

ASYLUM LAKE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Minutes

September 11, 2025

Members Present: Cybelle Shattuck, Acting Chair; Chris Bovid; Mark Frever; Lynne Heasley; John Kreuzer; David Lemberg; Matt Reeves; Chad Stirrett; Mark Weiss; Mel Luna (Alternate for Mike Weis)

Alternates: Keith Pung; Judy Huxmann; Josh Kieser

Excused: Pete Strazdas; Dave DeBack; Steve Kienle; Jay Emerson; Tom Sauber; Tiffany Schriever; Mike Weis

I. CALL TO ORDER.

- There was a quorum of members present, and the meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

II. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 11, 2025.

- A request was made to add a discussion about putting suicide prevention posters in the Preserve.
- **Mr. Bovid, supported by Ms. Heasley, moved approval of the Agenda as amended. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.**

III. EDITING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 12, 2025.

- There were no changes to the Minutes.
- **Mr. Weiss, supported by Mr. Kreuzer, moved approval of the Minutes as submitted. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.**

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT.

a. Asylum Lake Operations Financial Report.

- Mr. Kreuzer requested a breakdown of the \$7,798.00 daily operational expense listed on the financial report. That information will be requested for the next meeting.

b. Approve payment for Paul MacNellis' Services.

- Mr. MacNellis provided an invoice to Mark Frever, but he did not bring a copy of the invoice to the meeting. Mr. Frever did not arrive until later in the meeting.
- A prescribed burn was completed in the Preserve this spring. There is another prescribed burn coming up in the prairie area. Trees have been purchased for Sections F4 and F5 in the Preserve. They will be picked up on October 22nd and planted shortly thereafter.
- The ALPA (Asylum Lake Preservation Association) has scheduled a workday at the end of September. They will help prepare areas in the Preserve for the trees to be planted. Someone from that group will identify Cherry, Norway Maple, Sassafras and another type of tree on a map. Some of those trees might be removed and that will open up the canopy.
- Seed was ordered for the forest area and for the prairie area to be used after the prescribed burn. Sections F4, F5 and F8 will be seeded this fall where there are open spots.
- Dr. Lemberg inquired if the Council could approve a check to be cut to Mr. MacNellis for his services, so he doesn't have to wait another month. The invoice is approximately \$1,400.
- Mr. MacNellis stated that he's in no hurry and could wait until the next meeting. He can provide more details to the Council. The money has already been allocated, and it might be possible to get the payment approved by e-mail.

- **Dr. Lemberg, supported by Mr. Bovid, moved to approve payment of the invoice from Paul MacNellis up to the allocated amount. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

V. OLD BUSINESS.

a. Project Updates and Project Finances.

i. Storm Water and Research Project .

- Dr. Reeves stated that the permitting was not complete in terms of using chemicals to precipitate the chloride out of the stormwater. The proposed chemicals are used at water treatment plants so they are safe, but they were not approved by the State of Michigan for the stormwater project.
- Dr. Reeves originally requested \$92,000 for the research portion of the stormwater project. Approximately twenty thousand dollars of that money was returned to the university. \$16,108.47 of the \$20,663.03 was earmarked for the stormwater research. The research team was not aware of that money until recently. The other \$4,554.56 was designated for Kieser & Associates.
- Typically, grant money is in a separate account. For the stormwater project, the research funds were mixed in with the construction funds.
- The WMU accounting system has codes Dr. Reeves is not familiar with. He consulted with someone else who was also not able to figure out the codes. Joy Mills seems to be the only person who can figure out the accounting system used by the university. She discovered the \$20,000 that was still in the account. Those funds are listed on the spreadsheet provided by Mr. Frever.
- Dr. Reeves' team is hoping to use the remaining money on four stormwater events, for which they already have permits, so they can collect data about chloride removal from the stormwater. They are not sure if they have the budget for the chemicals that will be needed for that project.
- Also, the research team has been talking about the possibility of setting up a pump intake deep in Asylum Lake to remove concentrated chloride from the lake. They are not sure they can afford to do that with the remaining money.
- Mr. Weiss stated that he thought the chemicals were already stored on campus and available for use on the stormwater events. There might be an issue with the level of the lake the water is drawn from if it is pumped out of the lake. Someone at the university might need to provide approval for that project.
- Dr. Lemberg stated that the Council already allocated money to the stormwater research project. The Council shouldn't need to do anything at this point for Dr. Reeves to access that money.
- Aaron Parker from EGLE (Michigan Department of Energy Great Lakes and Environment) has also been taking chloride measurements from Asylum Lake.
- The hospitable zone of Asylum Lake is now only the upper 12 feet for fish and other organisms. It has a chemocline. The lake turns over but very slowly because it is so heavy with contaminants. It is anoxic at the 40-foot level.
- Dr. Lemberg inquired as to how much water would be needed to demonstrate the chemical process if water is pumped up from the lake. Dr. Reeves stated that Mark Kieser would have to talk to his engineers about the capacity of the treatment system. It is unclear if the system would be processing 50 gallons or a thousand gallons of lake water.
- It might be possible to cut a hole through the ice and drop equipment down to 40 feet to pump out the lake water. Maybe a scale model could be done of the treatment system to show how it would work. That would be less expensive and demonstrate the proof of concept. There is potential to clean up an entire lake with this treatment concept.
- If you pull water from the lake, the time of year doesn't matter, but it is more difficult during the winter months. The research team discussed that with Mark Kieser.

- The research team submitted a proposal to EGLE last year, but EGLE rejected the proposal because they thought the funds for non-point pollutant reduction did not fund research. It was not referred to as research in the application.
- Someone needs to find out if the \$20,000 has been returned to the general fund. Mr. Weiss advised that the money is there until someone removes it. It is still allocated to the stormwater project.
- Ms. Shattuck inquired if the \$20,663.03 could be put back in the financial report as a line item this year for Dr. Reeves to keep using. Mr. Frever will follow up with the business office regarding that question.

ii. Sign Committee.

- Ms. Huxmann stated that signs have been created for areas where there is unwanted foot traffic in the Preserve. Four of the signs have been installed and there are six more for other places. The signs asks people to not go in certain areas of the Preserve.
- There might be something to cover, redirect or replant these areas or they might be left alone so they can come back on their own. There are still issues with fishing line and bobbers.
- Someone made a request to place posters about suicide prevention in the Preserve. A young woman was found hanging in the Preserve by the Drake Road entrance.
- Concern was expressed that posters might memorialize the suicide that happened in the Preserve. There was a group suicide in Tokyo, Japan and the suicides have been repeated there.
- The shadow boxes by the entrances to the Preserve would not be a good place for public service messages. The Preserve is nature focused and interpretive. Putting up public service messages seems reactionary and not tested. Strategic planning would be a wiser decision.
- The signage in the Preserve should be specific to the Preserve. A billboard would be a better place to get the message across about suicide prevention.
- There was not sufficient support from the Council to approve suicide prevention signage in the Preserve.
- Kate Binder Martini did her dog-off-leash study and there was a poster in the hallway about it. This was in reference to a prior discussion at a Council meeting about people letting their dogs run loose in the Preserve and the issues that can cause. The poster says signage is the most effective way to get the message across about the importance of keeping dogs on a leash. It also suggests moving the signs around to get people's attention.

iii. Update on Other Projects.

- The ALPA (Asylum Lake Preservation Association) has been helping identify plants in the Preserve. They brought 8 or 10 people on the last workday to look for Oaks and Hickories. They found several Hickory trees and will try to protect some of them.
- Eight Oak trees have been purchased for the Preserve: three White Oak trees, three Burr Oak trees and two Chinquapin Oaks, they have the highest carbon sequestration. Shag Bark Hickory trees were located in the Preserve.
- The new trees will arrive in seven gallon and ten gallon grow bags. They need to be four to five inches in diameter and 16 to 20 feet tall to survive without cages around them.

b. Council Discussion on Indigenous Peoples.

- Ms. Heasley and Ms. Shattuck will try to organize a subcommittee meeting before the next Council meeting.

c. Lake Water Level Update.

- The spillway repair project in the Preserve went well.
- The lake water level is low. Mr. Kreuzer inquired if there is a way to use a manual valve or regulating device inside of the piping so when the water level is low maybe the pipe could be partially closed.
- There is a system at Goldsworth Valley, which has a bottom valve that keeps the pond at a certain level. There is an overflow which happens more often than the bottom valve is used. Possible use of an in-line valve could be investigated for Asylum Lake.
- The beaver deceiver does not change the amount of water flowing out naturally. It only changes how the water gets from one place to the other. Fluctuation of the lake water level is part of the natural ecological system. If the water was at a static level year around, it would be a swimming pool not a natural lake.
- Mr. MacNellis advised that Tom Sauber and his crew will use a diamond pattern on the beaver deceiver when he returns in a couple of weeks.

VI. NEW BUSINESS.

a. Application for Preserve Use.

- Dr. Lemberg received the annual application from Sara Nicole Diller to study fall Goldenrod. The application is similar to the one she submitted last year. Her students look for Goldenrod with galls and they tally them up.
- The subcommittee approved the application, it is being reported to the Council. The students have to look for the galls while they are available.

b. Items from John Kreuzer.

- 1. Acknowledge Tom Sauber on repair of erosion at spillway. Status of permit to remove trail erosion spoils from lower spillway creek. (See comments under Old Business, Item c.)
- 2. Status of beaver deceiver repair. (See comments under Old Business, Item c.)
- 3. Suggest some type of flow regulating valve be installed within the drain pipe from beaver deceiver. (See comments under Old Business, Item c.)
- 4. ALPA will be installing some “erosion” signs at 5 locations. (See comments under Old Business, Item a ii.)
- 5. Start discussion on having Council support changing residential zoning for ALP to a green zoning designation.
- Mr. Kreuzer reported that the City of Kalamazoo is in the process of reclassifying the residential zoning codes. RS5 is a residential zoning code. People are trying to create a separate zoning classification for green spaces.
- The City of Kalamazoo is coming out with their Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 plan, so it is appropriate to have a conversation now about the zoning codes.
- He inquired if the Council would support notifying the City of Kalamazoo that the existing residential classification for the preserve should be changed to green zoning classification. Council members made the following comments:
- It would be advocating for the city to create the green zoning classification. What influence could the Council have on the zoning code?
- In the past, the Council made a statement about the rezoning of the Vermeulen property adjacent to the Preserve. The university needs to send the request to the city.
- It would be good if the Council supported the green zoning classification, but it would be better if WMU supported the green zoning classification.

- Any Council communication regarding zoning would have to be cleared with WMU. It would be helpful to hear what Mr. Strazdas has to say about the rezoning process.
- A suggestion was made to have the Council draft a letter and send it to WMU for approval.
- There is a natural features zoning overlay which is not a zoning category. How will the green zoning designation interface with the overlay? The overlay leans more toward development.
- The natural features overlay doesn't change the zoning designations. It just says if you have a property that is zoned RS5, you are in the category of having a protected area around you. And you must do certain things.
- Maybe the Council could say that they work to preserve green space, and the Council supports green space zoning.
- Mr. Frever mentioned that Jeff Brenneman from WMU and the Mayor from the City of Kalamazoo were at some of the previous meetings when rezoning was discussed. There was more dialogue before the Council drafted a letter. He inquired if other municipalities have green zoning. Mr. Kreuzer will look into that. The city received community input for the zoning code. There are other areas of the country where that zoning has been established to protect green spaces.
- The Council needs more information on what's being proposed. Mr. Kreuzer will write something up for the Council to discuss at the next meeting.

VII. NEXT MEETING.

- October 9, 2025.

VIII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.

- None

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

- None

X. ADJOURNMENT.

- The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.