I. CALL TO ORDER AND ZOOM ROLL CALL.
- A quorum of members was present and the meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

II. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR MARCH 11, 2021.
- There were no changes to the March agenda, which was approved by unanimous vote.

III. EDITING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 11, 2021.
- There were no changes to the February Minutes, which were approved by unanimous vote.

IV. OLD BUSINESS.

a. Abuse of the Preserve; Signs harmed; bike racks trashed; needed maintenance by spillway.
- Mayor Anderson advised via e-mail that he would follow up with Hadji Tehran regarding plans for the former Vermeulen property.
- Mr. Sauber stated that there has been no new repair work in the Preserve. He is waiting for a consensus on where to reinstall the bike racks, which were removed by vandals at the Drake Rd. entrance. Maybe they could be reinstalled to the far right, away from where the plow piles snow but inside the fenced area.
- The bike racks by the Parkview entrance are leaning and they need new cement. Maybe they could be moved to the south end of the parking lot by the tree.
- Mr. Sauber noted that the bike racks aren’t used very much. He questioned if they need to be reinstalled. Mr. Kreuzer agreed but questioned if the bike racks might be used more when the proposed WALK Nature Trail is finished. If the bike racks are removed, people can chain their bikes to the fence.
- Discussion followed as to why the bike racks were installed in the first place. Mr. MacNellis stated that the bike racks were in the original plan in 2008 for the Drake Road parking lot. He suggested that, rather than spending money reinstalling the bike racks, they could be stored for now and reinstalled later if needed. The bike rack by the spillway can remain in that location.
- Mr. Kreuzer is planning on doing maintenance to the spillway at some point in the near future. He will contact Mr. Sauber when he has time.

b. Report from ALPA on several items including garlic mustard pull plan; Saturday, May 1 & 8.
- The Garlic Mustard pull is scheduled for May 1st and May 8th, from 11 a.m. to noon, and from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be a limit of 40 volunteers per session. Plans have not been made yet for a possible rain day.
- The ALPA (Asylum Lake Preservation Association) has a registration page on their website with details of the Garlic Mustard pull. The ALPMC website will direct people to the ALPA website. There are Covid requirements regarding masks and distancing, etc.
- Mr. MacNellis, Mr. Bassett Mr. Kreuzer and Mr. Nesius have volunteered to lead groups but a couple more leaders are needed. The volunteers will be given maps and assigned to a territory by the group leaders. Ms. Dever and Mr. Hampton also volunteered to help lead volunteers.
- Mr. MacNellis suggested waiting to see who volunteers on the ALPA website and then maybe asking some of them to supervise. A large patch of Garlic Mustard will be mowed by WMU and that will allow volunteers to focus on smaller areas.
- Mr. Sauber’s employees will dig a pit where the Garlic Mustard will be dumped. There will be a fence around the pit but there will be an access point.
• The ALPA changed the text on its brochures, its website and the Asylum Lake preservation Facebook page to reflect emphasis on the Preserve as a natural area rather than a passive recreation site. David Nesius and Donna Telham monitor the Facebook page, which has more than 1,600 members.
• The Preserve was the subject of a recent article in the Spark magazine, which also featured an interview and pictures by Sharon Cooley. The article inaccurately stated that there is a trail entirely around big Asylum Lake.
• Ms. Dever is looking into the possibility of having information about the trail corrected if it is inaccurate. The map is on the AllTrails website.
• Mr. Kreuzer stated that the shadow boxes and signs are being dealt with by a subcommittee of the ALPA.
• The ALPA wants to request money for a tree at the Preserve in memory of Pat Klein. She was instrumental in creating the Preserve.
• **Mr. Kreuzer, supported by Mr. Bassett, moved to appropriate money to plant a tree in the Preserve, in memory of Pat Klein, with a budget of $500. The tree should be planted in the vicinity of Arthur Falk’s memorial tree. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**
• Mr. Strazdas stated that this project should be turned over to the Landscape Services Department to select a species of tree to plant. Mr. Bassett will suggest a species if needed. A different species could be planted for each person. Mr. Frever’s staff will map the trees.
• Mr. MacNellis volunteered to follow up with the AllTrails website regarding corrections to the trail on the map of Asylum Lake.

**c. WALK nature route, the Winchell – Asylum Lake – Kleinstuck trail – ODWNA; ALPA statement.**

• The ALPA wants the trail information to emphasize that the Preserve is not a park. People can enjoy the serenity and solitude that is befitting a Preserve, it is not intended for bike traffic.
• Mr. MacNellis is on the Conservation Subcommittee for the ODWNA (Oakland Drive Winchell Neighborhood Association). He also represents the Stewards of Kleinstuck. He was asked to author something to put on the website for the walk, but he would prefer not to. He suggested providing a link to the Stewards of Kleinstuck website and the Asylum Lake website.
• Mr. Kreuzer suggested that the QR code could direct people to the ALPA website, which speaks clearly to being respectful of the Preserve. Mr. Hampton suggested that the QR code should direct people to the wording from Ms. Holmes about the Preserve. Mr. Kreuzer will follow up with that request.

**d. Will the Kalamazoo Foundation let us spend more money to pay for the Kieser treatment proposal, etc.?**

• Mr. Strazdas mentioned that the Council was pondering a less expensive vs more expensive option for this project. He recommended the option that fixed more of the stormwater problem, which was the costlier one. That is the proposal the Council approved. Mr. Strazdas stated that the Kalamazoo Foundation gave approval for the Council to access additional funding that is needed for the Kieser storm water treatment proposal. The university administration was also in favor of proceeding with the proposal.
• The funds required for the proposal would need to be requested in increments rather than requesting the entire amount at one time. The current funding request might be the largest allocation requested by the Council from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.
• Mr. MacNellis advised that the fund was originally 1.5 million dollars. The report from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation used to show granting money, which was up to $400,000 and the Council hadn’t spent any of it.
• The Council decided to roll $300,000 back into the fund to make it 1.8 million dollars, and now the fund is over two million dollars. There is likely three or four hundred thousand dollars the Council could use and not touch the principal.
• Mr. Hampton stated that the Kalamazoo Community Foundation report format has changed over time. It showed who has donated to that fund over the years. Mr. Strazdas receives the report.
• Mr. Strazdas will provide the report at the next meeting.
• Mr. Bassett commented that water quality is a primary charge of the Council and he appreciated that the Council members were keeping the focus on that topic. It is a good example of how conservation works. The Council did not cause the water quality issues, and it is not their responsibility to fix it, but they are providing the solution.
Discussion followed about the possibility of having someone pick up dog poop in the Preserve. Dog poop is a major source of phosphorus in the lake; studies have been done on that. The Kieser plan will help, but it will not solve the phosphorus issue at Asylum Lake.

There is an opportunity to educate people about how their actions are affecting the Preserve. The deer population is large and their poop also probably gets into the lake. Mr. Sauber mentioned that there is a lot of dog poop in the trash barrels, too; the bags are in the trash. There was an accumulation over the winter.

Mr. Strazdas suggested working with Paula Davis at WMU and with the media to create a positive press release regarding the Preserve.

Maybe the Council could consider educational signs about positive storm water activity at Asylum Lake. Also, educational material could be placed on the Asylum Lake website. The Research and Education Subcommittee could communicate with the Sign Subcommittee regarding this topic. The shadow boxes could be an opportunity for continuing education regarding burns, etc.

V. PROJECT/SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS.

a. Any applications for use of the Preserve?

- There were no applications received for use of the Preserve.
- Ms. Huxmann observed people coming out of the Preserve with yoga mats near the Drake Road entrance. They should have a permit for that activity. They would need to go to the website for information about the permits.
- It was suggested that details about permits could be placed on the sign by the entrance. This topic will be on a future agenda for further discussion. The Council would like to keep track of who is using the Preserve.
- Mr. Strazdas stated that Mr. Kieser indicated he has advanced the storm water design to 60 percent complete. The concept was altered and became more complex. The new overall cost for the storm water project is $223,322.
- The small amount of money Mr. Kieser received has been exhausted. There is a change order for $5,960, which will allow him to continue with the design. The subcommittee will report back to the Council on the latest progress.
- A motion was made to request that the Council allocate $5,960 to Kieser & Associates to continue with the proposed storm water design for the Asylum Lake Preserve. The motion carried by unanimous vote.
- Mr. Hampton mentioned that this item was not on the agenda, but it is the result of an e-mail earlier in the day.
- The Council doesn’t have to take the lowest bid, but there is not a document out to bid at this point. The Council will review the bids in detail before a decision is made.

b. Management plan update and thoughts about hiring ecological services from Wildtype, 2 prairie burning bids from Dave Mindell ($3,050) and Dave Borneman ($5,294), ballpark estimate for the second botanical survey, etc.

- Mr. Bassett stated that $17,000 for the updated botanical survey would be acceptable. He suggested that the Council could address other ecological management goals and set aside the rest of that budget for Wildtype.
- Wildtype is almost done working their way through the Preserve and doing the first sweep of invasive shrubs and spraying of seedlings. The subcommittee is developing the Management Plan to have a clearer vision of what the Council wants to do in the future.
- The subcommittee wants to consult with Bill Schneider from Wildtype and/or Justin from the Land Conservancy of West Michigan regarding the Management Plan revisions. The revised Management Plan will provide the Council with different goals.
- Ecological management is estimated to cost $42,000 over the next five years. $17,000 will be subtracted from that for updates to the 2008 ecological study. The burns will require approximately $4,000. The remaining $20,000 would go to Wildtype for management of invasive species.
- A motion was made to hire Plant Wise to proceed with the recommended burn of savannah 1 and a portion of the forest south of Asylum Lake. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. MacNellis will contact the contractors to let them know about the motion.

c. Signage committee: plans and budget for next year?

- Ms. Huxmann advised that, as things are thawing out, the posts will be installed in the Preserve.
- The subcommittee would like to have information about the upcoming burns placed in the shadow boxes at the Preserve. The information will refer to the value of the management of the savannah and the forest. Ms. Huxmann will provide the proposed verbiage to those who need to see it.
The subcommittee is also proposing to have temporary yard signs with wire frames placed in the Preserve to inform visitors of the scheduled burn. The burn contractor will prepare a statement. Mr. MacNellis suggested adding a QR code to the Nature Conservancy website to explain why the burn is beneficial.

Ms. Huxmann suggested also having signs in the Preserve about the Kieser & Associates project.

Discussion followed about how to provide information to the public regarding the burns and the storm water project. Ms. Alkema suggested having someone write an article about the burn and possibly do a series of articles about the Preserve.

Mr. Strazdas stated that there is a formal process for the burn. When that communication goes out, it will go through the Marcom (Marketing and Strategic Communications Department) area. The intention is to let the public know what’s going on so they will not dial 911 during the burn.

Mr. Bovid mentioned that the Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood is directly east of the Preserve. ODWNA has a newsletter and Facebook page where information could be posted about events at the Preserve. Ms. Alkema suggested also putting information about the Preserve in the Parkview Neighborhood newsletter.

The burns are weather-dependent and it is uncertain until the last minute as to whether or not the burn will occur. Mr. Bassett suggested preparing a statement advising that the burn will happen when the conditions are right.

Mr. Borneman advised in the bid document that the burn would likely occur between March 15 and May 15 and between noon and 7 p.m.

Mr. Strazdas stated that Mr. Sauber or Mr. Frever would take the lead with the burn boss and a member of the Council. They will share information with the Marcom Department and the Council regarding communications with the public.

Mr. Bovid will receive a copy of the announcement that he can tailor to the needs of his neighborhood. Mr. Bassett volunteered to help with that process.

Mr. Bassett is involved with an organization that has discussed doing a broad social media post regarding prescribed burns. They published a paper about a prescribed fire needs assessment for state land. It would be a link for more information.

The announcement has to come from WMU, but Mr. Bassett would like to be involved in that process. Mr. Nesius would also like to be involved and he would like to have the information posted on the Asylum Lake Facebook page.

d. The trails committee: OCBA proposal to implement the first phase of trail improvements: Possibility of grant for shovel-ready trail proposals; plans for next year?

The Trails Subcommittee will apply for one large grant for seven projects that add up to almost $100,000. The subcommittee is talking about other trail improvements that they would like to have designs and estimates for; there will be updates in the future.

Mr. MacNellis recommended that the Council proceed with phase I of the southeast trail. It will cost about $22,000 to reroute the trail by little Asylum Lake.

Mr. Lemberg provided information about a national plea from American Trails. They would like to add projects to a wish list, which will be forwarded to congress. They are trying to get a ballpark figure on what can be funded. They don’t know where the funds would be coming from at this point, but they want a list of projects in case funds do become available.

Mr. Strazdas expressed support for launching phase 1 of the trail project and applying for grant money. The grant process must go through the university’s OVPR (Office of Vice-Presidential Research). The Council can’t submit an application; they have to follow the university’s grant process. The university takes a percentage of the funds.

VI. NEW BUSINESS.

a. New budget proposals.

Mr. Kohler suggested adding $200 to the budget for water quality monitoring for the upcoming year.

Mr. Frever stated that there is a difference in numbers from maintenance. Almost a year ago the world stopped but the maintenance department continued to work. He is working with the business office and they are getting closer to having the real numbers, which will be lower than $42,000.

Mr. Hampton will e-mail the revised budget sheet.

b. Vote on 2021-2022 budget proposals.
• Mr. Strazdas, supported by Ms. Alkema, moved to support the proposed budget for the Council of $327,722, which will expire in June of 2022. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

VII. NEXT ONLINE MEETING – April 8th.
• The subcommittee will meet before the April Council meeting. The subcommittee will make a report with Mr. Kieser by then.
• Mr. Strazdas suggested setting a start date for the storm water project, which needs to be bid out so the Council can get a real number. There should be an update for the April meeting.

VIII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.
• None

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS.
• None

X. ADJOURNMENT.
• The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.