I. CALL TO ORDER AND ZOOM ROLL CALL.

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

II. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 9, 2021.

- Mr. Lemberg did not have an update from Kathleen Baker regarding the search for an intern to help with updates to the Asylum Lake website. Ms. Dever suggested checking with the Office of Sustainability for a student who could provide assistance.
- The list of Council members needs to be updated on the website, and the recent surveys need to be updated. Maybe a staff member who had his or her hours cut could assist with the updates?
- Ms. Alkema suggested putting a notation under passive recreation at the Preserve, that wearing good shoes is recommended because the trails are not paved with asphalt. Maybe a line could be added stating, “Watch your step, people have fallen and broken bones.”
- Ms. Alkema, supported by Mr. Bassett, moved approval of the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

III. EDITING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 12, 2021.

- The date on the August Minutes needs to be corrected.
- Mr. Bassett, supported by Mr. Scott, moved approval of the Minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS.

a. Update on stormwater treatment plan.

- Mr. Kieser provided an e-mail update stating that the permit was submitted to the State of Michigan. Kieser & Associates is working with City and State personnel to figure out access for the contractor. John from Kieser & Associates is working on the bid documents.

b. Preserving the Preserve. Signs, parking lots, bike racks, needed maintenance by spillway, boom boxes, shadow boxes.

- Ms. Huxmann stated that she is at the Preserve a couple times a week and it feels like things have settled down regarding the use of the Preserve. There has not much dog poo lately.
- There are severe wash-out areas, which she talked to Mr. Sauber about. An area by the stream is eroded, as well as an area on the east shore. He had thoughts about diverting the water off to the side. It might need to be professionally done with drains. Those areas are getting worse.
- The corrugated material in the ground on the trail to the east side of the lake is not doing the job we need. Someone put gravel on the trail coming down from the blacktop road, and that helped a little with the erosion.
- A guy was observed pulling his child in a carrier behind the bike. Maybe more security should be done on the two gates. The gate on Parkview doesn’t stay closed; the bungee cord is missing.
- Mr. Frever stated that the work order is open. Mr. Sauber needs suggestions from the Trails Subcommittee on what action to take on the trail improvements, washouts, etc.
- Mr. MacNellis has been working with Mr. Sauber for about six weeks. Mr. Sauber’s crew put gravel on the trail. It would be helpful to get OCBA involved to do some engineering. The geogrid that Larry Harris designed worked great but that was 12 or 15 years ago. There is an issue with the downhill trail.
- The Parkview gates could be removed and a switchback, similar to the one at the Winchell entrance, could be installed. It would be difficult to bring a bicycle past the switchback. The subcommittee is aware of those
problems and there have been discussions about next steps. It would be helpful to get the Trails and Infrastructure Subcommittees together to discuss next steps.

- It is not clear whether the beavers are blocking the flow from the big lake through the spillway, but it is down to a trickle again. When Mr. Sauber cleared it about a month ago, a big stream of water came rushing down and now it is reduced to a trickle again. There is no evidence of large trees being chewed down, so it is uncertain if the beavers are the cause of the issue. Ms. Holmes requested that someone please check the spillway and the screen near the entrance to the culvert.

- Mr. MacNellis stated that the beaver deceiver is not the problem, but there is an issue with the inlet in the lake. He thinks it isn’t deep enough; the box keeps getting blocked. Debris around the box is plugging the flow of water. A bigger box might help, but it is nice that the current one is under the surface and not showing above the water. Maybe the box needs to be longer and lower. The beavers found the beaver deceiver and tried to plug it up.

- Mr. Kohler mentioned that the weather has been dry for the last six weeks so the water level is lower. The flow would not be constant.

- The flow into Asylum Lake isn’t always storm water. The overflow from the stream is pretty steady. It should be stronger than it is. The flow is better when the box is cleared off.

c. The Financial report.

- The financial report will be forwarded to the Council as soon as possible, it has been reviewed for accuracy. Mr. Sauber was not present to provide input. There are eleven projects on the report:
  
  #1. Ecological Study Update. The Council approved $17,000 for this project; the money is in the account.
  
  #2. Ecological Maintenance by Wildtype. $20,000 was allocated for this project. Wildtype has been working in the Preserve. The invoices should be provided to Mr. Sauber.
  
  #3. Garlic Mustard Pull. The Council approved $1,000 to be spent on this project. There is a balance of $515. It was suggested that this project should remain open and funded for another Garlic Mustard pull to take place before June 30th, 2022.
  
  #4. Memorial Tree. The Council approved $500 for a memorial tree. Mr. Bassett will contact Mr. Sauber about this project. The funds should remain in the account for now.
  
  #5. Land Management Plan. $10,000 was allocated for this project; $3,880 has been spent so far. Mr. Bassett advised that money will probably be spent this winter as work continues on the Management Plan. The subcommittee needs input from Wildtype and the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy. He was uncertain as to what the existing expense was.
  
  #6. Prairie Burn. $3,100 was allocated; there is $50 remaining. Mr. Sauber recommended that the account be closed, and the remaining funds be sent back to the general fund.
  
  Mr. MacNellis stated that the burns went well. There was more burn area in the forested area than expected. The burn will help germinate seeds. The contractor tried to do a burn at the west end of the Preserve, near Drake Road, but some brush is still there.
  
  Mr. Bassett noted that, in the forest area that was burned, an additional native plant species was revealed that was not previously documented on the property: Yellow False Foxglove. This plant makes chlorophyll but is also parasitizes oak roots.
  
  #7 Galerucella beetles for Purple Loosestrife. $1,200 was allotted for this project. When Mr. Kieser returns from his trip, maybe he will share details in a briefing about how the beetles are doing.
  
  Ms. Holmes noted that the Purple Loosestrife is thriving, but that doesn’t mean that the process isn’t under way. Mr. Hampton stated that this project has been advertised as a two-year project.
  
  #8. Sign Subcommittee. $1,500 was allocated; $122 was spent. Ms. Huxmann stated that the subcommittee is waiting for changes to happen in the Preserve, including rerouting of a trail, and installation of the storm water mitigation system. She has no plans for signs at this point. Mr. Kreuzer mentioned a previous discussion about protecting the backs of existing signs in the Preserve, but there has been no progress on that yet.
  
  #9. Storm Water Project. $206,741 has been allotted for this project. There is a balance remaining of $185,913. An update will be requested from Kieser & Associates at a future meeting.
  
  #10. Trails Committee. $22,000 was allotted; there is $21,786 remaining. Mr. MacNellis requested that this amount remain available for use by the Trails Subcommittee.
11. Water Quality. $200 was allotted; there is $200 remaining. Mr. Kohler stated that the funds have not been needed yet.

Ms. Huxmann advised that the memorial Chinquapin Oak tree died by the Parkview Parking lot. Mr. MacNellis stated that he checked on the tree last year and it was o.k., but there were no leaves on it this spring. Mr. Falk’s tree should be replaced this fall with the same kind of tree. The budget was for a new tree for someone else.

It was suggested that the tree didn’t get enough water. The ALPA members were helping with it, they pulled weeds, added mulch, and put 20-gallon water bags on the tree two times. It was green last fall, but it did not come out of dormancy. Maybe the hole should be bigger next time and the bacteria could be built up. Mr. Frever confirmed that there is no warranty on the tree. It probably came from a local source such as Winding Creek or Murray Landscaping.

Mr. Bassett mentioned that a group in the Petoskey/Harbor Springs area is doing a climate change study that includes Chinquapin Oaks.

Mr. Hampton suggested reallocating money that was being returned so that it could be used to replace the Arthur Falk memorial tree.

Mr. Bassett, supported by Mr. Scott, moved to allocate $500 to purchase and install another Chinquapin Oak as the Arthur Falk memorial tree. The motion passed unanimously.

d. ALPA-NFP 2.0 approved by Planning Commission and Kalamazoo City Commission.

Ms. Holmes stated that Mr. Gesmundo called in during the meeting of the City Commission and stated that he had been reserved when he first heard about the NFP. As he got into the text and history of the NFP board, he was in favor of it. The NFP 2.0 passed with a unanimous vote of the City Commission.

Mr. Bassett referred to a small savannah remnant that was on the northwest corner of Stadium and Drake developed by Mr. Gesmundo. Untilled savannah remnants are uncommon.

e. What is the scoop about lights at the WMU soccer field?

Mr. Strazdas stated that no one put in a request for lighting on the field, but there are rumors that someone might want to do it. Kathy Beauregard confirmed that was a rumor. There is no money and there is no project at this point. If there ever is, she will make sure the appropriate people are notified.

Someone offered to put together information on how lighting affects the Preserve, in case something comes up, so the Council can be prepared. Sharon Gilly might be able to provide information. Mr. Lemberg was going to research the lighting situation, and Mr. Kreuzer has a brother who might have information.

Mr. Lemberg stated that he forwarded a couple of links this morning; Mr. Hampton will forward the links to the Council.

The Council should be looking at having yellower lights around the Preserve. Motion detectors would be useful on the local lighting. Pushing the light down and not up into the atmosphere would also be helpful.

Mr. Kreuzer inquired as to who previews building plans at WMU. He suggested putting something in the review process regarding the impact of lighting on the Preserve. Borgess Hospital has a big yellow band of light on all the time; their building is across from the Preserve.

Mr. Strazdas stated that the only land WMU owns would get review by WMU. BTR2 has standards which are managed by Kara Wood, Community Relations Vice President. The developers at BTR2 are also required to follow the Oshtemo Township standards.

Ms. Shattuck advised Ms. Holmes that she is not available to follow up with the lighting situation until after October 15th.

V. PROJECT/SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS.

a. Application for Preserve use?

Mr. Kohler advised of a proposal from a volunteer organization at Ferris State University. Dr. Jerry Griffith and Adventure Scientists are working with the U.S. Forest Services on trees impacted by poaching. They will collect samples from Black Walnut trees in the Preserve, and they will do DNA testing on those trees.

The MSU pollinator project was approved last month.

b. Ecological Services RFP – is it too soon?
• Mr. Sauber and Mr. Bassett decided that this project does not have to go out to bid, it can be a single bid. The contractor requested that the project be put off for a year; he is busy until October. Mr. Bassett will be in touch with the contractor soon.
• The set up will be done in April; the sampling will be done in May. The contractor will repeat the plot and transect sampling Mr. Bassett did in 2008. It will include plant community data so a comparison can be done on the before and after information. They will try to match the sampling periods, so the data are comparable.
• There is an RFP with details of the project. It is not needed at this point, but it can be handed over to the contractor if he needs the information.

c. Signage Committee – What should we communicate via signs?
• No updates.

d. The Trails Committee: OCBA first phase of trail improvements.
• Mr. MacNellis sent Brian Balkema an e-mail about the southeast trail. He said they are getting caught up on their projects and will probably start on the southeast trail in the next couple of weeks.
• Any excavation for new trails will be dumped by the old trail. He would like to use volunteers for that project when the time comes.

VI. NEW BUSINESS.
a. Community effort to buy parcel C as buffer strip. What can we learn from the Stewards of Kleinstuck’s success?
• Mr. MacNellis stated that the early process included a public meeting to get a feel for preserving the property. 140 people showed up at that meeting.
• Then a campaign was started, and a lawyer was hired. The lawyer did a lot of pro bono work on this project, but he did receive some payment. The lawyer created a governing entity to make sure the money went into the appropriate account.
• There was a focus on advertising on social media, spreading the word in neighborhoods and applying for grants. The biggest grant received was $25,000. A family agreed to match up to $250,000 of the funds that were raised. Approximately $300,000 was raised for this project.
• Heather Ratliff and Erin Fuller raised the most money and made the most contacts. A media contact was hired to do the social media.
• The property was paid off; the Stewards of Kleinstuck has the deed to the property. There was a willing seller in that instance.

b. What do our governing documents say about elections?
• Should the Council have had an election in September? Mr. Hampton will try to locate information about elections for the Council and provide an update.
• Mr. Nesius takes care of the Facebook Page and it has been slow lately. Normally a lot of pictures are posted but it hasn’t been happening lately. There have been about 3,000 people on that page.

VII. NEXT ONLINE MEETING – OCTOBER 14TH?
• Mark Kieser should be back in the country by the time the Council meets again. Maybe he will be on the next agenda to provide an update.
• Comments from the Council were in favor of continuing with virtual meetings. There were no comments to the contrary.

VIII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.
• None

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS.
• Mr. MacNellis suggested having Mr. Strazdas and Mr. Frever ask Kieser & Associates to present an updated timeline showing when work will be happening in the Preserve. Construction should be happening now. Mr. Frever will follow up with that request.
The bid package is ready to be submitted to WMU. Mr. Sauber will be working with Mr. Kieser on that. That information will be delivered to the Purchasing Department. It should be out to qualified bidders later this month or early October. The contractor will have a schedule; we will have to wait and see if the low qualified bidder is within the budget.

Ms. Holmes talked with Mr. Hampton regarding the large, dead Oak trees in the Preserve. She inquired if one or two of the trees could be cored to find accurate information about how old they are. This could be one more piece of evidence to show the community how precious the Preserve is. Bill Schneider thinks the Oaks on the hill are about 150 years old.

There was concern about the trees the beavers took down, but they won’t take down the large Oak trees.

Mr. Bassett stated that coring a dead tree is usually a dead end. Because of the rot, you would not get accurate data. Coring does not normally harm a live tree. He has a co-worker who likes to core trees. The Council could ask him to do the core samples and give a report to the Council.

Trees should be cored at an upper angle, so the water doesn’t go into the hole where the sample was removed.

Mr. Frever stated that WMU has a resistograph, which measures density in live wood. Mr. MacNellis mentioned that it will record a blip at every ring, there is a tape that shows the rings. An increment borer could also be used, and the data could be compared. Coring is very accurate. You can see how fast the tree was growing by the space between the rings.

X. ADJOURNMENT.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.