**GLA ANNUAL MEETING Minutes**

Saturday, August 21, 2021

Lake Geneva Country Club

Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

 9:30 a.m.

**WELCOME** — President Lillie called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and thanked the attendees for their support of an in-person meeting and for their generosity, noting an increase in membership donations of 14% in spite of the pandemic. Lillie introduced the GLA officers and read the GLA mission statement, noting that the GLA does not have regulatory authority over lake issues, but is ready to educate and communicate, most recently focusing on water quality issues via the GLA Guardian and the website.

In previewing some of the guest speakers who follow, Lillie noted that overall, the water quality for one of the busiest lake in Wisconsin is very good, but threats exist in the form of phosphorus, erosion, and invasive species.

**MINUTES FROM THE VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING, AUGUST, 2020** — A motion to approve the minutes as published was passed unanimously (McClayton/Grayson).

**GLA GRANT PROGRAM / STEWARDSHIP AND PROGRESS** — Grants to local associations whose missions are compatible with GLA were focused on Water Quality improvements, and included a partnership with the Water Alliance, EEF, GLC and the DNR to purchase a CD3 water cleaning system which was rotated among the public launch ramps as an experiment, and funding for winter cover crops to save soil and prevent phosphorus runoff into the lake.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORTS** — Nominating Committee nominated the following, which were approved unanimously:

EEF Directors for three-year terms ending in 2024: Shannon McCarthy (first term), Ted Peters (first term), Rob Rowe (first term), Bill Thompson (second term), and Carol Zimmermann (first term).

GLA Directors with three-year terms to expire in 2024: Mark S. Lillie, Sally Jouris, Thomas T. Stuhley, James W. Gee, Patrick Kenny, Frank K. Voris, Thomas G. Gardiner, Robert Klockars, and David B. Williams.

Retiring EEF board members Colin Griffith, Melita Grunow, Jim Gee, and retiring President Carl Rathmann were thanked for their dedicated service to the Foundation.

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION** — EEF President Bill Thompson announced that thanks to the generosity of the community along with a grant from the GLA, the EEF also raised more funding for scholarships over the past year. While traditional middle school outdoor education programs were not held, funding was provided to Big Foot Recreation, Kishwauketoe, and Sharon Schools to equip programs introducing student to outdoor nature activities. In addition, high school graduating seniors and college undergraduate students benefitted from the traditional EEF scholarship packages, the Geneva Lake Astrophysics and STEAM received additional funding for the LENSS (Dark Sky) program, and a new Thomas E. Reynolds, Jr. Gateway Technical College Scholarship was instituted.

**YERKES FUTURE FOUNDATION**: Chair Dianna Colman outlined the activities going on at Yerkes. Construction will continue for another year or two, and includes complete rewiring and lighting, refurbishing flooring, as well as exterior improvements. Solar panels on the flat roofs will provide 60-75 % of the electrical need for the building and exterior charging station for electric automobiles. Dennis Kois has been hired as Director and comes with vast experience and enthusiasm. He will be hiring more staff to meet future operating needs. Landscaping projects include removing buckthorn, building welcoming, pollination, and rain gardens. Public exhibits are being planned for a soft opening in the fall, and donations and volunteers are encouraged.

**LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES**:

Representative Amy Loudenbeck announced that a balanced state budget was completed in a timely fashion and that it provides for a surplus and tax cuts. Loudenbeck is versed in land use and water quality issues and as a legislator tries to help achieve the goals of diverse groups while remaining in compliance with good environmental practices. Loudenbeck worked with the Water Safety Patrol to fix a loophole in the law pertaining to boat operator licenses, and was happy a couple of years ago to help carve out an exception for Geneva Lake, requiring spotters on boats pulling skiers and other water sport activities. Loudenbeck hope to find ways to allocate increased funds from boat fees to be used by groups like GLEA for preserving and protecting lakes.

Representative Tyler August was unable to attend due to a prior commitment.

**AFFILIATED ASSOCIATION REPORTS**

*Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake* — Tom Nickols and Charles Colman related the history and goals of the Water Alliance, which started two years ago, not as a new organization, of which there are already many, but as a medium for representatives from all of the organizations to meet, share, and coordinate ideas. The group has representatives from EEF, GLA, GLC, GLEA, DNR, SEWRPC, and other entities, all interested in preserving the quality of Geneva Lake.

SEWRPC has provided a map of the 50 tributaries that run into the lake. Current studies show that some of the streams are healthy contributors to the lake; some are not. The stream running into the lake by Big Foot Beach is most undesirable. Other areas where improvements can be made include the runoff from the gravel pit in Williams Bay, and the routing of the stream that flows along highway 67. Rerouting the stream that flows into Abbey Harbor is an improvement, and Fontana is engaged in many projects including retention ponds that will benefit the lake and prevent flooding. The GLC takes the lead on many of these projects, which also include encouraging and finding funding for winter cover crops.

*Walworth County Land Use and Resource Management* — On behalf of Walworth County, Brian Smetana deals with farmers to employ conservation practices for the land. He encourages farmers to plant cover crops and use no-till farming. His department looks for problem areas such as creeks runoff and tries to find realistic solutions. He put together the proposal which was used by three south shore area farmers to plant cover crops this past winter. The participating farmers will benefit from less soil loss from erosion, and an increase in soil nutrition. The lake will benefit from less phosphorus runoff from the farms via the watershed.

Asked about the vast construction at the large dairy farm on the south side of the lake, Smetana explained that farms like this with over 1,000 animals are regulated entirely by the DNR, and that new DNR rules require holding areas for feed leeching now as well as holding areas for manure. The construction at Snudden Farms is intended to help the property come into compliance with the new requirements.

*Geneva Lake Water Safety Patrol* —Ted Pankau and Brigid Cashman spoke on issues affecting the WSP, now into its second century of service. Pankau noted that the last two years have been very busy years, and notes 11 lifesaving pullouts this year. Pankau cautions boaters who swim off the boats and don’t realize the speed by which a boat can get away in high winds, noting that drownings have occurred when people get separated from the boat. Lifejackets need to be accessible, not stowed, and throwables are the most convenient way to help a struggling swimmer.

Cashman reported that two in-person boat safety classes were held this year, mostly with kids but with some young adults as well who are of the age that require licensing, and emphasized that the in-person training is much more effective than on line classes. Over 700 children received swimming lessons this year and many participated in WSP lifeguard classes. Cashman reminded the membership that the WSP is not government funded, and welcomes donations.

*Geneva Lake Environmental Agency* — Retiring Director Ted Peters received applause in appreciation of his 45 years at the Agency as he thanked all the groups who worked so well with him and on behalf of the lake. Regarding starry stonewort, Peters relates that it is now existent throughout the Trinke lagoon, but new infestations have not been discovered at public entry points that were investigated. The plants that exist are mixed in with healthy native plants, and it may be best to let healthy plants keep it in check. Removal experiments throughout Wisconsin and in other states have not been successful. Peters hopes to have a town hall meeting with the DNR on the issue later this fall.

Peters reports that the Clean Boats/Clean Water program in combination with the CD3 station have had positive results in keeping infestations from entering or leaving Geneva Lake and have had an educational impact on the public who use the launch facilities. Peters encourages each community to provide a CD3 at their launch sites. Peters believes that the demand to better manage invasive species in our waters is increasing in Wisconsin, and hopes that the legislature could consider these management costs when it reviews allowable launch fees at each municipality.

*Real Estate Market Trends* — Bob Rauland, from Rauland Realty, highlighted real estate market trends especially those related to lakefront and lake access houses. Bob provided a hand out with current statistics and maps of Walworth County lakes. The handout was available in the room, and copies are available from the Rauland office. Rauland reports that inventory remains low and there is little or no vacant lakefront property available.

Information in the handout shows a significant increase in prices over last year. Many homes are sold at above listing prices. And prices are higher as well. For example, on the lakefront properties sold, the average per frontage foot price in 2020 was $38,000. In 2021 it is $45,000 per frontage foot. For lake access sales, the average price in 2020 was $600,000. In 2021, the average price was $740,000.

Rauland was thanked for his forty some years of reporting at the GLA Annual Meetings.

President Lillie encouraged members to look for the great content that has been added to the GLA web site and adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Smith

Executive Secretary