ASYLUM LAKE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Minutes
April 11, 2024

Members Present: Pete Strazdas, Chair; Sharon Dever, Vice Chair; Kay Chase, Council Secretary; Mark Frever; Duane Hampton; Lynne Heasley; Lauri Holmes; Steve Kienle; John Kreuzer; David Lemberg; Keith Pung; Silvia Roederer; Paul Scott; Cybelle Shattuck

Members Excused: Tom Sauber, Tyler Bassett; Tiffany Schriever; Mark Weiss

Guests: Mark Kieser, Kieser & Associates; Paul MacNellis

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ZOOM ROLL CALL.
   • Mr. Strazdas called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. EDITING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR APRIL 11, 2024.
   • Ms. Heasley requested the addition of item c under new business, discussion about the possibility of having native American representation on the Council.
   • Mr. Kreuzer, supported by Mr. Frever, moved approval of the amended agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

III. EDITING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 14, 2024.
   • There were no changes to the Minutes.
   • Mr. Scott, supported by Mr. Kienle, moved approval of the March Minutes. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT.
      • Mr. Frever reported expenses of $2,600 for March. Mr. Sauber ordered the port o potties for the Preserve.

V. OLD BUSINESS.
   a. Project Updates and Project Finances.
      i. Storm Water and Research Project.
         • Mark Kieser provided the following updates regarding the stormwater project in the Preserve:
         • Kieser & Associates and WMU staff are working with the contractor to address some issues with the stormwater system. Some areas of the berm are about six inches too low and that is allowing the stormwater to flow over the top of the berm. There were a couple of issues with the fence by the road, and the retaining wall by Drake Road needs more support.
         • Mr. Sauber advised the contractor of these issues, and they are working with WMU to find a solution. Per the language in the contract, ten percent of the contractor’s fees have been held back until these problems are resolved.
         • The basic stormwater system is working, and stormwater sampling has continued through the recent storms. There have been good results so far.
         • Mr. Hampton commented that the phosphorus and chloride treatment is working well. There have been limited snow events this winter, which has been the warmest year on record. He inquired if the precipitant had to be removed from the pond to get the chloride and phosphorus out of the stormwater.
         • Mr. Kieser stated that the current stormwater treatment system is not the final chloride removal system, this is a pilot test. The precipitant in the pond will be gathered up for research purposes; there are secondary uses for the precipitant.
         • Most of the phosphorus comes from the particulate in the sediment that is coming into the stormwater system. If the sediment can be captured by the mechanical treatment devices (barracuda traps) by the road, it will be pumped out by the City of Kalamazoo.
The rest of the sediment would settle out in the equalization basin and the infiltration trench. The small amount of remaining phosphorus would go through the soil before it gets to the lake.

The precipitant settles out quickly and polymer can be used to accelerate the settling of the precipitant. The size of the particles can be controlled; instead of fine powder it can be more solidified.

There were some road salt events that were measured earlier in the year. The likelihood of getting more snow this spring is low.

Kieser & Associates has been negotiating with the Michigan Department of EGLE (Environment Great Lakes and Energy) regarding the stormwater permit. The addition of any substance to the stormwater is regulated. They are looking into how this can be done without a two-year permit process.

Representatives from the State of Michigan have been working with Keith Pung on the MS4 permit. Western Michigan University is an MS4 permittee, but the Preserve is not part of their permit. There are provisions in the statewide permit that provide for putting additives in the stormwater for the treatment process, as long as it is acknowledged in the permit, which is good through 2025.

The attorneys are finalizing the confidentiality agreement for the stormwater project to protect the proprietary nature of the system. After the agreement is finalized, the work plan will be submitted to the State of Michigan.

Kieser & Associates measured stormwater samples by U.S. 131 last week. There were 200 milligrams of chloride in the stormwater. They are looking at the possibility of creating an artificial event in the stormwater treatment system, which will use actual stormwater.

Dr. Reeves has been using distilled water in the laboratory and it works great but there are additional elements (heavy metals) in the stormwater. They are performing an additional set of tests for chloride.

There are challenges with trying to get accurate measurements. They want to work with raw stormwater, and they are crafting scenarios that will be consistent with the work plan. They are considering pumping water out of a ditch near Drake Road and U.S. 131, putting it into the stormwater system and adding road salt brine. The paperwork for that process has not been approved yet.

It is important to proceed with the testing. They thought about delaying the testing until next winter and hope there is snow, but it is preferable to do it now. The goal is to approach the State of Michigan in September or October regarding phase 2 of the proposed stormwater system across Drake Road for treatment of stormwater coming from U.S. 131. It might be premature to proceed with phase 2 without field testing the data. The pilot testing can continue without snow. Additional information might be needed to build on the data they have so far.

Mr. Strazdas provided the following summary: The traditional stormwater project extracts phosphorus and heavy metals and that has been working well. The other part of the project involves removing the road salt from the stormwater and more documentation is needed from the State of Michigan before that can begin. Because of the warm weather/lack of snow, a mock test of road salt removal will be done and then a full test of the system will be done next winter season.

**Ecological Maintenance—Continue Discussion on Part-Time Consultant.**

- The bids for the part-time consultant position were due today. Mark Frever, Pete Strazdas, John Kreuzer and Tom Sauber are on the subcommittee that has been working to find a consultant.
- The Director of the Purchasing Department reported to the subcommittee that there was one, incomplete response to the Request for Bids (RFP). Seven people expressed an interest in the position, but only one company, Dreamland Wildlife, submitted a bid and that response was incomplete. The committee has not met since they received this communication.
- The Purchasing Department advised that there are four options at this point: a. Consider the RPF to be unsuccessful; b. Request more information from Dreamland Wildlife; c. Identify other potential vendors and; d. Discuss a different plan.
- Mr. Frever advised that Dreamland Wildlife just provided a menu of tasks, like running equipment; they didn’t provide enough details.
- Mr. Kreuzer was in favor of trying to identify other vendors and possibly rewriting the RFP to get the desired results. Mr. Strazdas suggested having the subcommittee report back to the Council with recommendations. The essential work that needs to get done in the Preserve is being done.
- Discussion followed regarding a possible cause for the low response. The bidders were supposed to provide estimates for the work they would do. Mr. Strazdas will communicate with the Purchasing Department and ask
them to reach out to the bidders and find out what happened. The bidders had to write several pages of information and that might have been intimidating.

- Ms. Dever suggested asking a little less of the bidders and maybe having them come for an interview. Some bidders might be better at talking through the process rather than providing a written response.
- It might be preferable to have less detailed questions and maybe have the bidders meet with someone in the Purchasing Department.
- A prairie burn has been requested but a date has not been set yet. It will be too windy tomorrow to have a prescribed burn in the Preserve.

iii. **Sign Committee.**

- Mr. Kreuzer reported that the ALPA (Asylum Lake Preservation Association) will post notifications on some of the trees that have been wrapped in the Preserve. Some of the tree wrapping has been removed. The notifications will explain that the trees have been wrapped to protect them from the beavers and there will be a request that the wrapping not be removed.
- The notifications will also be placed in the shadow boxes, which are updated four times per year.

iv. **Trails Management Committee.**

- There was no report from the trails subcommittee.
- Discussion followed about the issue of dogs being off leash in the Preserve. There are signs stating that dogs are not allowed in the Preserve unless they are on a leash. Ms. Roederer mentioned a sign that the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy has, which states that dogs must be on a six-foot leash in the Preserve. Violators will be ticketed by county animal control. She inquired if the stronger language could be used at Asylum Lake Preserve.
- It was suggested that WMU public safety could be contacted first to find out what they have to say about this problem. It might be preferable to educate people about the harm dogs can cause to the Preserve if they are not on a leash, rather than threatening enforcement.
- Mr. Hampton stated that someone from county animal control came out to the Preserve in the past. That didn’t last long, and he was not sure why. Maybe a combination of education and enforcement would be helpful.
- There are signs in the Preserve to educate people, but the signs don’t seem to be working. Ms. Dever suggested talking to people who are violating the rules and maybe putting more information on social media about this issue.
- Ms. Roederer offered to contact the Sheriff’s Department and WMU police to get their input about what can be done. Further discussion can take place at the next meeting.

b. **Council Discussion on Indigenous Peoples.**

- Ms. Shattuck reported that members of the Gun Lake tribe were on campus doing a water ceremony and providing information. She spoke with one of the students who is part of the Gun Lake tribe and the Native American student group. They talked about the possibility of one of the students doing some research about the history of their tribe, which had a reservation next to Asylum Lake.
- It might be possible to dig into the sediments in the lake to see if wild rice ever grew on Asylum Lake. Restoration of wild rice is one of the projects that the Gun Lake tribe and Nottawaseppi tribe are involved in. She will reach out to them after the end of the semester.
- A past president of the Native American student organization is continuing at WMU in the geography graduate program. That will be another opportunity to work with the students who are members of the local band.

c. **Lake Water Level.**

- There were no updates on the Asylum Lake water level.

d. **Prescribed Burn Update.**

- Mr. Sauber has been working with Dave Mindell from Plantwise. They visited Ascension Borgess, across the street from the Preserve, to talk with them about the prescribed burn. He is covering all the bases with the neighbors and the media so that everyone is prepared. The burn will need to be done when the weather is favorable for that to happen.
There should be minimal concern with crowd control due to the location of the two sections that will be burned. They are in the master plan this year for a controlled burn. There will probably be a 24 to 48-hour notice from the burn boss.

Ms. Healey requested an e-mail to the Council to advise when the burn will take place, so that people can take pictures and observe the process if they would like to do that.

VI. NEW BUSINESS.

a. Application for Preserve Use.

- Dr. Lemberg reported that there were no applications to use the Preserve. That might be a reason for concern; the summer field courses should be getting applications.
- Ms. Heasley stated that some of the field courses are not in the Kalamazoo area. Tiffany Shriever is teaching a summer course on Beaver Island.
- The university is in the process of hiring a new geographer who specializes in remote sensing, GIS and drone technology but that person won’t be here until fall.
- The geologic sciences department usually has courses on the wells in the Preserve, but Dr. Lemberg hasn’t heard from them. Mr. Hampton will contact them.
- Mr. Strazdas advised that there have been four or five hundred dollars available from the Council in the past to help provide testing equipment for research activities in the Preserve.
- Ms. Shattuck suggested creating a flyer or e-mail to send to relevant departments to remind them that this opportunity exists. New faculty members might not know about this program. Mr. Strazdas suggested that some of the academic colleague members could put something together about the research opportunities and add that to the website.
- Ms. Heasley suggested something with a cachet for a faculty member to grab their attention like an Asylum Lake research fellowship, which would have information about the $500 and what that could support.
- Maybe there could be a similar opportunity for graduate students for research, specifically for the Preserve. There might be more interest in that.
- Mr. Strazdas stated that preserving the Preserve is the goal of the Council. The Council might also be interested in funding projects that would benefit the Preserve in the future.
- Mr. Kienle was in favor of having communication on a wider scale. WMU is not the only academic entity in the area. Other schools (Kalamazoo College or Kalamazoo Valley Community College) might be interested in making use of the Preserve.

b. Garlic Mustard Pull

- Mr. Kreuzer stated that the Garlic Mustard pull is scheduled for April 27th from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Some areas of the Preserve will be roped off for this event. The precise locations for the Garlic Mustard pull have not been determined yet.
- Mr. Sauber made arrangements to have the pit dug where the Garlic Mustard plants will be placed once they are pulled.
- The event will be publicized on the ALPA Facebook page and webpage and on the WMU news.

c. Discussion on Possibility of Native American Representation on the Council.

- Ms. Heasly stated that she is on the Native American Affairs Council. Dee Sherwood is the Chair of that Council and the faculty advisor to the Native American student organization. She asked Ms. Heasley to facilitate a request to have Native American student representation on the Council.
- Mr. Strazdas mentioned that changing the bylaws takes a long time. The Council meetings are open to the public. Making someone a voting member would take a long time. The Council could form an ad-hoc committee and the student could chair that committee.
- Ms. Heasley inquired if an at-large position on the Council could be filled by a WMU student or if it would have to be filled by a WMU employee. Mr. Hampton stated that WMU Vice President Jan VanDerKley has the power of approval for those positions. He thought it was not likely that she would nominate a non-employee for an at-large position on the Council.
- Ms. Holmes suggested having a subcommittee for indigenous affairs and community input. The subcommittee would be under the guidance of a member of the Council. The subcommittee could provide input to the Council.
If there is turnover due to graduation someone else could fill the position on the subcommittee and report to the Council.

- If a subcommittee is formed, they would need to have a charge. Mr. Strazdas suggested that Ms. Shattuck or Ms. Heasley could put together a paragraph to explain who would be on the subcommittee and what the goal of the subcommittee would be.

**VII. NEXT ONLINE MEETING.**
- May 9, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.
- The Council decided to meet in May to deal with the Request For Proposals for the part-time consultant as soon as possible.
- Mr. Kreuzer mentioned the motion at the March meeting regarding the letter the Council wrote in opposition to the proposed car wash adjacent to the Preserve.
- Mr. Strazdas stated that the letter was sent to the City of Kalamazoo administration. They received the letter and will put it on file for now because there is no application to rezone that property at this point.
- Ms. Heasley inquired if the Council could have a copy of the letter that was sent from the Council. Mr. Strazdas will forward to the Council the same communication he sent to the City of Kalamazoo.

**VIII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS.**
- The Ecological Maintenance Subcommittee (Mr. Strazdas, Mr. Kreuzer and Mr. Frever) met after the Council meeting adjourned to discuss options for finding a part-time consultant.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS.**
- None

**X. ADJOURNMENT.**
- The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.