

# ASYLUM LAKE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

## Minutes

January 16, 2025

Members Present: Pete Strazdas, Chair; Cybelle Shattuck, Council Secretary; Dave DeBack; Mark Frever; Lynne Heasley; Judy Huxmann; John Kreuzer; Steve Kienle; Keith Pung; Silvia Roederer; Paul Scott

Members Excused: Tom Sauber; David Lemberg; Mark Weiss; Tiffany Schriever

Guests: Paul MacNellis

### **I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL.**

- A quorum of members was present, and Mr. Strazdas called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

### **II. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR JANUARY, 2025.**

- There were no changes to the Agenda.
- **Mr. Frever, supported by Ms. Shattuck, moved approval of the Agenda as submitted. The motion was approved by voice vote.**

### **III. EDITING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 14, 2024.**

- Mr. MacNellis requested the addition of the word “tree” after “compatible” under the discussion on ecological maintenance.
- **Mr. Scott, supported by Mr. Kienle, moved approval of the Minutes as amended. The motion was approved by voice vote.**

### **IV. FINANCIAL REPORT.**

#### **a. Asylum Lake Operations Financial Report.**

- Mr. Frever provided the financial report to the Council.

### **V. OLD BUSINESS.**

#### **a. Project Updates and Project Finances.**

##### **i. Storm Water and Research Project.**

- Mr. Kieser and Dr. Reeves were not able to attend the January ALPMC meeting.
- Mr. Strazdas stated that Dr. Reeves worked with Kieser & Associates regarding a \$40,000 research grant submission through the Michigan Department of EGLE (Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy) for the chloride removal project.
- Kieser & Associates is also collaborating with WMU on a 319 Grant through EGLE. More details should be available in the future. Mr. MacNellis stated that most of the stormwater projects at WMU were funded by 319 grants.
- Marwan Al Hinaai’s research paper about chloride removal from stormwater has been published. The research paper will be provided to the Council in the future.
- Mr. Frever submitted two summary reports, one to the State of Michigan to close the funding on the stormwater project, and one to State Representative Julie Rogers for her records. A copy of the report will be provided to the Council.

##### **ii. Ecological Maintenance.**

- Mr. MacNellis provided the following update:
- He met with the ALPA (Asylum Lake Preservation Association) representatives. The ALPA will be a key player in helping Mr. MacNellis with plant inventories in the areas of the Preserve that will be focused on this year. He will give them the tools and information they need.

- The ALPA representatives picked out eight, 100 meter by 100 meter quadrants, mostly in Forest Two, to work on. The people at the meeting were enthused about getting involved with that project.
- Seeding in the Asylum Lake Preserve should be done in the fall. On the 100 meter grid, grids C, D, E & F, numbers seven and eight would be done. Wildtype will concentrate on eradicating invasive species in that area. Additional trees should be planted in that area in the late fall, if there is a budget for that project. The canopy should be thinned out to help with plant regeneration.
- The plant inventory will be done during the summer. It would be helpful to see what kind of Forbes and Sedges grow in the forest area. The Forbes grow in March. The ALPA team will make four to six visits to the Preserve starting in March.
- Controlled burns are proposed for the prairie by Parkview. That burn will include at least 20 to 25 acres. A native grass species called Big Blue Stem has become overly dominant in that area. A fall burn should help manage that species.
- A controlled burn is recommended in that area for the next three years. It should be followed up with herbicide application to take care of invasive species that remain after the burn. The burn area should be reseeded with at least 40 Forbes and eight grasses.
- Dave Mindell from Plantwise is the contractor who has been doing the burns. He is recommending that the burns be done in mid to late September.
- Mr. Weis would like to be part of the plant inventory group.
- Ms. Roederer inquired as to what percentage of the Preserve the grid would be. Mr. MacNellis stated that Forest One is the priority and that area is about 35 to 40 acres.
- Ms. Roederer inquired if plants in the water are considered to be invasive. She noticed a lot of plant life in the lake that is different from the last 30 years. She wondered if that changed suddenly.
- Mr. MacNellis stated that Cattails and Phragmites are invasive. Phragmites is a giant reed, and that will take over the shoreline. There are two large patches of Phragmites on the west end of the Preserve. Judy Huxmann and Paul MacNellis mapped the Phragmites.
- Ms. Shattuck mentioned that the changes were due to the hot summer last year. Ms. Roederer wondered, if all the summers are going to be hotter, how will the invasive species be dealt with?
- Mr. MacNellis stated that herbicides could be used. He will leave that up to Bill Schneider. Winter application of herbicides seems to be helpful. It will melt the ice around the Phragmites tubers where the herbicide is injected.
- A certified applicator would need to apply the chemicals that are used. Mike Weis and Paul MacNellis are both certified to do that work.
- Mr. Scott mentioned partnering with the Parkview Hills Neighborhood Association in the past to spray Phragmites from a helicopter. It did not seem to slow down the Phragmites.
- Mr. Strazdas suggested inviting representatives from Wildtype and Plantwise to provide a presentation to the Council in March. He is recommending that the Council not meet in February.
- Wildtype and Plantwise are not local companies. It was suggested that it would be a nice gesture to have pizza at the March meeting for the out-of-town guests. Alternatively, maybe a Webex meeting would be more appropriate so the contractors would not have to travel.
- Mr. Strazdas suggested getting at least one of the two contractors to attend the Council meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. MacNellis will be done with his job as part-time consultant for the Ecological Maintenance Plan in November. He suggested having Bill Schneider take over that position. Mr. Schneider expressed an interest in the job, but he didn't like the way the RFP (Request For Proposals) was written. If it was different he would take a look at it.
- Mr. Strazdas suggested that Mr. MacNellis reach out to Mr. Schneider and Mr. Mindell to ask if they can do a 30 to 45 minute presentation to the Council in March. They could discuss what they have done in the Preserve and what needs to be done next.

- The Council needs to agree on a budget for the work the contractors will do. The Council needs to know the month the contractors will start and the cost of the work they will be doing. That information should be provided to Tom Sauber, and he can proceed with the paperwork to pay the contractors. The contractors need to provide invoices and quotes to the Council.

**iii. Sign Committee.**

- Ms. Huxmann reported that the main signs in the Preserve need to be cleaned at some point when the weather is warmer.

**iv. Trails Management Committee.**

- No report.
- If the trails committee wants to get together, they can bring information to the Council with a budget and suggested projects. There was a brief discussion about issues near the bench by the spillway. O'Boyle, Cowell, Blalock & Associates, Inc. recommended changes for that area.

**b. Council Discussion on Indigenous Peoples.**

- No report.

**c. Lake Water Level Update.**

- The lake water level is very high. Tom Sauber will work on that issue. He can contact a contractor to help resolve the issues with the lake water level if that is necessary.
- Ms. Heasley stated that her students have seen multiple beavers in the Preserve recently.
- Mr. Strazdas mentioned that the Council decided to let nature take its course as far as the beavers are concerned.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS.**

**a. Application for Preserve Use.**

- None

**b. Council Member Appointments.**

- David DeBack was appointed to serve on the Council as the ECC (City of Kalamazoo Environmental Concerns Committee) representative. He is replacing Sharon Dever.

**c. Elect Vice Chair.**

- Sharon Dever was the Vice Chair of the Council. Her term was over in December. So far, no one on the Council has volunteered for the Vice Chair position. There will be more discussion on this topic at a future meeting.

**VII. NEXT MEETING.**

- The next Council meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2025.

**VIII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.**

- Ms. Heasley met with Kate Martini, a Behavioral Psychologist in the Psychology Department, for about an hour and a half. Ms. Martini is interested in putting together a research project about what mechanisms could be used to adjust people's behavior in the Preserve.
- This information could be used to deter people from walking their dogs in the Preserve off leash, which has been a serious problem over the years.
- Ms. Heasley is proposing to invite Ms. Martini to one of the Council meetings after the March meeting, which already has a full agenda.

- There is money to do a pilot project and that might develop into a larger research project.
- Mr. Strazdas suggested having Ms. Martini come to the meeting with a proposed budget so the Council can take action. He suggested a budget of about \$1,000. That money would pay for student workers and signs.
- Mr. MacNellis recommended not using the word “research” but calling it a “project” instead. In the past, a lawyer advised that the Council’s money is not for research, it is for maintenance.
- Ms. Heasley stated that it would still be “research” from Kate Martini’s perspective.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

- None

**X. ADJOURNMENT.**

- The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.