ASYLUM LAKE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Minutes
June 10, 2021

Members Present: Duane Hampton, Chair; Kay Chase, Council Secretary; Tom Sauber, Natural Areas Manager; Bonnie Alkema; Tyler Bassett; Sharon Dever; Mark Frever; Lauri Holmes; John Kreuzer; Paul Scott; Cybelle Shattuck

Members Excused: Pete Strazdas; Steve Kohler; Dave Lemberg; James Penner

Guests: Mark Kieser; Paul MacNellis; Judy Huxmann

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ZOOM ROLL CALL.
   • The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR JUNE 10, 2021.
   • Under old business, add update from Duane Hampton regarding conversation with Kathleen Baker about finding an intern to update water quality information and put it on the Council’s website.
   • Ms. Alkema, supported by Mr. Frever, moved approval of the Agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

III. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 8, 2021.
   • The Minutes were updated by Mr. Hampton and Mr. Kieser and e-mailed to the Council prior to the meeting.
   • Mr. Scott, supported by Mr. Frever, moved approval of the April Minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. UPDATE BY MARK KIESER ON STORMWATER TREATMENT PLAN.
a. The meeting with EGLE at Asylum Lake on April 16, the progress of the permit application to EGLE, progress on the design and bidding of the project, any interactions with the City of Kalamazoo Engineering staff.
   • Mr. Kieser provided the following update:
   • Suggestions were made during the April 16th meeting at the Preserve with the EGLE staff and Council Members.
   • There is a wetland area at the northwest corner of the lake where storm water treatment will be located. The walking trail in that area is wet. The state officials advised that an area is not considered part of the wetland if the path feels hard and dry.
   • One rivulet from the stream that goes under the road comes close to the pipe that will cross the wetlands. The pipe needs to be far enough away from that.
   • They looked at the 60 percent drawings and suggested resizing the berm in the wetland from the treatment box to the east where the storm water will be infiltrated into the ground water and into the lake. If there is a disturbance in a regulated wetland, a permit will be required. The disturbance will be the 100 feet of pipe that will be installed across the wetland to connect to other features of the storm water treatment system.
   • The size of the pipe will be scaled back for a smaller footprint. That will not diminish the treatment system, there will just be a smaller footprint going through the wetlands.
   • The area which is approximately four feet away from the lake is not considered by the State to be wetland. This allows the project to be placed closer to the east/west fence line.
   • There are habitat and invasive species considerations. When the soil is disturbed and there is new vegetation coming in, you can get invasive species that are already in the soil. As part of the permit, the contractor is required to properly remove invasive species in the path. The trees will be inspected; just a few are impacted.
   • The water quality and permitting expert attended the on-site meeting.
   • Some of the drawings were adjusted, and they are being finalized so they can be submitted to the state.
Kieser & Associates requested a meeting next week with James Baker, Director of the City’s Public Services Department. Kieser & Associates will be working in the City’s right of way and around their infrastructure. They will make sure the engineering computations fit with the City’s specifications. Conversations have already taken place with James Baker and his staff. They want to avoid removing trees.

Kieser & Associates feels that the installation of the infiltration trench is a critical component to the system. The mechanical treatment system only handles a limited amount of water and sediment. If we don’t infiltrate the water, we lose a treatment opportunity.

Kieser & Associates talked to a couple of different contractors. They will be working in a narrow space which might need specialized equipment and that might take longer. They will make sure to minimize their impact.

The original pipe that was suggested was larger and needed to be pushed together and fused. The state requested smaller pipe for a smaller imprint.

The current proposal is for 16” diameter PVC pipe that will go from one side of the wetland to the other. The stability of the pipe needs to be considered and will be affected by what is placed under it and over it. That has been discussed with the contractors.

After conversations with City staff, Kieser & Associates will submit the permit. The project will go out to bid before the permit is issued.

Mr. Kieser will advise Mr. Hampton and the Storm Water Committee as to what the city says. It would be helpful to have someone from the Storm Water Committee on the call with the city.

Mr. Hampton attended the April 16th on site meeting with Chris Bovid, John Kreuzer and the state officials. The questions were answered well and there was positive feedback from the state.

b. Proposal to use beetles to deal with Purple Loosestrife for $1,520.

Mr. Kieser provided the following information:

In 2008 Kieser & Associates finalized their lake management report on water quality. The storm water project recently funded by the Council is based on that report.

Kieser & Associates looked at aquatic vegetation at Asylum Lake and Little Asylum Lake. The color of the dots on the map indicate invasive species they found in 2008. Purple Loosestrife is represented by purple dots. Three small areas of Purple Loosestrife were fairly limited at that time.

The blue shaded areas and red lines on the map represent data from a week ago. There are low, medium and high/ heavy density areas of Purple Loosestrife. It has spread around the lake, except the western areas of the lake.

During storm water restorations, Kieser & Associates experienced issues with Purple Loosestrife. It becomes almost a monoculture over time. Research showed that the Galerucella beetles focused on Purple Loosestrife, which is an invasive plant. The beetle is native to this area and eats the stems and leaves of the plants.

The City of Portage utilized the beetles in a consolidated drain project. Purple Loosestrife was significant at Kalamazoo Christian High School on Stadium Drive prior to introducing the beetles, but there are not many plants in that location now. The number of Purple Loosestrife plants diminishes over a couple of years.

Kieser & Associates grows beetles in pots of Purple Loosestrife. The plants have a mesh covering to contain the beetles. Ten to fifteen pots of infested plants were transported to Fort Custer over a two or three-year period to help control the Purple Loosestrife in that area.

The beetles are self-regulating. When the plants are gone, they don’t eat anything else. This provides a chance for native plants to come back.

No digging is necessary, the pots are placed among the natural stands of Loosestrife and then the netting is removed. There are still 10 pots with beetles available for use this year at a 20% discount.

Mr. MacNellis referred to other projects where the beetles were used to successfully reduce the number of Purple Loosestrife plants. He confirmed that the beetles didn’t damage other types of plants.

Ms. Chase mentioned that Cattails are also a problem. She wondered if the Parkview Neighborhood could also utilize some of the beetles. Mr. Kieser stated that he thought Purple Loosestrife would not be replaced by Cattails. There is a limited supply of beetles available for use at this point. It is too late this year to raise more
beetles. Ms. Alkema stated that she has not seen Purple Loosestrife at Parkview but there are Cattails in that area.

- **Ms. Holmes, supported by Mr. Scott, moved to accept the offer from Keiser & Associates to place Galerucella beetles at Asylum Lake to help control the Purple Loosestrife population. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.**
- Mr. Hampton stated that there is approximately $322,223 in the budget for next year. There is $1,520 available to buy 10 pots of bugs, so there is no need for a new budget.

V. OLD BUSINESS.

a. Preserving the Preserve.

- Mr. Sauber observed a guy in a kayak fishing on Asylum Lake. He was told by parking services that he could fish there. He got off the lake when he was advised that he should not be there. Signs are in the Preserve stating that no flotation devices are allowed. People need to call dispatch or call Mr. Sauber to report issues. Too much time goes by before he sees e-mails.
- Ms. Huxmann mentioned that people are being pretty responsible about picking up after their animals. There is concern about the water quality and there will be a discussion about notifying the public. There have been reports of people riding bicycles in the Preserve; they come in by the Parkview entrance.
- Mr. Sauber stated that things have slowed down. He stopped some cyclists and they left the Preserve. There are signs at every entrance stating the rules to be observed in the Preserve. He will e-mail the dispatch number to the Council.
- People reporting issues should ask for a WMU police officer, rather than just stating that they need an officer. Other officers might take hours to get to the Preserve. The WMU police captain suggested reporting issues so they can see if there is a pattern.
- Ms. Holmes offered to put the dispatch number on the ALPA web page. It is a non-emergency number, not 911.
- Mayor Anderson provided the following update:
  - There were discussions about the idea of using Parcel C to create a buffer between the Preserve and the adjacent property owned by Mr. Tehrani. The buffer would address concerns about run-off from the proposed car wash Mr. Tehrani would like to build on the former Vermeulen property. Mr. Tehrani could ask for commercial zoning on the other portion of his property.
  - Mayor Anderson worked with Hillary Hunt from Southwest Michigan First and came up with a boundary on the southern edge of Mr. Tehrani’s property. Mayor Anderson met with the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy and WMU. The university wanted an increase to the endowment in order to take responsibility for that property.
  - Mayor Anderson feels that he has reached the end of the road with his efforts. He recently met with staff in the Planning and Parks Departments, the Deputy City Manager and the City Manager for Kalamazoo to inquire if they want to continue to work with Mr. Tehrani regarding options for Parcel C. He felt there was not a lot of enthusiasm from City staff to continue these discussions. He still feels there are possibilities, and he communicated that to Mr. Tehrani. Mayor Anderson is passing this issue along to the Council for further discussion and follow up.
  - WMU made an offer on the Vermeulen property when it was for sale. Then WMU had budget issues. They would need funding for the endowment in order to consider adopting Parcel C and making it part of the Preserve. They decided they couldn’t consider adopting it, but maybe the City could obtain that property. Maybe the American Rescue Plan could provide funds to help make that happen? Mayor Anderson said those funds could not be used for this purpose.
  - Mr. Tehrani would expect in exchange for selling a buffer parcel that he would be allowed to rezone the rest of the property to build a car wash (it was pointed out by Mr. Kreuzer, as that is what he builds).
  - Ms. Holmes thanked Mayor Anderson for the work he has done regarding Parcel C. He was agreeable with having the Council contact him with questions in the future. Mayor Anderson asked if the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy would want Parcel C, but they did not seem interested.
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- Mr. Hampton asked if Mr. Kreuzer could help move this discussion forward since he has had contact with Mr. Tehrani. Ms. Holmes and Ms. Dever are willing to be part of the discussions. Mr. Hampton will talk to Mr. Strazdas about having a representative from WMU included in the conversation.
- Discussion followed about the Council communicating with Mr. Tehrani regarding a possible compromise before approaching WMU. Concern was expressed about having a car wash adjacent to the Preserve. Ms. Holmes suggested checking out other resources in the community and investigating options for preserving the integrity of the Preserve. There does not appear to be a need for a strict deadline for community options at this point since there is no indication Mr. Tehrani is about to approach the Planning Commission again.
- It was suggested that the neighborhood representatives from Oakwood, Winchell and Parkview could talk and possibly form a coalition. Ms. Holmes commented that major sources of support will not likely come from the institutions but will have to come from the community. It will take time to mobilize the community. Mr. Hampton requested updates on this issue as information becomes available.

- Mr. Sauber is working on a more streamlined process for accounting. A project number will be assigned to each work order. Invoices will go on the report, which will be updated every month. There should be a liaison from the Council for each budgeted project to report to Mr. Sauber. The liaison would provide him with the invoices so he doesn’t have to track them down.
- The liaisons are as follows: Ecological study and ecological maintenance, Mr. Bassett; Garlic Mustard Pull, Ms. Holmes; trails and prairie burns, Mr. MacNellis; sign committee, Ms. Huxmann; storm water, Mr. Hampton; water monitoring, Mr. Kohler, etc. Mr. Sauber will send the list out to everyone.
- Mr. Sauber receives calls about homeless people at the Preserve. The callers think the homeless people are on WMU property, but they are on property that belongs to Mr. Tehrani. The property owner could make a complaint to the police. There was a brief discussion about having someone contact Mr. Tehrani. It was suggested that Mr. Sauber should just advise the callers that the homeless people are not on WMU property.

c. ALPA garlic mustard pull: this year and next year.
- Mr. Hampton congratulated Mr. MacNellis and Ms. Holmes regarding the successful Garlic Mustard pull. Hopefully, that event can take place again next year since there are many benefits.

d. ODWNA WALK Nature Route, the Winchell – Asylum Lake – Kleinstuck trail: route is finalized-uses Winchell entrance.
- Postponed

e. Update from Duane Hampton re: conversation with Kathleen Baker about finding an intern.
- Postponed

VI. PROJECT/SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS.

a. Application for Preserve use: Hydrogeology field course. How should we tell visitors that they must apply to use the Preserve?
- Postponed

b. 8 pm ecological services RFP, etc.
- Mr. Bassett put an RFP together and sent it to Mr. Sauber who determined it could be sole-sourced. It could also go out to bid if the Council would prefer to do that.
- Mr. Bassett did a survey in 2008 and looked at the biodiversity in plots. It would be helpful to repeat that process to see what has changed since then. He suggested doing it in May. Orbis is the contractor but they are busy this year. The Council needs an updated baseline in case development happens north of the property line.
- There is already money for this project in the next budget year which starts in July.
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- There was no update regarding the Management Plan, but that may be available this fall.
- Mr. Bassett, supported by Ms. Alkema, moved approval for Orbis to do the ecological sampling in the Preserve in May of 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Signage Committee.
- Concern was expressed about the impact blue green algae has on people and animals.
- Mr. Scott, supported by Ms. Alkema, moved to have temporary signage created to warn people about the potential for water quality issues this summer due to blue green algae.
- The signage committee has a budget for the signs.
- If the weather continues to be dry and hot there will be an algae bloom in July and August. People should be notified if there is a potential health risk. Dogs have died from contact with blue green algae.
- If the signs are created with no specific date, they can be reused since this will be a recurring issue.
- Dozens of kids play in the creek and running water can also have issues with algae. Maybe the signs should be placed by the creek and the lake? Ms. Huxmann will communicate with Mr. Kohler about this issue.
- The motion was amended to state that Steve Kohler will be consulted about the algae and the wording of the signs will be discussed at the July Council meeting. The motion carried by a majority vote.
- In the past, the algae were treated with toxic copper-containing compounds. The copper leaves the sediment tainted and that doesn’t go away.
- In an effort to move things along as quickly as possible, it was suggested that someone could design the signs, tell the Council where the signs will be placed and what they will say. Maybe the Council could vote on this by e-mail, prior to the July meeting?

d. The Trails Committee: OCBA first phase of trail improvements.
- Postponed

VII. NEW BUSINESS.

ALPA motion on NFP 2.0.
- Ms. Holmes, supported by Ms. Alkema, moved that the Council forward to both the Natural Features Protection Appeals Board and the City Planning Commission a memo that states as follows: The ALPMC supports phase 2 of the Natural Features Protection Ordinance and its increased coverage of properties throughout the City. We note especially that the area around the Asylum Lake Preserve is being added to the protection afforded by the ordinance. This adjacent area is an important one to include as the Preserve is under pressure from the surrounding roadways and potential development. It is located within the city, which has limited green space. We also commend the work that is already being done by the Board and staff in assisting individuals and developers in including a natural features perspective in their planning and development. The motion carried unanimously.
- Ms. Holmes has attended the last several, virtual Natural Features Protection Appeals Board meetings and has been impressed with how that process works. She feels that additional parcels will also be dealt with through this process. This is not just a set of rules to be imposed on people, this is a set of requirements. People come to the appeals board to ask questions or request exceptions regarding developments. It appears that Jamie McCarthy and her staff work with the developers to create a plan that respects natural features.
- It is hard to inform the community and the new Planning Commissioners regarding what this process is all about. Some of the people making the decisions are not getting the information they need. It is important for people to express support for the NFP overlay. The NFP process is largely protective and driven by people who care, and the Council would like to support that.
- Ms. Chase will put the motion on Council letterhead and Ms. Holmes will let her know where to direct it.
- On July 1st, the Planning Commission will receive the plan from the NFP board and that will be a public hearing. Written statements will be submitted by Ms. McCarthy and public comments will be recorded.

VIII. NEXT ONLINE MEETING.
• There were several things on the June Agenda that were not discussed due to time constraints. Therefore, it was decided that the next Zoom meeting should take place on July 8th. A decision can be made at that point as to whether or not the Council needs to meet in August. It was suggested that the Council could start meeting again in person in September.
• Mr. Hampton will be zooming in from California for the July meeting. Ms. Holmes is not available for the meeting in July.

IX. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.
• Discussion followed as to what the Council should do with the information from Mayor Anderson. It would be helpful to look at the potential in the community before the Council talks about this.
• It will take more than four weeks to gather information from the community, so this item will not be on the July agenda.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS.
• None

XI. ADJOURNMENT.
• The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.