ASYLUM LAKE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Minutes
March 16, 2023

Members Present: Pete Strazdas, Chair; Sharon Dever, Vice Chair; Kay Chase, Council Secretary; Tom Sauber, Natural Areas Manager; Tyler Bassett; Chris Bovid; Mark Frever; Duane Hampton; Lynne Heasley; Steve Kienle; John Kreuzer; David Lemberg; Cybelle Shattuck; Silvia Roederer; Tiffany Schriever; Mark Weiss

Members Excused: Paul Scott, Todd Barkman; Keith Pung

Guests: Judy Huxmann; Paul MacNellis;

I. CALL TO ORDER AND 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 16, 2023.
   • There were no changes to the agenda, which was approved by unanimous voice vote.

III. EDITING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 12, 2023.
   • There were no changes to the Minutes, which were approved by unanimous voice vote.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT.
      • The financial report was provided for the Council to review. The charge of $6,500 from the operating funds was used for the beaver deceiver pipe.

V. OLD BUSINESS.
   a. Project Updates and Project Finances.
      • The updates and financial information were provided to the Council for review.

i. Stormwater and Research Project.
   • Mark Kieser and his staff met with Dr. Reeves and the graduate student at Asylum Lake. They are laying out the bench scale testing protocols, which will help determine if the project can be done with perfect laboratory conditions. An Environmental Engineer from Kieser & Associates is working with the graduate student on this project.
   • The original stormwater plan was updated to provide a more economical way to complete the project. The new plan includes a flat spot by Drake Road for containers of alum (Sodium Aluminate), which will be injected into the stormwater system during the wintertime (December through March). Alum is used to suppress phosphorus in stormwater treatment and adjust the pH (acidity) to a more alkaline state.
   • The infiltration trench will be constructed with limestone rather than rocks, as originally proposed. The limestone will help adjust the pH levels.
   • There is instrumentation (piezometers), which are shallow well pipes in the wetlands for data collection. There is automated instrumentation along Drake Road which is constantly collecting data regarding the chloride content of the water.
   • The stormwater construction process has two main elements: 1. The redesign and rebidding and, 2. Making sure the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and EGLE (Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy) will provide approval for the stormwater project.
   • There are details in the permit that refer to a possible innovative treatment for chloride. The EPA and EGLE advised that further discussions will be necessary if the intention is to proceed with that treatment.
   • Kieser & Associates contacted the EPA and EGLE to let them know about the alum container by the roadway. They will review the changes and provide feedback. They could advise that if something is being injected into a surface water body, a federal permit would be required. The injections are going into
the stormwater, rather than the lake. Discussions are ongoing to determine if additional permits will be required.

- The updated drawings have been submitted to Jackie Michels at WMU, and she will help get the project out to bid. Kieser and Associates is suggesting that a pre-bid meeting should be held so that the Council, WMU and Kieser & Associates can meet with the contractors who are interested in bidding on the project.
- A deadline of May 15th has been proposed for the bids to be submitted. The contractors will have about 10 months to complete the project, which will have a proposed completion date of March 1, 2024.
- There are four trees in the Preserve that will be removed as part of the stormwater project. They cannot be removed during the time period from April 1st to September 30th because of restrictions regarding bats. Bats have not been observed in these trees, but the restrictions still apply.
- Kieser & Associates did value engineering to simplify the project, get the price down and get more bids. One of the changes was the concrete box buried by the road. The original proposal required going down 18 feet, which would cost almost $80,000. The updated proposal requires two smaller boxes side by side, at a depth of 12 feet. This should result in substantial savings on construction costs and should also provide more treatment. The updated project should go out to bid at the end of March 2023.
- It was suggested that Mr. Sauber or Mr. Frever should attend the pre-bid meeting, and then the Council can approve the payment. It was also suggested that Mark Weiss should attend the pre-bid meeting since he deals with the regulatory items. Mr. Kieser can come back to the Council for input after the bids are received.
- Mr. Sauber will see that the six current invoices from Kieser & Associates will be paid.
- There will be six to ten months of research to help determine the amount of alum to be injected into the stormwater system. A framework for the research has been created. Dr. Reeves and Dan Cassidy are looking at the most effective way to do the treatments. They will provide that information to EGLE and the EPA.
- A wetland permit was issued for this project, but not a Rule 97 permit for injecting into a surface water body. The wetland permit was required because a pipe will be installed (buried) across an 80-foot area of wetland and a two-foot-wide berm will be constructed.
- The pipe and berm will extend to the east and there will be an open-water, equalization pond that will overflow into the gravel trench. The trench will be about 10 feet from the lake, and it will blend into the landscape after a couple of years.
- Discussion followed as to whether or not the results of this project will be published. Mr. Kieser stated that the results of the project would not be published in real time because it is experimental. The professors will want to publish details of the project.
- Kieser & Associates has an agreement with the university that states what will happen if this project becomes commercial. They have a non-disclosure agreement with the university pertaining to intellectual property, which would stay in-house.
- A question was asked about the nutrients in the water. Mr. Kieser stated that pre-monitoring is being done at this point to study the nutrients in the stormwater. When the system is built, there will be post-monitoring of the stormwater. Water sampling will be done every season to provide a good baseline of information.
- Mr. Strazdas stated that Mr. Frever will work with the media so that consistent information can be provided to the public when the construction starts.
- Discussion followed regarding the former Vermeulen property next to the Preserve and how construction on that site might affect the stormwater system in the Preserve. The City has not approved the necessary rezoning to allow the proposed developments to take place.
- The capacity of the stormwater system on the Preserve property would be maxed out. City regulations would require stormwater to be retained on the adjacent property if there is new construction on that land.
- Mr. Kieser suggested having signage in the Preserve with a QR code so the public can find information about what is happening in the Preserve once the construction begins.
It was suggested that, if there is signage in the Preserve regarding the stormwater construction project, it should refer to an Asylum Lake water “restoration” initiative because that would seem more positive than referring to a stormwater “quality” project.

A question was asked regarding use of a desalination process. Current desalination processes utilize reverse osmosis, which would be prohibitively expensive for Asylum Lake.

**ii. Land Management Plan Committee/Update on Public Session for Student and Public Review/Comments.**

- The public provided positive feedback about the draft Land Management Plan at the public meeting held on March 16th.
- Ms. Shattuck offered to contact the local Indian tribes to request feedback about the draft Land Management Plan. She will share the draft documents with representatives from the tribes and ask them to attend the next Council meeting.
- It was suggested that the Council should approve the Plan as soon as possible.

**iii. Ecological Study.**

- Mr. Bassett reported that the $18,000 budget has been spent.

**iv. Ecological Maintenance.**

- Mr. Sauber has been in contact with Bill Schneider from Wildtype. Mr. Sauber offered to send information to the Council about what Mr. Schneider is proposing to do in the Preserve. The Council needs to consider having Wildtype do more work in the Preserve this summer.
- Mr. Sauber and Mr. Bassett will communicate with Bill Schneider regarding the Land Management Plan.
- Mr. Strazdas suggested having a discussion at the next meeting about what projects the Council would like to do in the Preserve so that a contractor can be retained to proceed with the work. Mr. Strazdas needs to get a draw from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to make sure there are enough funds to pay the contractor. He requested that estimates for the work be discussed at the next meeting.
- Mr. Bassett commented that the Council probably missed an opportunity to have a prescribed burn in the Preserve this spring. Fall provides a narrow window of opportunity for a prescribed burn due to increased precipitation from climate change.
- Mr. Strazdas suggested that the Council budget for the prescribed burn in the fall of 2023. If it isn’t possible to do the burn in the fall, it can be scheduled for the spring of 2024.

**v. Sign Committee.**

- Ms. Huxmann stated that changes should be made to the dog signs in the Preserve. She suggested having six or seven signs with a red slash mark by the entrances to get people’s attention. The current signs blend in with the landscaping. The signs state that dogs should be kept on a leash and that people should clean up after their dogs.
- Signs with other colors could be used on the deer trails and scattered throughout the Preserve where dog poop tends to accumulate. The signs don’t have to be permanent. The subcommittee has funds to pay for the signs.
- The following comments were made: the signs should contain the phrase “within this Preserve” rather than “this area” which could be interpreted to mean the area by the sign. The signs should emphasize ecology rather than the law. Dog poop leaves nutrients that can damage the ecology. Dogs that are off-leash might interfere with ground-nesting birds and that is an issue. Don’t put the signs on the deer trails as that could encourage use of non-approved trails. Maybe put the signs at the beginning and the end of the deer trail. The red signs with the slash mark should be near the entrances to the Preserve. The signs regarding ecology should be placed within the Preserve.
- Mr. Strazdas suggested that the sign subcommittee work with Mr. Sauber regarding the proposal for the new signs.
vi. Trails Management Committee.
- Mr. Strazdas requested that the Trails Management Subcommittee prioritize their projects and discuss the top two projects at the next Council meeting. The Council needs to budget for these items. It is important to keep these projects moving forward.

- Ms. Shattuck stated that she had positive responses from the Nottawaseppi Band and the Pokagon band. She hasn’t heard from the Gun Lake Tribe. She is hoping to find out if they have any historical records or oral traditions about the Preserve property. The students who were helping her have graduated.

VI. NEW BUSINESS.

a. Application for Preserve Use.
- Mr. Sauber received two proposals for projects in the Preserve. One of them is for a water purification project and the other one is a research project. He will tell them about the stormwater project the Council is working on. Also, Aaron Parker talked to EGLE about monitoring the water. Concern was expressed about having multiple entities producing water quality data in the Preserve.
- Mr. Sauber will e-mail the applicants and ask them to fill out applications. It might be helpful to learn more details about what they are proposing in order to determine if these projects could be useful for the Preserve. Maybe they want to clean the sediment out of the lake; the Council doesn’t have a plan for that yet.

b. Tree or Bench Memorials and Donations.
- The process for creating memorials and providing donations is on the Asylum Lake website now, along with a form for people to fill out.

VII. NEXT ONLINE MEETING.

a. April 13, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Some of the Council members expressed a preference for having an in-person meeting in April. It was suggested that the meeting could be held at the Campus Services Building. Ms. Shattuck stated that the Pokagon representative can only attend a zoom meeting.

VIII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.
- Mr. Sauber took care of 20 or 30 branches that were on the trails after the recent storm. The Arborist he is working with will do more work on branches that came down.
- Mr. Strazdas suggested having a discussion at the next meeting about budgeting for invasives, trails and a prescribed burn at the Preserve.
- Ms. Holmes stated that the Asylum Lake Preservation Association (ALPA) will be holding a community gathering in the Preserve on May 20th. There will be a tent with display tables for environmental organizations in the area. There will be tours of the Preserve and presentations by WMU representatives.
- This has been an uplifting event in the past because it provides an opportunity for the community to appreciate the Preserve. The Council will receive notification of this event and the Council members might be asked to help out.
- Mr. Sauber stated that the port-o-johns will be delivered to the Preserve in April.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS.
- None

X. ADJOURNMENT.
- The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.