I. CALL TO ORDER AND ZOOM ROLL CALL.
   • A quorum was present, and Mr. Strazdas called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

II. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR APRIL 14, 2022.
   • Mr. Hampton, supported by Mr. Kreuzer, moved approval of the Agenda as submitted. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

III. EDITING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 10, 2022.
   • Mr. Kreuzer, supported by Mr. Bassett, moved approval of the Minutes as submitted. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT.
      • There were two items listed for March, a Procard expense of $372.00 and work orders of $749.00, which were for the daily grounds/trades person who takes care of the property and picks up litter. There were one or two snow removal charges for that period. There have been no mowing charges yet, but those charges should increase over the next few months.
      • Mr. Strazdas referred to the stormwater project and the information from Julie Rogers, which indicates that the Council should wait for further details about possible funding from Lansing for this project.
      • Mr. Hampton referred to the $48,301 in expenses so far for this project. That investment has helped advance this project to shovel-ready status, which could be beneficial for obtaining matching funds at the state level.

V. OLD BUSINESS.
   a. Project Updates and Project Finances.
      i. Storm Water Project.
         • Mr. Strazdas provided the following summary of the stormwater project:
         • The focus of the Council is to preserve the Preserve. The goal of the stormwater project is to improve water quality in Asylum Lake. There is historical data showing degradation of water quality in Asylum Lake.
         • Some of the stormwater that was draining into the lake was redirected during the U.S. 131 interchange project at Stadium Drive a couple of years ago.
         • Kieser and Associates was hired to do a remediation plan for the stormwater that still flows into Asylum Lake. The design was completed but the bids came in higher than expected. It was suggested that someone approach state legislators to see if financial resources are available for this project.
         • Mr. Strazdas met with Jeff Breneman, WMU Vice President for Government Relations, and State Representative, Julie Rogers, to discuss the stormwater project.
         • Ms. Rogers provided a flyer containing information about a research project that might possibly dovetail into the stormwater project. The flyer was provided to the Council for review.
         • Ms. Rogers advised that she wanted to speak with the Council about this project. She served eight years on the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners. Prior to that, she was an appointee to the Kalamazoo County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority Board.
         • She is concerned about the contaminants flowing into Asylum Lake but enthused about the shovel-ready project. Having a research component for this project is also appealing. Information from the Asylum Lake stormwater project could benefit other projects throughout the State of Michigan to mitigate and minimize road salt going into our lakes and streams.
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- As of January, Ms. Rogers was appointed to the House Appropriations Committee, as well as the EGLE (Environment Great Lakes Energy) subcommittee for appropriations. Ms. Rogers is keeping Senator McCann updated on the stormwater project. She has been working with Senator McCann on legislation for the Morrow Dam.
- Ms. Rogers spoke to her leadership with the House of Representatives and the EGLE Appropriations Chair. The preliminary conversations were positive.
- There are a number of ways to get funding for these projects. The governor’s recommendations for the 2022/2023 budget were made in February/March. The subcommittee hearing process started recently.
- Each member of the house democrats was asked for two large (millions of dollars) projects, but they haven’t been approached yet for smaller projects (less than a million dollars) like the stormwater project.
- There is a traditional budgeting process with subcommittees, and then the overall budget gets voted out of appropriations and goes to the full floor for the House of Representatives to vote on. The same process occurs in the Senate. Then the governor breaks it down during negotiations, and she might do a line-item veto of certain items.
- There is also a possibility of supplementals. There have been more supplementals in 2020 and 2021 than ever because of Covid money from the federal government. An example of that is Senate Bill 565, which is a water infrastructure bill. That bill designates funds for dams, flooding, and storm water management.
- The grant process for those funds will be revealed over the next few months. Ms. Rogers will share that information with Mr. Strazdas and Mr. Breneman when it becomes available. She doesn’t get to choose the funding source because she serves in the minority party. Senator McCann is the senior member of the delegation. She communicates with him regularly so they can decide which projects to support.
- Mr. Strazdas stated that Kieser & Associates recommended focusing on salt removal from the lake, but no one has figured out how to get rid of the salt. He contacted Carla Koretsky, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at WMU, and she referred him to Matt Reeves, Professor of Hydrogeology at WMU, who is interested in the potential for doing salt removal in addition to phosphorus sediment removal.
- Mr. Hampton expressed support for having Matt Reeves work on the salt issue in the lakes. The Council is committed to investing in the stormwater project, but not as much as the bid that was stated. He is hoping the government can provide financial assistance for this project.
- The Council has matching funds available for the stormwater project, and the City of Kalamazoo has committed to assisting with maintenance of the Barracuda boxes that are part of the stormwater project. Ms. Rogers advised that these will be positive points when applying for grant funding.
- Ms. Rogers was uncertain about the timeline Lansing will follow regarding the funding. They are in the middle of starting appropriations, so the timing is good if this project will be in the general fund budget for 2023. The subcommittee hearings and budgeting began recently. Senate bill 565 has already been signed by the governor and there are some categories of funding that the stormwater project might fit into.
- The legislation was the first hurdle and now they are figuring out what the grant process will look like. It could be as soon as next month that the grant process is available.
- If it becomes clear that the stormwater project could get into the budget, Ms. Rogers can ask the Council members to reach out with letters of support. It is not clear at this point which funding source the money will come from. If the funding comes through the larger omnibus budget, the letters of support would go to Thomas Albert, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, he will be at the negotiating table with the governor.
- Mr. Strazdas mentioned that Tyler Bassett is representing the Kalamazoo Environmental Council, Paul Scott represents the ODWNA (Oakland Drive Winchell Neighborhood Association).
- Mr. Scott stated that the Asylum Lake Preserve was once owned by the State of Michigan when it was a state hospital. There is a lot of history associated with the Preserve.
- Mr. Strazdas worked with Kieser & Associates regarding the one-page flyer that was provided to the Council. It was suggested there should be a research element and that was discussed with Carla Koretsky and Matt Reeves. It would be helpful to find research for extracting road salt from the lake.
- Information at the bottom of the one-page flyer refers to cost of the stormwater system ($775,000), construction ($525,000), and road salt research ($250,000). The Council has a funding gap of $550,000; Ms. Rogers is trying to help the Council find that funding.

ii. Land Management Plan Committee.
- The subcommittee has been working on revising the Management Plan for the past couple of years. Mr. Bassett, Mr. MacNelis, Mr. Kreuzer, Ms. Chase and Ms. Huxmann are involved with that subcommittee. Progress has been made with the updates, but a decision was made to hire Justin Heslinga, Heslinga Ecological, to help move things along.
Mr. Heslinga works with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. He has put management plans together for many other Preserves. The current management plan lacks specifics and needs to be streamlined.

Mr. Heslinga provided a draft of the objectives for the plan. The Council can provide input about what the next steps should be.

Good management plans have a circular motion, which follows the idea of adaptive management. Mr. Heslinga is proposing a six-section structure based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Plan, which works well.

The plan will begin with an introduction, which provides the big picture for the plan. It also contains information about what the plan is, why it was written, how it relates to other organizational documents (Declaration of Conservation Restrictions, previous plans, regional guidance), etc.

Section 2 provides specific background information about the site itself, where it is, where it sits in the landscape, what was there before, what’s there now, natural communities, rare species, etc. It also contains information about why the plan was written, such as threats or stressors that need to be mitigated. Maps of management units will be included. That work has already been done and there will be a focus on prioritization. These plans can offer justification and defense for seeking funding to do certain kinds of work on the site.

Section 3 covers goals that provide a long-term vision for the site and what we want it to look like in 50 years or 100 years. This section also covers specific objectives that define what needs to be done, where it needs to be done, how much, when, and identifies specific benchmarks to achieve those goals. Strategies are the tools that are used to achieve the objectives. Different terminology can be used if the Council prefers. This site has an ecological and a human component so it might be helpful to have a couple of different goals. The objectives were organized by broad habitat type in the previous plan and that makes sense for this site.

Section 4 covers best practices for dealing with objectives. Mr. Heslinga suggested using the “SMART” acronym, which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Oriented and Time-bound. There should be specific benchmarks that will be achievable with the resources that are available. Also included in the objectives section is a rationale for each objective. It is helpful to have enough detail so that people who are dealing with the plan in the future will have a clear idea of what needs to be done.

Section 5 covers strategies, which are the specific tools, techniques, and management actions, such as invasive species removal, prescribed burning, planting restoration, trail work, signage, etc. that help reach the objectives. It is helpful to prioritize the strategies in case some of this work needs to be done in sequence.

Section 6 covers monitoring, which references back to the objectives to make sure our management is successful. This allows us to determine if the strategies are working and, if not, what needs to be changed.

Mr. Lemberg referred to the standard planning model and suggested adding information between sections 2 and 3 that refers to the problems that need to be solved. Mr. Heslinga advised that the problems are imbedded in the background section, but they could be stated as a separate section.

Maps were provided showing the different areas of the Preserve. The Council has defined clear management units and Mr. Heslinga is proposing to keep that information. The only change he made was to include the fringing wetlands around Asylum Lake as part of the wet meadow emergent marsh management unit.

A map was provided showing desired future conditions, beyond the next five to ten years. Mr. Heslinga referred to the reconstruction of the prairie in the southwest corner of the Preserve. It is low in diversity, especially forbs, and maybe there is a strategy for that area, in addition to the burns, such as seeding and herbicide.

Savannah 1 is similar to the prairie in its lower diversity and the same strategy could be used to elevate the forb diversity and the species and functional diversity. Savannah 2, in the south/central area, doesn’t look like a savannah at this point and has a history of intensive land use. To do anything comprehensive in that area would take quite a bit of resource input.

The old field area that extends into the forest would eventually be reforested either through passive or active restoration. The rest of the forest has a pretty nice over-story but is species-poor underneath, and there is not much regeneration of Oaks and other desirable species.

Mr. Heslinga recommends keeping up with the prescribed burns and being more aggressive with getting additional light to the ground layer to promote regeneration of desirable species. That could include mechanical thinning through cutting or girdling. It should not disrupt the closed canopy but should open things up enough for natural regeneration of desirable species.

The invasive species are benefiting from the high nutrients and low water quality that is coming into the wetlands around the lake. Mr. Heslinga suggested addressing the nutrient issues before spending a lot of money on restoration of those habitats. Wetland habitats tend to retain native seed banks for a long period of time.
• Mr. Heslinga has been working with Mr. Bassett on sections 1 and 2 of the plan and those are in draft form at the moment. He drafted goals that didn’t make it onto the sheet he provided, and that can be discussed at another time. The objectives were provided by Mr. Bassett and the subcommittee.
• Annual work plans could be developed while the land management plan is being developed. Additional botanical studies to be done this summer will be incorporated into the management plan. The objectives should be determined before proceeding to Sections 5 and 6.
• Mr. Bassett will send communications to Mr. Heslinga if anyone on the Council wants to comment about the plan.
• Mr. Hampton referred to desired future conditions. Section #1 is close to the desired future condition. Most of the southern part of Oak savannah #1 is still prairie. Cherry Lane appears to be the boundary between Oak savannah #1 and the prairie. If that is the case, the prairie extends to the north of Cherry Lane. He questioned why that would be changed since the prairie is as valuable a resource as the Oak savannah.
• Under forest objectives, one of the ways mentioned to achieve transition to forest is by reducing deer browse, but that might not be possible. Mr. Heslinga advised that the Council could gauge the feasibility of that suggestion.
• Mr. Sauber advised that the purchase order should be available tomorrow. Jackie Michels will provide an e-mail update to Mr. Bassett in the near future.

iii. Ecological Study.
• Work on the ecological study is scheduled to begin in late May or early June. The corners of the sampling plot need to be relocated. Mr. Bassett has been in touch with the vendor, and they are committed to making sure the study is consistent with how it was done in the past.
• Mr. Sauber will make sure the paperwork is done for the funding of this project.

iv. Ecological Maintenance.
• Refer to updates under Land Management Plan Committee.

v. Garlic Mustard Pull.
• Mr. Kreuzer mentioned that the only expense for the Garlic Mustard pull that impacts the budget would be for Mr. Sauber’s crew getting the hole dug. The other participants are volunteers.
• The organizers have enough trash bags, but the hole still needs to be dug and fence needs to be set up around the hole as a safety measure. Mr. Sauber advised that the cost should be the same amount as last year for the hole and the safety items.
• The Garlic Mustard pull is scheduled for May 7th and 14th, 10 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. May 15th is the rain date with the same times. Drake Road is the official entry point. Ms. Huxmann has been working with Mr. MacNellis and Mr. Sauber on the details of this event, and they will hand out flyers during the event.

vi. Install Memorial Tree.
• The Burr Oak tree is for the new memorial and the Swamp White Oak will be the replacement tree for the memorial by the Parkview entrance to the Preserve.
• Discussion followed as to where the new tree/memorial will be located. Mr. Sauber suggested putting the Burr Oak tree in an area where the prescribed burns occur, since that type of tree is tolerant of burns. The Council members were in favor of allowing Mr. Sauber to determine the exact location where the tree will be planted.

vii. Replace Dead Memorial Tree.
• The Swamp White Oak needs to be replaced and a new tree will be planted in that location. Mr. Bassett commented that Burr Oaks define the landscape and he would like to see another one of those at the Preserve.
• Mr. Sauber will contact the arborist to order another tree, it should be planted soon.

viii. Sign Committee.
• There were no updates from the Sign Subcommittee.

ix. Trails Management Committee.
• Mr. Sauber got a purchase order for O’Boyle, Cowell, Blalock & Associates (OCBA). They are working on five projects that need estimates. Those will be presented to the Council when more funding is required. The Council is paying them out of the current budget.
There are now four shovel-ready trail projects. There has been discussion about the trail that needs work near the spillway, by the south shore of Asylum Lake. The subcommittee has the specifications and designs for those projects, which might be presented at the next meeting.

OCBA will work on the design for the expansion of the Parkview parking lot.

There is $7,000 left from two previous projects. The trail from Parkview to Little Asylum Lake was finished, but the project was over budget by about $3,000. The $7,000 is for the second project, which is the northwest trail addition from the savannah to the old trail by Drake Rd. It might be preferable to spend the money on one or two smaller projects.

Mr. Strazdas mentioned the importance of having the Council prioritize these projects so they can begin during the current calendar year.

x. Water Quality Testing with WMU Class.

- Mr. Kohler had nothing to report yet.

xi. Land and Boundary Mark Survey.

- The Council authorized 51% of the expense for the land survey. The other 49% came from WMU administration. A purchase order was issued for Fishbeck to do the land survey and put the permanent markers on the Asylum Lake Preserve property line.
- Mr. Sauber observed Fishbeck starting the survey at Asylum Lake. They were on Drake Rd. at the north end of the Preserve. There should be more progress over the next couple of weeks as they get ready to install the permanent markers.
- There will be markers at every turn/corner of the property. There will be intermediate markers for the property to the north.

b. Beaver Deceiver Update.

- Mr. MacNellis and Mr. Sauber met with Allen Frazier from Fulton Excavating and gave him some parameters to extend the pipe another 20 feet into the bay. He is working on a quote.
- The water level at the lake is high, and the silt is building up around the inlet which is under water. If the pipe is extended another 20 feet, it should resolve that issue.
- Mr. Strazdas confirmed that there are financial resources in the budget for this project.

c. Parking on Winchell Ave.

- Mark Hoffman met on site with Pete Kushner, President of the Oakland Drive Winchell Neighborhood Association (ODWNA) and Dennis Randolph, the Traffic Engineer for the City of Kalamazoo. Mr. Randolph proposed a solution, which Mr. Kreuzer sent to the Council.
- The proposal is to create a 240-foot-long designated, shared bike lane/parking lane on the south side of Winchell, starting 30 feet west of Highpoint Drive for intersection vision requirements. This would allow for 12, 20-foot-long parking spaces and would be marked with a dashed, white line. Signs would be posted to indicate two-hour parking 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., rather than dawn to dusk, which would be hard to enforce.
- If the neighborhood agrees, signs could be posted soon, and the lines could be painted during the regular painting season this summer. The ALPA voted to approve the proposed solution, but they have not notified the city yet.
- The Oakland Drive Winchell Neighborhood Association requested time to review the survey to see if they have other recommendations besides what’s been approved by the City.
- Mr. Scott stated that he was not in favor of having twelve parking spaces in that location; it undermines the neighborhood plan. He has never seen more than six cars parked there. There is no sidewalk in that area and people would be forced to walk around cars. Traffic safety is a big issue in the neighborhood. Twelve spaces would be more parking than what is available at the Parkview parking lot.
- There have been reports of Public Safety ticketing vehicles in the no parking zone by the Winchell entrance to the Preserve. Public Safety doesn’t usually patrol that area; people were reporting that vehicles were parked illegally. Shelter Point is an open street nearby and that might be a solution to the parking issue.
- Mr. Strazdas encouraged the ALPA and the ODWNA to continue working together to find a middle-ground that will work.
d. Oak Trees and Beavers – Tree Wrap.
   • Mr. Kreuzer reported that the wrap seems to be working. The beavers have been hungry lately and cutting down trees. Channel 3 and Channel 8 both did segments on the trees and the beavers.
   • Additional help is needed so that more trees can be wrapped. Mr. Kreuzer has been tasked with putting white dots on additional trees that should be wrapped.
   • Mr. Lemberg mentioned research on beaver ecology is focused on the western states where Aspen trees are, and they grow fast. Beavers normally don’t eat trees here unless they are really hungry. They make lodges to live in and dams to create standing water that helps grow vegetation, which is a part of their diet.
   • The beavers that Mr. Lemberg watches in his back yard dive under the ice and retrieve Pond Lilies, which they eat on the ice. They don’t eat the trees. The Council is focused on the forest and not looking at what the beavers should be eating. Maybe the Preserve doesn’t have a large stand of Pond Lilies, Cattails and Arrowhead near the dam where the beavers should be eating. Oak trees are bitter, and beavers don’t normally eat them unless they are starving. If we plant Pond Lilies, chances are they would not be eating our trees.
   • Mr. Kohler stated that there are tons of Pond Lilies at Asylum Lake, but maybe the beavers have eaten them already or those beavers don’t like Pond Lilies. There is plenty of aquatic vegetation at Asylum Lake. He was not in favor of introducing more Pond Lilies just to feed the beavers.

VI. NEW BUSINESS.

a. Application for Preserve Use.
   • Mr. Kohler advised that an application was received recently, and it was approved.
   • Mattawan Elementary has been bringing six classes into the Preserve for the last twelve years. They will be in the Preserve on May 12th and 13th, and will be staying mostly on the trail but taking a few samples from the lake.
   • Mr. Sauber will let the applicants know their proposal has been approved.

   • Mr. Strazdas referred to an issue about inappropriate words on a sign in the Preserve, which inspired a number of e-mails. Ms. Shattuck has been working on this issue.
   • Ms. Shattuck advised that WMU has a Native American Advisory Council, which was approved by the Provost to build better relationships with the local tribes. There are representatives from all three of the Potawatomi bands on that Council. There is a land acknowledgement statement that has been developed by the university.
   • One of the goals of the Native American Advisory Council is to talk about the shared stewardship of the land. The ALPMC could link to their website, add the land acknowledgement statement to the ALPMC site, and include historical information on the web pages.
   • Some of Ms. Shattuck’s students are doing research on the Anishinaabe Indian names and the plants and wildlife on the website. Maybe the ALPMC could incorporate that information into their materials.
   • Mr. Kreuzer mentioned that some of our land management practices, such as prescribed burns, originated from native American practices. The new play area at Bronson Park has made a statement on their website and acknowledges contributions of indigenous people regarding the land.
   • Mr. Bassett suggested being explicit about that with the Management Plan. At least an acknowledgement that we are attempting to restore the land, as close as possible, to what it was when Native Americans were there. We are used to erasures of those cultures, and we should reverse that while we can.
   • Mr. Strazdas inquired if Ms. Shattuck’s students could create a word document for the Asylum Lake Preserve website about the history of indigenous people on the Preserve. Ms. Shattuck agreed to help with that; she will try to have something for the next meeting.
   • Mr. Kohler mentioned that the Asylum Lake Preserve was not singled-out for this action. There was a similar kind of vandalism at the Preserves Kalamazoo College has near the Oshtemo Township park.

   c. New Comments from ALPA.
   • Mr. Kreuzer stated that ALPA wants permission from the Council for a visitors meet-and-greet. It would be held at the Drake and Parkview entrances to the Preserve to express gratitude to visitors, offer ALPA brochures and provide awareness about what a special place the Preserve is. Wendy Denning and Judy Huxmann have volunteered to do this. The intention is to help determine where visitors live and how that impacts green space. The brochure has QR codes for the ALPA and WMU websites.
• Mr. Kreuzer, supported by Mr. Scott, moved to accept the ALPA proposal to share fliers with guests at the Asylum Lake Preserve. The motion was approved by a majority vote; Ms. Twynham did not vote in favor of the motion.
• The intention is to have a meet-and-greet three or four times throughout the spring and summer and find out where visitors to the preserve are coming from.
• The Earth Day video provided to the Council is about four minutes long. It will be posted on the Earth Day website.

VII. NEXT ONLINE MEETING.
• The next Council meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2022. Mr. Strazdas inquired if Council members would prefer to meet in person or remotely. No one expressed a preference for meeting in person.

VIII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.
• Mr. Sauber ordered the Port O Potties for the Garlic Mustard pull. One will be placed at the Drake Road entrance, and one will be placed in the woods.
• Mr. Hampton commended Mr. Strazdas for his work with the Council, and for getting Julie Rogers on board with the stormwater project. He also acknowledged Mr. Sauber and Mr. Bassett for getting Mr. Heslings on board with the Land Management Plan.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS.
• None

X. ADJOURNMENT.
• The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.