Asylum Lake Policy & Management Council Meeting
Thursday, 10 May 2007
7:00 p.m.
Parkview Hills Clubhouse
3707 Greenleaf Circle

The recorded comments below are expressions of council members and are not approved policy until voted on. The statements were not recorded verbatim and cannot be used as quotes.

AGENDA:

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call

a. Sign-In Roster

Council Members Present: Paul MacNellis, Mark Hoffman, Tom Edmonds, Cam Vossen, Bob Nagler, Kay Chase (rep. for Tyler Bassett), Bill Steinmann, Duane Hampton, Steve Kohler, Chuck Ide, Tim Holysz

Guests Present: Cari DeLong (Council Coordinator), Mike Hodgkinson (rep. for Tim Holysz), Travis Meier, Sam Cooper

III. Adoption of Agenda

Cari DeLong requested that the agenda item under “Old Business ‘B’” be tabled until next month’s meeting. Tom Edmonds moved to adopt the revised 10 May 2007 meeting agenda. Bill Steinmann seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

IV. Approval of 08 March 2007 Meeting Minutes

Mark Hoffman moved to approve the 08 March 2007 meeting minutes. Bill Steinmann seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

V. Old Business

a. Asylum Lake Management Plan (Savanna 1 & 2)

Cari DeLong

- The Savanna 1 and Savanna 2 management plans were handed out for review. Cari went through the format and content of the documents with the Council.
- Cari brought up concern that the issue of the assessment section being too detailed and rigorous was not resolved at the last meeting. It was discussed and decided that since this section is intended to be comprehensive and used as a guideline, not a mandate; a clause should be added to the assessment section stating “The following are possible actions that may be taken.”
- Cari stated that presently the Savanna 2 and Forest 1 management plans are the only units with a provision for studying the possible addition of handicap accessibility due to the assumption that the
existing paved drive within these units would be the easiest option. However, she suggested adding this to all of the management plans so that a comprehensive study of the property will determine the area/areas of best feasibility. There was general agreement that this is a good addition.

- Kay was not impressed with the list of bird species included in the plans. She will review the Nature Center Study and compile a brief list of the rare species found each of the units to be included in the management plans.

- Mark brought up concern that the ranking of the Savanna 2 management unit as a high sensitivity in regards to the archeological importance may impede any management actions. Paul stated that the management plan requires consultation of a professional archeologist; it does not prevent actions from being taken in areas of high sensitivity.

- Mark questioned whether a handicap accessible parking lot would be added to the Savanna 2 management unit. It was stated that handicap accessibility will be assessed for the entire property and added to any area/areas where feasible, this may not necessarily be the savanna unit. Handicap accessibility would include any necessary improvements, potentially a parking lot. What this would involve includes details that go beyond the scope of the management plan.

- Mark asked whether prescribed burning was a possible management strategy for this unit. Paul explained that it is a possibility and is not excluded by this document. Cari brought up that burning would be included under the mitigation strategy, “Use Integrated Pest Management and Best Management Practices with ecologically sound methods in the management of plant and animal species.”

VI. New Business

a. Management Council sub-committees
   Frank Wolf
   - Mark presented a summary of subcommittee ideas generated by Frank Wolf and himself. This summary included a list of possible committees and duties that would fall within each. Implementing the various subcommittees would be a good way to facilitate the management plan and produce action by Council members outside of the monthly meetings. Outside experts could be included in these committees.
   - Paul agreed that forming these committees would be a great way to generate ideas and take action to improve the property. Paul mentioned a few projects that he has in mind and has been researching but is not prepared at this point to present to the Council.
   - Kay raised concern with committees proposing projects before the management plans are finished. These projects need to be done in conjunction with the management plans taking into account the goals outlined within.
   - This topic was discussed and it was agreed that the development of, and research into various improvements to the property could begin before the management plans are completed and approved.
   - Tom volunteered to be part of the committee working on improving the trail system.
   - Cari will send out an email soliciting interest in the possible committees suggested by Mark.

b. Kalamazoo Community Foundation/Asylum Lake Fund update
   Cari DeLong
   Cari reviewed the latest quarterly statement from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation with the Council, including the ending principle amount for this quarter as well as the amount available for grants.

   Tom Edmonds moved to accept and file this document. Mark Hoffman seconded. All in favor. None opposed.
VII. Project/Special Committee Reports

a. Research/Education Committee

Proposed Natural Features Inventory
Cari DeLong
Cari passed out a summary of an assessment meeting that was held as an expansion of the Research & Education committee to discuss a plan for developing a comprehensive ecological assessment of the Asylum lake property. This meeting was a result of last month’s Council meeting in which it was decided that before approving any type of assessment studies, the Council should develop a strategic plan for assessment of the property.

Cari outlined a few of the conclusion reached at this meeting including the incorporation of academic as well as non-academic resources. A specific set of protocols should be developed for monitoring and assessment to be used by University classes and professional companies.

Another meeting will be scheduled for the end of May, at which the management plan goals will be evaluated and used to create a strategic assessment plan.

PeaceJam
Cari, Mark, Paul, Sam Cooper, Travis Meier
Paul explained that the PeaceJam event at Asylum Lake included about 250 high school students. They met at the Gibbs House and were given tours through the Asylum Lake property by Cari, Mark, Paul and David Nesius. It was a great opportunity to talk to them about the property including the history and current management strategies. The students collected a lot of trash along the tours. Sam and Travis did outdoor education with groups of 25. Good exposure to Asylum Lake.

Earth Day
Cal Mastin, Mark Hoffman
Paul reported that the Earth Day activities at Asylum Lake included garlic mustard pulling as well as trash collecting. There were about 12 people that helped out.

Bob brought up a suggestion to add 2 trash containers at specific locations within the property rather than just at entrances. Tim explained that there are several issues with that but would discuss with Paul.

b. Operations Committee

Prairie Burn 2007, Paul MacNellis
Paul described the recent prescribed burn that took place on Tuesday, March 13, 2007. An updated prescribed burn plan was prepared prior. Jim Bruce was the burn boss and Oshtemo firefighters were on site. It was a successful burn with optimal conditions. Approximately 15.9 acres were burned north of Cherry Lane and approximately 31.4 acres were burned north of Parkview Avenue in the prairie. Pictures will be put on the website soon.

VIII. Public Comments
Sam Cooper and Travis Meier invited Council members to an open house at the Gibbs House on Saturday June 23rd, 2007 from noon – 5pm. There will be music and refreshments as well as tours on the hour.
IX. Council/Staff Comments

Mark asked for an update on the dog patrols at the property. Paul reported that animal control calls in to Western’s DPS when they are on the property. They haven’t called in for 3 months. The goal for patrols is to be sporadic and we may have them out there frequently in the near future.

Paul announced a workshop organized by the stewardship network that will be held at MSU’s MacCready Reserve to learn about savanna and prairie ecosystems and restoration techniques. Paul will email the Council more info.

Paul added that Council members should start thinking about and researching ideas for improvements at the property. The planning process can begin before the management plan is completed.

X. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.