

## **Avian Committee**

Monday, July 27, 2020

5 to 6 pm

Council Chambers (Aldersperson Flowers in chamber, all others virtual)

### **Minutes:**

**1. Call to order: 5:04 p.m. by Aldersperson Flower**

**2. Roll Call. The following members were present:** Cindy Flower - Aldersperson, Carol Zimmermann, Sarah McConnell, Beverly Leonard, Jill Rodriguez, Karen Gallo, Kelley Happ

**3. Election of Avian Committee Officers:**

**Chair:** Cindy Flower was nominated for the position of Chair by Sarah McConnell, seconded by Carol Zimmerman. Vote was unanimous in favor of Flower.

**Secretary:** Kelley Happ was nominated as Secretary by Sarah McConnell, seconded by Carol Zimmerman. Vote was unanimous.

**4. Comments from the public** – No members of the public were physically present or present online

**5. Approval of the Avian Committee Minutes from January 27, 2020**

Carol Zimmerman moved to approve the minutes; Jill Rodriguez seconded. Passed unanimously.

**6. Updates** - Virtual World Migratory Bird Celebration and Facebook presentations:

Because the school was shut down due to Covid-19, the planned Migratory Bird Fair went viral instead of the in-person displays and presentations that had been planned for last spring.

Rodriguez put the winning students' presentations on the Lake Geneva Bird City Facebook page. Parents and students were thrilled to have the presentations online, and we encouraged some of the parents to become avid birders as well. Due to ongoing school shutdowns, many lessons were unstructured for online use and plans are being made to convert more lesson plans and activities for online use.

**7. Purple Martin Colony Update:** McConnell reported that she had no birds in the houses she tended by the beach this year. She also reported that the old house had been taken down over the winter. This may have been a mistake - the birds seemed to like the old house. The cold snap this spring might also have discouraged the birds by the beach. Gallo reported that there were quite a few Martins in the houses she tended by the library. She took photos of the young birds for our Facebook page. Leonard reported that the Martin house by Pond View has been relocated to the fishing and boating pier, which she thinks will be a better location. She also reported one nest with five babies in the new gourd location on Wrigley Drive. Happ's house by the Museum had so Martins this year.

Zimmermann asked that the house tenders record how many nests, how many birds hatched and fledged and e-mail the results to her. Also, it was requested that nest tenders clean out the houses by mid-August. McConnell will check in with volunteer Nancy Wolff to get her report.

**8. Learning to Soar Update:** Zimmermann reported that she was been working on virtual lessons for the Learn to Soar program. Again, it will be part of the fifth-grade curriculum at St. Francis school, and (if changes in public school structures will allow) part of an afterschool sessions at Eastview School and, potentially, other public elementary schools. The Learn to Soar incorporates STEM, art and cross curricular goals matched to 5th grade standards for Wisconsin schools and will be used for afterschool curriculum for the public school.

McConnell complimented Zimmermann and the teachers for converting the program to virtual so quickly.

**9. Budget:** To date \$627.37 has been spent - about 12 % of our budgeted amount of \$4,950. Since so many of our activities have been shut down, we probably will not spend it all this year. The Committee will review the planned expenditures at the next meeting and will then be prepared to notify the City Comptroller (Hall) of the amount that will go unspent. McConnell brought up that another Purple Martin sign was approved in committee last year, but had been tabled. Rodriguez recommended that we purchase it now- that way we won't tie up money for next year. The committee agreed. McConnell will make sure the estimated cost is still valid and will work with Public Works for placement and will follow up with the city on procedure; invoice will be sent to Alderperson Flowers.

**10. Swift Night Out:** The Committee reviewed the planning proposal in the packet. Again because of the Covid pandemic, the annual Swift Night Out evening at the Geneva Lake Museum will be changed to accommodate social distancing. Swift Night Out will now take place from September 6 through September 12 at the Geneva Lake Museum. Participants will be encouraged to come during the week and watch these amazing birds circle and dive into the Museum's chimney. Directional signs and information about the birds will be placed at the Museum. Information about the Chimney Swifts will also be given to the schools and the library.

It was brought to our attention that swifts have also been sighted at the City's water treatment facility and the VFW hall. If so, these could be alternate viewing spots. Zimmermann will look into this.

Food vendors have been cancelled, as was the speaker from the Schlitz Audubon Raptor Center. She has been rebooked for next year's Swift Night Out.

**11. Grants:** Zimmermann discussed an opportunity for a modest grant from the Environmental Education Foundation to help support the Learn to Soar program. Some of the money will go towards the purchase of tri-fold poster boards and art materials for the students' presentations. We would also like for students to participate once again with our partners at the Geneva Lake Conservancy in a bird walk and educational luncheon, and would make money available to both the Conservancy and Lakeland Audubon Society to help defray expenses. Any additional funds could be used for materials for the World Migratory Bird Day Bird Fair – student presentations. Zimmermann has written a draft proposal and will complete the application.

She mentioned that we might want to write a grant proposal to WE Energies for funds to purchase field guides and bird books for children.

Thanks to **lots** of hard work by Zimmermann and team, the City of Lake Geneva was awarded the Wisconsin Bird City high flyer status 2020 for implementing sound practices and fostering public education on important bird conservation issues.

**12. Regrouping** - plans for the rest of the year will appear as items on next month's agenda.

**13. Cookies for a Cause:** Simple Bakery will again provide cookies and donate the proceeds from their sale during the month of August to the Avian Committee. Last year we made almost \$400. Rodriguez reported that she submitted the application to participate, delivered the informational rack cards developed by the Committee, and will work with Simple on this project. Money will be used to supplement our backyard birding kits.

**14. Future meeting agenda ideas:** In future meetings we will discuss Martin house maintenance and the Christmas tree walk at the Geneva Lake Museum. Participation is on a first come/first serve basis, and Rodriguez will call at the appropriate time to get us included. Other topics will include updates on Learn to Soar, grants, events, the 2021 budget and the success of our Martin colonies.

**15. Next meeting date:** Alderperson Flower has requested a change in the monthly meeting dates to the first Tuesday of each month at 6 pm to aid in efficiency of Covid-cleaning at City Hall. Our next meeting will be September 1st.

**16. Adjourn:** Zimmermann moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:54 pm. The motion was seconded by McConnell and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted  
Kelley Happ  
8/2/2020