I. CALL TO ORDER AND ZOOM ROLL CALL.
   • Mr. Strazdas called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR DECEMBER 14, 2023.
   • Under new business, add a discussion about the possibility of Judy Huxmann becoming a voting member of the Council. Under old business, move stormwater discussion to the first item on the agenda.
   • Mr. Frever, supported by Mr. Kreuzer, moved approval of the agenda as amended. The amended agenda was approved.

III. EDITING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 9, 2023.
   • Under VI. c., correct spelling to “Dever”.
   • Mr. Hampton, supported by Mr. Weiss, moved approval of the amended Minutes. The amended minutes were approved.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT.
   • The expenses for November have not been added to the spreadsheet but they should be about the same as the expenses for October for operational costs.
   • There was a payment to Wildtype in October. Mr. Sauber would like to have Bill Schneider from Wildtype attend the next Council meeting to provide an update about what his crew has done in the Preserve. They did a lot of work with invasive plants. The results of this work should be obvious next year. He can also talk about what they plan to do in the future.

V. OLD BUSINESS.
a. Project Updates and Project Finances.
i. Storm Water and Research Project.
   • Mr. Jacobson provided the following updates regarding the construction of the stormwater system:
   • Construction of phase 1 of the stormwater system has been completed. Mr. Jacobson spoke with Ryan from Hoffman Brothers regarding the punch list of items that need to be addressed. Three of the five issues have been resolved.
   • The only money item is the fencing that is needed at a cost of $5,175 to close off the pathway by the hydraulic forebay. The forebay is not easy to walk around; that area should be closed to the public.
   • The infiltration trench was shortened, and some trees were saved at the other end of the system, that provided a cost savings of $3,464, leaving a total fencing cost of $1,711 ($5,175 minus $3,464). There will be gates to allow Kieser & Associates to sample the stormwater and to allow the Council to see what’s happening with the system.
   • The second item on the punch list is the wood retaining wall, which provides access to the system. The retaining wall is leaning, and it needs to be stabilized since it will be there for a while.
• **Mr. Hampton, supported by Mr. Kienle, moved to authorize additional funds in the amount of $1,711 to finish phase 1 of the stormwater project.** The motion carried unanimously.

• Mr. Frever inquired if the design of the fence would force people onto the neighboring property or Asylum Lake property. Mr. Kieser stated that if people went around the fence, they would be on the neighbor’s property. The goal is to discourage people from walking in that area.

• If the beavers are keeping the lake level up, there is about 12 inches of walkway. In two years, the path should be grown over. If people try hard they could go around the fence to the north or south but it would be difficult.

• It should be possible for the contractor to put a fence around the area and install a sign saying, “danger do not enter”? Ms. Huxmann mentioned that she would discuss a sign she is proposing for that area later in the meeting.

• Mr. Hampton mentioned that the contractor cut 100 feet off the 1,400 foot long trench. He questioned if the cost savings of $3,000 included labor or if that was just the pipe. Mr. Kieser stated that it was 80 feet of piping and that was deducted from the total cost. The cost reduction was consistent with the contractor’s bid for phase 1 of the project, which was bid separately. Mr. Strazdas observed that deductions tend to create a small credit but additions to the project are expensive.

• Mr. Kieser mentioned that the contractor also put a fence and a gate around the concrete pad by the road and that was part of the credit. The fence is necessary to make sure the totes of chemicals by the concrete pad are secured.

• Mr. Frever and Mr. Sauber will review the general fund budget for the $1,711 that is needed for the fencing.

• Mr. Strazdas mentioned that the third part of the stormwater project is to remove salt from the stormwater. He inquired as to what has been done and what needs to be done.

• Mr. Kieser stated that the construction is done. There is a separate budget for the chloride research. The chloride removal process will be tested in the Preserve this winter. A determination can be made as to how well the chloride removal system is working at each stage of the filtration.

• There was a discussion about how much precipitate (salt) might be generated from the stormwater filtration system. As an example, if there is a cubic yard of salt, there could be five cubic yards of powder (part of the filtration process) to get that amount of chloride (road salt) out of the stormwater.

• This portion of the two main stormwater drains carries less than 5% of the chloride coming into the lake. Ninety-five percent of the chloride going into Asylum Lake is coming from U.S. 131. Funds from a future 319 grant would help pay for that part of the project.

• The portion of the stormwater project that was just completed is phase 1 of the project. A future phase 2 of the stormwater project is across Drake Road by U.S. 131. That is where the larger, commercial operation might be necessary to deal with the bigger volume of chloride that needs to be removed from the stormwater.

• What the research team learns from phase 1 of the project could be applied to phase 2 of the project. The research team is set up to do the pilot testing and find out what works in the Preserve. That will tell them what is needed when they go across the street to the west of Drake Road for the next phase of the stormwater project.

• Mr. Hampton, Ms. Chase, Ms. Huxmann and Mr. Sauber expressed an interest in looking at the stormwater system with Mr. Kieser. The tour was set up for December 15th at 2 p.m. The group will meet at the Drake Road parking lot and walk to where the fence will be installed.

• The people who created the Declaration of Conservation Restrictions and the Management Framework for the Preserve suggested focusing on Asylum Lake. Mr. Strazdas gave kudos to the Council and the team of people who have been focusing on the water quality in Asylum Lake.

• Most of the solid contaminants are coming through the traditional stormwater system that has just been completed. The stormwater runoff from U.S. 131 is not adding solids but contains most of the road salt (chloride) that is going into Asylum Lake.
Mr. Kieser provided the following updates regarding the research portion of the stormwater project:

- Staff from Kieser & Associates met again with Dr. Cassidy, Dr. Reeves and Mr. Al Hinai; they are making good progress. The chloride removal numbers are not as extreme as the numbers that were originally reported.
- The bench scale testing in the lab was done with distilled water. Testing that was done on the snow melt did not show as high a percentage of chloride removal, but it is still over 70% removal. The proof of concept is still there, and that tells the team they need a different ratio of dosing on site.
- Dr. Reeves will have Mr. Al Hinai focus on what is needed out in the field. There are interesting features that were added to the schematic but have not been built. The chloride removal process produces a milky liquid, which might require a polymer injection to turn it into heavier particles, similar to coarse sand. The pH might also need to be adjusted with CO2 injections.
- The barracuda traps by the road take out sediment from the stormwater and then the stormwater can be treated for chloride. The chloride treatment mixes with the stormwater in a minute to a minute and a half. By the time the polymer might be needed, the treatment has been going on for about 40 minutes. Approximately ten minutes after that, an adjustment could be made to the pH, if needed, and then the treated stormwater flows into the infiltration trench.
- The team has to progress from using beakers in the lab to using the stormwater treatment system in the field. They are going through testing that mimics what goes on out in the field. The schematic shows the details of the stormwater treatment system.
- There is money in the research budget to do some of the proposed physical details on site. Contractor involvement should not be required other than for the precipitant and the polymer. The team can do the additional work that might be needed.
- The wetland intrusion permit can be closed, but there was a clause in the permit that requires disclosure to the Department of EGLE (Environment Great Lakes and Energy) regarding the chemicals that are being added to the stormwater treatment system. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) says as long as the stormwater is below a pH of 9, it can be discharged.
- The State of Michigan has expressed interest in being part of the conversations about what is happening with the chloride removal process. This should not impede the project. Representatives from Kieser & Associates will talk with them in the next couple of months. If they have an issue, Kieser & Associates will report back to the Council.
- Mr. Hampton mentioned that Kieser & Associates was forced to cut back on stormwater monitoring at the lake due to budget constraints. He inquired what should be done so there is monitoring in place to check the effectiveness of the stormwater treatment system. Mr. Kieser stated that there are monitors in place and more sampling points will be installed in the infiltration trench. That will come out of the chloride budget.

**ii. Ecological Maintenance – Continue Discussion on Part-Time Consultant.**

- The Council discussed the idea of hiring a consultant to help guide the implementation of the Land Management Plan. Mr. Bassett put together a draft RFP (Request for Proposals) and sent it to Mark Frever. Mr. Frever did not have an update.
- There was an email discussion about hiring a consultant from the Nature Center to help implement the Plan. Staff from the Kalamazoo Nature Center did the original study in the Preserve before the Council was formed.
- Mr. Bassett stated that he would like to see additional bids from contractors other than the Nature Center, but they have employees who are qualified to do the work. The Nature Center is local and they have staff who are able to visit the Preserve regularly and they are familiar with the site.
- The names of five contractors were provided as possible part-time consultants. Mr. Strazdas suggested adding the Nature Center to that list. This is a part-time consulting job and would be very costly if it were a full-time job. The Council would not have the funds for a full-time position.
• Mr. Frever stated that he can add the Nature Center to the list of contractors. Mr. Strazdas commented that the Council has hired contractors to do several burns and to take care of invasive plant species in the Preserve. Those two items consume the budget allotted for ecological maintenance. The part-time consultant would help the Council take care of other things in the Preserve that have not been getting done. They need to stay on track with the timeline laid out in the Plan.
• Mr. Strazdas suggested including an hourly rate in the RFP, and stating how many hours per year the Council will need the part-time contractor.

iii. Sign Committee.
• Ms. Huxmann has been working on a sign to keep people out of certain areas of the Preserve. She has seen a similar sign in other places that are trying to reclaim habitat.
• The proposal is for one sign, which is about 14” x 18” inches, and it is on a post. The QR code on the sign is for the WMU Asylum Lake page. There is probably a better website to direct people to, about the water filtration system.
• The intention is to discourage people from going to the north side of the lake because it is more vulnerable. The sign could be placed as far east as possible.
• Mr. Sauber can purchase the sign with his procurement card after the contractor provides a quote. Ms. Huxmann suggested having the signs at both ends of the stormwater system and also putting one on the fence that will be installed to close off the west end of the trail.
• Mr. Strazdas suggested having Mark Kieser ask the contractor to get a “danger do not enter sign” on the fence. That area will be grown over with vegetation in a couple of years. A couple of signs could be purchased and moved around to different locations as needed.
• Ms. Huxmann referred to the sign the engineers created for the project by the former parking lot by Drake Road. She suggested moving that sign by the current Drake Road parking lot so people can see it from there. The QR code is so small you can’t read it by driving by. It would be helpful if people could walk up to the sign and get the QR code.
• Ms. Huxmann stated that she and Ms. Heasley attempted to get together for a meeting about the signs but their schedules did not allow for that to happen. Mr. Strazdas suggested that the sign subcommittee could discuss what other signage might be needed in the Preserve.

iv. Trails Management Committee.
• Mr. Sauber stated that there is some erosion to the trail off Parkview. A few volunteers could fix it. The material has migrated down the hill. It needs to be taken back up the hill and put in place. Three or four people could take care of it in a couple of hours. It could be done during the winter months if we have a mild winter.
• Mr. Strazdas suggested creating a work order for a couple of landscape personnel to get that job done.

• No report.

• Mr. Weiss expressed concern that the draft letter referred to support by WMU when their position might not be fully vetted. Mr. Strazdas suggested that the letter is more likely to be approved by the Vice President of Business and Finance if that language is removed. Mr. Strazdas needs a final draft to send to Jan Van Der Kley. If she approves the letter, he will sign it and send it to the Planning Commission.
• The following comments were made about the draft letter:
• The first sentence of the letter should refer to “The Asylum Lake Policy and Management Council” rather than, “the Board.”
• There should be something in the letter about the potential traffic impasse on Drake Rd. if the adjacent property is developed as a car wash.
• Ms. Chase could join the subcommittee to do one last rewording of the letter and then e-mail it to the Council for review.
• Due to time constraints, the subcommittee was in favor of continuing the conversation by phone, rather than meeting in person. The subcommittee will review the letter and send it to the Council for approval.
• The State of Michigan grant plus the financial support from the Council should add up to the total budget of $775,000.
• A brief conversation followed regarding the timeline for the letter to be approved and sent to the Planning Commission. A suggestion was made to wait until after the holidays. Ms. Dever stated that the approval process through WMU will take time. She would prefer to keep it moving.
• The zoning code update is scheduled to be on the Planning Commission agenda in March. The subcommittee was encouraged to meet next week and provide the draft letter to the Council for approval as soon as possible.
• There was a brief conversation about the article written by Paula Davis in the WMU magazine. The university expressed support in the article (dated September 20, 2023) for the installation of the innovative stormwater treatment system at Asylum Lake Preserve. Mr. Kreuzer inquired if WMU would not support the letter even though they made a statement in the article about supporting the stormwater project.
• Concern was expressed that WMU would not support the letter if it contains information about what adjacent landowners should or should not do with the adjacent land.
• If there are significant changes from Vice President Van Der Kley to the draft letter, the letter will go back to the Council for review.

VI. NEW BUSINESS.

a. Application for Preserve Use.
• There were no new applications for use of the Preserve.

b. Discussion regarding Judy Huxmann’s request to be a voting member of the Council.
• Ms. Huxmann stated that she has been a volunteer for the Council for years, but she would like to be a voting member. Mr. Strazdas suggested taking a look at the Management Framework and the Bylaws that identify positions on the Council. All of the positions are filled and he was not sure if anyone was leaving.
• Mr. Bassett stated that he would like to resign from the Council. Maybe Ms. Huxmann could apply for his position.
• Ms. Chase suggested the possibility of phasing out the Kalamazoo Environmental Council representation on the Council in favor of Oakwood Neighborhood Association representation. That would require action by the WMU Board of Trustees and changes to the governing documents, which could take months to happen.
• The quickest way to get Ms. Huxmann on the Council might be to have The Kalamazoo Environmental Council send a letter to Mr. Strazdas. They could state that they would like to have Ms. Huxmann as their representative on the Council after Mr. Bassett resigns. Mr. Strazdas can inform WMU Vice President Van Der Kley of the requested change and then the ALPMC website and e-mail distribution list etc. can be updated.
• Mr. Hampton was in favor of having Ms. Huxmann as a voting member of the Council. He is about to leave the country in two months. He was appointed to the Council by the Vice President for Business. The current Vice President for that department will have to appoint someone as his replacement. That will likely be a WMU employee.
• Mr. Strazdas expressed his appreciation to Ms. Huxmann for her contributions to the Council. If Mr. Bassett is leaving, his replacement could be appointed sooner than the Council’s bylaws could be rewritten to provide an open seat on the Council.

• Ms. Dever stated that the ECC (Environmental Concerns Committee) will have an open position when she leaves in 12 months. They will need to appoint another representative to serve on the Council. The person in that position would have to live in the City of Kalamazoo.

VII. NEXT ONLINE MEETING.
• January 11, 2024 (or do we skip a month?)
• After a brief discussion, the Council decided not to meet in January of 2024. The next Council meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2024.

VIII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.
• Mr. Sauber stated that the beaver deceiver pipe is not flowing like it should be; he cleared out the pipe. A couple weeks later it was not flowing again.
• The beaver deceiver pipe has broken away from the chains and it’s on the bottom of the lake. Mr. Sauber will be meeting with a representative from Fulton Excavating tomorrow to discuss this issue. The contractor designed the beaver deceiver, and he wants them to fix it. The pipe needs a wider cage on the end so the beavers can’t plug it with debris.
• Tom Holmes suggested drilling a hole in the pipe so the water continues to flow but the beavers don’t hear the water flowing. They don’t hear the flowing water under the surface of the lake like they do if it’s on top of the lake. The intention is not to get rid of the beavers, they are part of the ecosystem. There are articles on how to fix the beaver deceiver.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS.
• None

X. ADJOURNMENT.
• The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.