Avian members to attend various informational or educational programs that are relevant to our Avian projects. Yager volunteered to prepare a set of basic guidelines, and will confer with the city's clerk or comptroller for suggestions. Yager pointed out that we may need a line in our budget for reimbursement for educational and/or seminars. McConnell requested she come back with guidelines and we vote on this next meeting.

McConnell and Rodriguez presented the Avian Committee 2025 budget request at the city's Budget Meeting in October. They reported that the feedback was good, but we have not yet heard results.

Leonard led a discussion of Martin house expenses and ongoing maintenance. The houses were installed in 2017 and now need some repairs, including nesting box replacement trays. We have 84 nesting boxes and Leonard reports that at least 25 trays need to be replaced (at about \$18 each), as well as new perching rods. She estimates \$800 for repairs. Rodriguez reported that we currently have \$680 in the budget for repairs and have listed \$950 for repairs/supplies in the 2025 Budget. Leonard also mentioned that all the houses are cleaned out and the trays turned backwards. We no longer take the boxes down to store them for the winter.

McConnell suggested we have an ongoing maintenance program to fix up to 25 boxes each year, as well as replacement wires and include power washing every two years. She asked Leonard to create a budget line. Happ moved to spend up to \$800 a year for maintenance and repair of the Martin houses. The motion was seconded by Ross and passed.

7. Bird City Application

McConnell reported that our Bird City password is no longer valid but suggested that David Nord may have had to change the password to accommodate the new application form. She will try to reset the password. They have not been responsive and we are still not sure of our status. Their new form is not as difficult as the last one, and McConnell offered to re-read our old application to see what we can re-use. We may not have to submit as many documents and will work with the new city administrator to complete the process and apply for the 2025 year. We will need a new proclamation from the city (each year we need to do this) and will plan to do this at a December meeting of City Council. In the future the Parks Director should be responsible for the Bird City application.

8. Partnerships and Funding Opportunities (see item 9)

9. Birdwatching Backpacks for the City of Lake Geneva

Rodriguez prepared a draft of a grant request to the Tourism Committee, requesting funds for an avian backpack project. These backpacks will be designed to appeal to tourists with an interest in our local and migrating birds. The request will go through the city administration for a Tourism Committee meeting on October 14. The grant request is for \$3000, to be used to prepare marketing materials to go into the backpacks, using local designers and businesses to help prepare the contents. We are planning to make five backpacks, which will be distributed to local hotels for guests to check out free of charge.

The request goes through the city first, then we will be given a time to present our request and details.

Rodriguez will be the point contact. She will also need to work with the city and how to process orders of supplies for the backpacks with purchases on Amazon.

10. Climate Change Topics and Updates

Ross moved to combine items 10 and 11, to link World Migratory Bird Day activities with plans we are making for a program on climate change. Happ seconded the motion and it was passed. Ross presented information she researched on Benjamin Zuckerberg, faculty member at UW-Madison, as a possible speaker on the topic of the changing climate and its impact on birds and migration. She has suggested a potential date of May 17, (Friday) and we all agreed that a morning program during the week, from 10 am to noon, would be an optimal time. We need to find an appropriate venue, possibly the library or the Geneva Lake Museum. We could offer a speaking gratuity of up to \$500. Ross will follow up to confirm details.

This was followed by a long discussion of the need for EV chargers in the city. Yager said the city is beginning to study this issue and she will work to move the project forward. VISIT Lake Geneva also took information to BID on EV chargers.

13. Christmas Tree Decorating at the Geneva Lake Museum

Rodriguez reported that we will be included in this year's Christmas Tree Decorating Contest at the Geneva Lake Museum. Decorating will be from 9 to 11am on November 20.

14. Next Meeting:

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

15. Future Agenda Items

- Bird City Application
- Proclamation for Bird City Application
- Budget Update and 2025 Financial Review
- Partnerships and Funding Opportunities
- Birding Backpacks Project
- Climate Change Topics/Updates
 - World Migratory Bird Day activities
 - EV Chargers in Lake Geneva
 - Dark Skies project
- Christmas tree decorating at the Geneva Lake Museum
- Other
- Next meeting Date and Time
- Future Agenda Items

16: Adjournment:

Rodriguez moved to adjourn, seconded by Ross and approved. Meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, 11/6//2024

Kelley Happ