

GENEVA LAKE CONSERVANCY, INC.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD

Saturday, February 6th, 2021, 8:30 a.m. via Zoom

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Geneva Lake Conservancy, Inc., took place on Saturday, February 6th, 2021 via Zoom Conference Call. The Directors present via video conference were Messrs. Bromley, Chairman Brunner, Cobb, Danou, Jordan, Madonia, Nickols, Parker and Todd, Meses. Holland & Aldred. Staff present via video conference were Meses. Yancey, Happ, Karow, Olivieri and Theys. Ms. Karow acted as Secretary. The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m.

WELCOME TO MADISON OLIVIERI, new staff member - Mr. Brunner welcomed Ms. Olivieri to the GLC team as the new Community Outreach Manager. Ms. Olivieri is a graduate of University of Vermont with a degree in Environmental Policy & Development and she minored in Spanish. Ms. Olivieri's first tasks started with organization & preparation of the Conservation@Home program as well as the programs at Helen Rohner Children's park for the upcoming summer season.

BOARD EDUCATION – Strategic Planning and 2019-2021 Strategic Plan – Ms. Yancey presented the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan for review. She noted that the team has successfully accomplished a number of the key goals. Ms. Yancey highlighted that key goal #1 was to complete purchase of two significant properties and the GLC has been successful in securing properties to include: Bromley's Woods and the Zabler property, as well as the Piening conservation easement, which may lead to a donation of that 556-acre property. Ms. Yancey referenced that the GLC has done a great job concentrating on the strategic plan over the last few years and the goals have been met and continue to be revisited to ensure that they are being met. Ms. Yancey noted that there is not a strategic plan in place for 2022 and requested that board members complete the handout titled "Vision for 2022-2025 Strategic Plan". She requested that the survey be returned to her so that a plan can be laid out for the next board of directors meeting. Mr. Brunner agreed that a new strategic plan should be put into place before the end of the year and would like to see it completed in the 3rd or 4th quarter of 2021.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Brunner asked for a motion to approve the minutes presented for approval:

- 12-12-20 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
- 1-29-21 Land Protection Committee Minutes
- 2-1-21 Fundraising Committee minutes
- 12-11-20 Finance Committee Minutes
- 1-19-21 Finance Committee Minutes
- 1-25-21 Finance Committee Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes as distributed was made by Mr. Bromley, seconded by Mr. Todd. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT – 2021 Operating Plan & Dashboards – Ms. Yancey reviewed the Operating Plans goals for 2021.

- Conservation @ Home program will have 2 new volunteers for this season and they will begin their training in May
- There will be 2 more Eagle Scout projects at the Hansen Preserve.
- Ms. Yancey will be meeting with the Village of Willams Bay to continue to move forward with the redirection of the Southwick Creek
- Mr. Jordan & Ms. Yancey have identified 2 new board members and will be working with them.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE –

- **Reelection of Tom Nickols, Chris Danou and John Cobb to three-year terms –** Mr. Nickols agrees to the reappointment as does Mr. Cobb. Mr. Danou agrees to the reappointment but wanted the board to know that there is the possibility of his family moving in the near future and he will have to step down if that happens. Mr. Brunner asked for a motion to reelect board members Nickols, Danou and Cobb.

A motion to approve the reelection of Tom Nickols, Chris Danou and John Cobb to three-year terms was made by Mr. Bromley, seconded by Mr. Jordan. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Committee Chairman Assignments –** Ms. Yancey said that the Committee Chairman assignments for 2021 will be essentially the same as 2019 noting that the only change will be adding Ms. Aldred to the Advocacy committee. The 2021 Committee Chairs will be: Executive Committee, Mr. Brunner; Fundraising, Mr. Cobb and Mr. Nickols, co-chairs; Finance, Mr. Parker; Governance, Mr. Jordan; Land Protection, Mr. Brunner; Accreditation, Mr. Brunner; and Membership-Outreach, Mr. Nickols; Advocacy, Mr. Todd and Mr. Bostrom co-chairs; Water Alliance for Geneva lake (Taskforce) Mr. Nickols and Mr. Colman co-chairs. Ms. Yancey said that Accreditation and Governance Committees each have one vacancy. Ms. Karow to send out google form to obtain current board contact information.
- **2020 Executive Director Performance Review –** Messrs. Brunner, Jordan and Nickols met to discuss the Executive Director review. Mr. Brunner stated that it was a great review and nearly all goals were met. Compensation will be discussed later in the agenda during the Executive Committee Session. Ms. Yancey stated that she has enjoyed the positive work environment and is very happy with her position at the GLC. Mr. Brunner highlighted that the board is looking to adjust salaries to be more competitive and to align with similarly sized land trusts. This salary increase would be in lieu of the traditional bonus given to full-time employees annually.
- **New Board Candidates –** Mr. Jordan talked about potential new board members. Susan Steele is local to the area and works part-time at Village of Sharon and is interested in learning more about Geneva Lake Conservancy. Ms. Yancey will contact Ms. Steele to provide more info.
There is one additional potential board member that Mr. Danou will be contacting and Ms. Yancey hopes to have 2-3 more potential candidates for the next board meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE –

- **Fourth Quarter 2020 Financial Reports for approval** – Mr. Parker noted that despite the pandemic, preliminary numbers show that the GLC had a great year and surpassed budgeted income numbers. GLC receiving the PPP loan & forgiveness of the loan helped the GLC to surpass the budget. Mr. Parker asked for a motion to approve the minutes presented for approval:

A motion to approve the 4th quarter preliminary numbers was made by Mr. Todd and seconded by Mr. Madonia. The motion passed unanimously.

- **2021 Budget for approval** – Mr. Parker presented the 2021 budget. Ms. Yancey stated that with the addition of the new Community Outreach Manager, she believed the GLC would be able to increase donations and felt that the increase in income was attainable. Ms. Yancey noted that with the investment of the restricted funds into Vanguard accounts, that the GLC expects to receive interest income to cover staff time and programs in 2021. Ms. Yancey looks forward to some exciting programs at Rohner Park this year and noted that the restricted budget includes the addition of a natural playground and a photo contest for the park. The budget anticipates that the GLC will receive a Knowles Nelson Grant for the LAQF fund. She also noted that a “contingency” line item was added to the budget as Mr. Parker noted that this is something that is done by many municipalities to assist with any unexpected expenses. Keeping the current pandemic in mind and the unknown future, the budget concentrates on an operating plan that still keeps the Conservancy at the top of mind among donors and Ms. Yancey feels confident the GLC can maintain this budget. Mr. Brunner asked for a motion to approve the 2021 budget presented, subject to salary adjustments, for approval:

A motion to approve the 2021 budget presented, subject to salary adjustments, was made by Mr. Parker and seconded by Mr. Cobb.

- **Restricted Assets Review** – Mr. Parker presented the revised reporting for GLC accounts & restricted assets. He noted that the Finance committee has not determined what excess cash should be allocated to the long-term investment account. The Finance Committee will need more time to analyze this and Mr. Parker says they should have a recommendation by the next board meeting.
- **Stewardship and Legal Defense accounts** – Mr. Parker discussed that the funds in the stewardship and legal defense accounts are currently a work in progress while the finance committee determines where funds are needed.
- **2020 Surplus funds discussion** – Mr. Parker said that the Finance Committee would like one more in-depth discussion regarding the surplus of funds from 2020 now that the books are closed. Mr. Brunner asked if Ms. Yancey could reach out to other land trusts to see what they hold in reserve.

LAND PROTECTION COMMITTEE –

- **Bromley III option for approval and Bromley II updated option for approval** – Mr. Brunner presented the updated Bromley II option to purchase to include Exhibit A to show the “parcel split” providing an easement that provides access to the property from Greening road. Ms. Yancey stated that once the board approves both the Bromley II & III options to purchase then she can complete the application for the Community Forest

Grant. She noted that the appraisal value for Bromley II was \$200,000 and Bromley III was \$235,000. Bromley III mostly consists of a kettle pond with great restoration opportunity that can include a trail around the pond. The Bromley management plan has been ordered and will take 1-2 weeks to receive. Mr. Brunner asked for a motion to approve the updated option to purchase Bromley II and option to purchase Bromley III for approval:

A motion to approve the updated option to purchase Bromley II and option to purchase Bromley III was made by Mr. Cobb, seconded by Mr. Jordan. Mr. Bromley abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Zabler follow-up and publicity** – Ms. Yancey reports that she will be meeting with the Zabler’s next week to discuss the removal of phragmites. She notes that Mr. Haubrich will pay for this process as the Zabler property is adjacent to his. Ms. Yancey said that the Racine Journal Times was out to interview the Zabler’s and will be putting together a nice article to highlight the generous donation.
- **Land Protection Summary** - Mr. Brunner provided a summary of land protection activity. He noted 2 new potential properties owned by farmers Gifford and Lurin. The properties are within the Hackmatack area and are too wet to farm. They have potential to be good candidates for wetland restoration and turn the farmland back into conservation land. Ms. Yancey & Ms. Theys recently went to tour the Potawatomi Hills Girl Scout camp. The property has oak forest and remnant prairie. Ms. Yancey said she is waiting to hear back from the Milwaukee Council of Girl Scouts regarding the property.
- **Haubrich amendment discussion** - Ms. Yancey reported that Mr. Haubrich has asked us to review an amendment to the conservation easement held by the Seno K/RLT Conservancy. She indicated that Mr. McKeever has reviewed this. Since Seno will be deciding whether to accept the amendment they need to give us a copy when it is finalized but before it is signed.
- **Other Business** – Mr. Brunner said that he would like to prioritize the land management plans for Bromley & Piening for this year.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE –

- **Agenda addition: Observatory Woods Project** – Mr. Todd says this proposed project is adjacent to Yerkes. There is currently a petition to halt the re-zone request for this property and he believes that GLC will be approached about this because of the pristine lake frontage. Ms. Yancey noted that she did attend meetings last year and at that time the GLC did not wish to become involved as the estimated value of those 3 lots was \$3 million each and if the money could be raised the \$9 million could buy properties of much greater conservation value. She also noted that the selling of the lots was a compromise to offset the University of Chicago’s donation of the Yerkes building and 50 acres of property and she did not think the Conservancy should become involved in protesting that compromise.
- **Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake (WAPGL) (formerly Geneva Lake Task Force (GLTF))** – Ms. Yancey reported that the WAPGL is working on a map to highlight projects around the lake and she hopes to be able to present the map at the next meeting.

- **Southwick Creek issue** – Ms. Yancey says that there is new momentum to reroute the creek. Both the DNR and SWRPC agree that the reroute will improve habitat and water quality. The new DNR representative is not sold that this is a good idea because of the “mucky” soil. Brian Smetana with Walworth County is looking for grants to support the cost of the rerouting construction.
- **WEP Oak Savanna** – Ms. Yancey stated that new owners of the farm have been dedicated to improving the conservation management of the farm. She states that they may try to hold a “farm day” to educate local farmers about BMPs they are implementing at the farm and to show the oak savanna restoration project.
- **Social media report** – Ms. Yancey stated that this will be the last social media report compiled by Ms. Best and Ms. Olivieri will put together subsequent reports. The report indicates that there has been a decent increase in Facebook followers and the most popular posts are those that highlight followers visiting GLC preserves and news updates. Ms. Best suggests that the GLC continue to encourage and share user-generated content, post GLC news, and post content on the GLC public preserves. Ms. Best reports that the GLC Instagram account has also greatly increased in followers. She suggests that the GLC continue to use multimedia content for posting on stories, post timely photos/videos of the preserves & continue to follow and engage with relevant people and organizations.
- **Publicity – news releases on new land protection projects and oak tree contest**– Ms. Yancey stated that there has been two news articles highlighting the oak tree program and the oldest oak tree in Walworth County in the Janesville Gazette and Lake Geneva Regional News. She said maps will be created to help the public hike to the tree from Bromley’s Woods.

FUNDRAISING –

- **2021 Calendar of Events** – Ms. Happ provided an overview of the exciting 2021 Calendar of Events. Despite the current pandemic the Fundraising committee has put together a great calendar to include the annual Kettle Moraine Bird Festival, Rohner Park Family Day, Picnic on the Prairie, a reprise of the successful Road Rally and the Annual Holly Ball to name a few. She noted that she is still working to connect with the Driehaus’. All the spring and summer events are to be held outside to meet social distancing requirements, which are relatively unknown at this time.
- **Fundraising Goals** – Ms. Happ presented the dashboards for the 2021 fundraising goals in comparison to prior years. She noted that fundraising through special events was down last year due to the pandemic but was pleased with the hard work by staff and volunteers to still manage to execute a couple of successful fundraisers given the circumstances. Ms. Yancey said that she looks forward to accomplishing the 2021 fundraising goals especially since Maddie has now started.
- **Membership Numbers and New Member Packets** – Ms. Happ presented history of GLC membership by year. Membership trend was increasing since 2016 until the dip in 2020 due to the decrease in events as a result of the pandemic. Ms. Happ and Ms. Olivieri will be working together to be consistent with sending out new member packets in a timely manner.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH –

- **Conservation@Home** – Ms. Olivieri reported that she’s been contacting local libraries to schedule C@H presentations. She’s getting organized to reach out to the program volunteers to begin preparing for the season.

- **Rohner Park Plans for 2021** – Ms. Olivieri reported that she’s currently working on ordering the equipment for the new natural playground to be installed this spring and organizing the fishing classes and other planned events at the park.

There being no other business, a motion for adjournment was made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Todd. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m. The Executive Session followed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

An executive session was held to discuss salary increases for all staff in 2021. In attendance via zoom were: Messrs. Brunner – Chairman, Parker, Cobb, Madonia, Jordan & Nickols. Ms. Yancey remained as part of the session and acted as secretary.

It was agreed that all employees did an excellent job this year and that the board and Ms. Yancey wanted to bring salaries in alignment with LTA averages for land trusts with \$500,000 and above operating budgets. Mr. Brunner went through recommendations for salary increases and promotions for the two other full-time employees as well as our accountant and it was agreed that these increases would be retroactive to January 1. It was decided that these increases were sufficient and would better meet LTA requirements than giving out bonuses this year. Mr. Brunner requested that Ms. Yancey determine if creating an incentive structure based on meeting goals would be acceptable to the LTA for a 2021 bonus for each employee or if the LTA frowned on this.

Mr. Brunner, Mr. Nickols and Mr. Jordan all contributed to the Executive Director review and recommended that she also be brought up to LTA salary levels for land trusts of the GLC’s size. On a motion made by Mr. Brunner and seconded by Mr. Jordan the board unanimously voted to approve the staff salary increases for 2021.

The session was adjourned at approximately 10:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jodi Karow, Acting Secretary

Prepared: February 20th, 2021

Approved: _____
Joseph Madonia, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

DRAFT

GENEVA LAKE CONSERVANCY
MINUTES OF THE LAND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

April 1st, 2021, Mill House, 398 Mill Street

A meeting of the Land Protection Committee of the Geneva Lake Conservancy, Inc., took place over Zoom, on Thursday, April 1st, 2021. In attendance was Mr. Nickols, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Bostrom, and Mr. Madonia who were in attendance over Zoom. Staff present were Ms. Theys, who acted as Secretary, Ms. Yancey, Executive Director, and Ms. Oliveri, Community Outreach Manager. The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Mr. Nickols.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Cobb motioned to approve the meeting agenda.

II. MAP OF OLDEST OAK

Ms. Yancey reported that the staff needed guidance from the LPC about the distribution of the map of the oldest oak in the Kettle Moraine State Forest Southern Unit. She stated that people are calling asking for directions on how to get to the tree to see it. She mentioned staff is currently honoring individual requests for those asking the tree's location, but that we do not want to distribute it widely or promote it on our website yet due to the possibility of vandalism. She stated that it is a great destination hike and that we would be able to create maps to place at the Bromley kiosk for those visiting. Mr. Bostrom agreed that keeping it on an individual basis, and having paper copies of the map available at Bromley is a good idea. Mr. Cobb suggested the idea of putting in the upcoming GLC newsletter a column listing the 5 hikes we recommend for people to take on our public properties. The idea of putting an oak hike for Bromley was also mentioned. He also mentioned that it could be something promoted on our social media. Ms. Yancey suggested we could potentially have maps at each preserve for people to take on their hikes.

III. MICHAEL FIELDS CONSERVATION EASEMENT RECOMMENDATION TO BOARD

Ms. Yancey reported that the Michael Fields conservation easement is ready for the committee to review and that it was originally called Hive Tap. She stated that this is something that was worked on several years ago and that there were issues that stalled the project last year. The property was zoned A-2 which would allow for the building on the property that would leave little conservation value. Ms. Yancey reported that she spoke with Carol Andrews late last year, who met with Perry Brown to discuss how they could still protect the most conservation value. They decided to have a new survey completed and only include those areas down by the creek that have the highest conservation values in the conservation easement not the portion of the property that could be developed. This made redrafting the conservation easement much easier as there is no development allowed within the conservation easement boundaries. Mr. McKeever redrafted the easement using a newer easement formatting, which at the beginning outlines the environmental significance to the

property, including that it is part of a Primary Environmental Corridor and has more than 1,800 square feet of land along Honey Creek.

Mr. Cobb motioned to make a recommendation to send the easement to the board for approval at the next meeting. Mr. Bostrom seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. PLAYGROUND INSURANCE

Ms. Yancey stated that she has been in contact with Tom Reed about the insurance for Rohner park. She stated that he found a company that is willing to insure it and that it would be a cost of \$1,000 or less a year. She also reported that Ms. Oliveri found someone who would be able to certify the playground equipment as safe once installed. She stated that there were three pieces of playground equipment purchased, one being a balance beam, a wood playhouse with wooden blocks inside, and four art easels for the children to draw on outside. Ms. Oliveri stated we need to ensure that the equipment is safe for the kids to use and that she will update the board next weekend and include pictures of the equipment in the board packet. Ms. Bostrom asked Ms. Oliveri about the wooden house and how tall it is up from the ground, and if a fall surface would be installed around the structure. Ms. Oliveri reported that the house is made up of four wooden posts with no walls and a roof on top. Mr. Bostrom's concern was that a child could potentially climb on top of the play house. Mr. Cobb suggested selling that portion of the property to another non-profit, put an easement on it, then the liability will go back to them and not the GLC if an injury occurs. This would be something that would need to be brought up and approved by the Rohners. Ms. Yancey stated that we do not want the liability so a decision needs to be made on which pieces of equipment we can move forward with. Ms. Nickols mentioned that the amount of \$1,000 per year for insurance does add up over time. Ms. Yancey also brought up the possibility of getting rid of the stepping boulders currently out on the property because those can pose a risk for injury. Mr. Cobb added that there is already a playground not far from the park in Williams Bay. The idea of establishing an LLC was brought up, to which Mr. Madonia responded stating that we may or may not be able to do that due to our current status, but that it is a good way to reduce liability.

V. SOUTHWICK CREEK PROJECT

Ms. Yancey reported that there were no damages done out at the park from the soil borings. She stated that we expect the results from the borings potentially next week once the staff member gets back from vacation. She also let the committee know that a lot of the borings did contain the sand and gravel we were looking for. She reported that there was a news article in the LG Regional News about the boring project. She also wanted to give a special thanks to those who helped out at the park on the days they were out there doing the borings.

VI. NEW PROJECTS

Ms. Yancey reported to the committee that there is still interest in the potential for turning Mr. Piening's property into a county park. She stated that the park committee is still interested in the idea for it and that there is potential to split the property into two large parcels. She also mentioned that a great name for it could be "Piening Park" located on the parcels north of Town Line Road. She is meeting with Richard Hough, the county director

of Public Works next week and will reconnect with Ron Piening after he completes his taxes on April 15.

VII. BROMLEY

Ms. Yancey reported that she was hoping to hear back from the Knowles Nelson folks and the joint finance committee on the status of the grant but have not heard anything back yet. She stated it would be unfortunate after acquiring two of the parcels to have them deny the additional 40 acres if one of the finance committee members rejects our application. Ms. Yancey also brought up the US Forest Service Grant that was submitted in February. She hopes that we will hear back from them in either May or June.

VIII. NEW BROMLEY TRAILS

Ms. Yancey reported that we will be meeting with Anne Korman, DNR staff member who is in charge of the Kettle Moraine State Forest SU. She and Ms. Theys will be walking out at Bromley Woods to plan the route for a hiking trail around the entire kettle pond that will include the far side of the pond, which is owned by the DNR. Ms. Yancey also mentioned there was discussion about creating a connection from Bromley Woods to the Nordic Trail, but Ms. Korman recommended we not pursue that as the Nordic trail is open only to cross country skiers in the winter and having hikers enter from Bromley Woods would damage the groomed trail.

IX. HANSEN BOARDWALK AND EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS

Mr. Bostrom reported that Sutton Fritz is currently working to raise funds for purchasing the lumber for the boardwalk construction, which would cost around \$1,500. Mr. Bostrom stated that Sutton's mother is a graphic artist, and that he would like to do a fundraiser selling shirts that he designs and creates to promote the Hansen Preserve. Mr. Bostrom also mentioned other fundraising ideas that Sutton came up with to raise the remaining funds. Mr. Bostrom also reported that the back portion of Hansen is more saturated than the front, with the idea of moving the current boards to the back of the preserve and allowing wider boards to be placed at the front so a mower used by Midwest Prairies can get through. Ms. Yancey reported that Mr. Williams is starting with the GLC in May part time and that he can help with moving the boards. She also reported that Mr. Bostrom purchased a rock for out at Bromley Woods to place with the donor plaque attached. Mr. Bostrom stated he has a meeting set up with Mr. Bromley on April 7th at 12:30 p.m. to determine the placement of the rock and plans to arrange for it to be moved there..

X. HUNTING AT HANSEN

Ms. Yancey and Ms. Theys reported to the board the idea of potentially no longer requiring hunting permits to hunt out at Hansen. Ms. Theys mentioned in the past there was a complaint from a DNR secretary, and that the permitting can sometimes be challenging with spots filling up fast for the gun deer season. Ms. Yancey mentioned the reason we did not do permitting at Bromley is because regulating hunters would be difficult with them coming in and out from Kettle Moraine land. Mr. Madonia asked why we decided to do the permitting

in the first place and that he did not remember why we did it. He stated the idea of why change it if we thought it was a good idea previously. Ms. Yancey stated that we have a 3-million-dollar insurance policy for the preserves. The idea of keeping the rules the same at all our preserves was brought up. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Madonia motioned to make a recommendation to the board to remove the hunting permitting out at Hansen. Mr. Cobb seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

XI. WHITE RIVER COUNTY PARK

Ms. Yancey reported to the committee that Ms. Theys and Mr. Williams will be planning a work day out at WRCP for on April 30th with public works staff. Ms. Yancey told the committee about the excellent presentation Ms. Theys gave at the last Parks Committee meeting talking about the new oak savanna at WRCP and plans for 2021.

XIII. ZINNIKER and HAMILTON

Ms. Yancey reported to the board that we wanted to try reaching the goal of over 3,000 acres of land protected, but that we do not currently have the projects scheduled to reach the goal this year. There are two landowners with large acreage who are interested in placing conservation easements on their land in the next few years: the Zinnikers (160 acres) and the Willard-Hamilton orchard (up to 400 acres). She stated that a good way to try to get the Zinniker's attention would be to look into having them be the first farm to take advantage of carbon credits in Walworth County. Ms. Yancey also reported that Jane Hamilton was looking into the potential of a conservation easement, but their family barn burnt down with all new orchard equipment inside so further discussion will be delayed until at least fall 2021.

Ms. Yancey thanked everyone for attending the zoom meeting. Mr. Nickols motioned to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kiera Theys, as Acting Secretary

Date Approved: _____

GENEVA LAKE CONSERVANCY, INC.
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ADVOCACY COMMITTEE
March 10, 2021 – via Zoom

A meeting of the Advocacy Committee of the Geneva Lake Conservancy, Inc., a Wisconsin nonprofit corporation was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2021 at 4:00 pm. Present were Messrs. Todd and Bostrom, Co-Chairs and Ms. Aldred. Also present was Mses. Yancey, Executive Director, Happ, Assistant Executive Director, and Olivieri, Community Outreach Manager. Ms. Happ acted as secretary.

Old Business

Hillmoor – Ms. Yancey, having heard no recent news regarding Hillmoor, will call Charlene Klein, Mayor of Lake Geneva, and a vocal proponent for the Hillmoor site to remain open land. Ms. Yancey said that with President Biden’s 30 x 30 plan, the utilization of Knowles Nelson grant program, potential carbon offset funding, the protection of Hillmoor could be more likely. The committee agreed that after Ms. Yancey spoke with Ms. Klein, that the board, at its April 10 meeting, could recommend a position on Hillmoor.

Conservation@Home – Ms. Olivieri is scheduling Zoom meetings with libraries to talk about the Conservancy’s Conservation@Home program. Ms. Olivieri has had good interest in her presentations, and is utilizing social media to promote. Ms. Yancey said that people on the waiting list from 2020 have been contacted and Ms. Olivieri said that she is working on a Conservation@Home newsletter that will be send via email. Mr. Todd asked what the capacity for visits is, and Ms. Olivier said that 40-50 visits per year is feasible. Mr. Bostrom asked is how a 2020 participant can request a follow up visit, and Ms. Yancey said they can call and request a second visit.

County Highway Pollinator Program – Ms. Yancey said that Ms. Theys, Land Protection Manager, is working with Walworth County Public Works and Ms. Gerri Green, and developing a map of where new project areas will be as well as raising the signs so they are more visible. Ms. Yancey said there is a meeting next week with the County.

Oak Recovery Program – Ms. Yancey said Ms. Theys will be making a presentation at a Walworth County Park Committee meeting and discuss the oak savanna planting at White River County Park (WRCP), and will order the trees needed for the oak recovery program this year. Ms. Yancey said that the Griffith Family Foundation sponsored the oak recovery program, and in the fall of this year, the oak savanna at WRCP will be dedicated and signage will be placed marking the savanna. Further, a rock will be dedicated to the memory of Dean Griffith will at the savanna. Ms. Yancey and Ms. Happ will set up a meeting with the Geneva Lake Museum to determine if the museum has an interest in creating an exhibit on oaks and potential costs and then ask the Griffiths this fall if they are interested in sponsoring the exhibit.

New Business

Knowles Nelson financial and advocacy support – Ms. Yancey said that Governor Evers has asked the legislature for a 10 year commitment to the Knowles Nelson grant program as well as to double the financial support. Gathering Waters has asked the Conservancy for \$10,000 to pay for a lobbyist to advocate for the Knowles Nelson program. Ms. Yancey suggested \$5,000, which would be an increase from previous years. Ms. Yancey said that a meeting with Senator Nass to discuss the Knowles Nelson program has been arranged at the Mill House on March 12. Present will be Mike Carlson, Executive Director, Gathering Waters. Ms. Yancey extended an invitation to the committee to join the meeting, and noted that Walworth County needs more nature preserves and that municipalities have utilized the Knowles Nelson program in the past.

Mr. Bostrom made a motion to recommend to the Board at the April 10, 2021 meeting, that the Conservancy increase their donation to Gathering Waters to \$5,000. Ms. Aldred seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dredging permits – Discussion on a DNR permit request for dredging in the area of Shadow Land by McCarter included concern over stirring up the lake bed, disturbing native vegetation as well as invasive, and phosphorous, led Mr. Todd to ask the committee how they would like to proceed.

Mr. Bostrom made a motion to direct staff to request the DNR for a public hearing. Ms. Aldred seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

School Earth Day activities – Ms. Yancey and Ms. Olivieri are working on a program for 2nd and 3rd graders to produce a drawing inspired by a poem that reflects what Earth Day stands for. Winning drawings will be chosen, hung in the Mill House windows and shared with newspapers. Ms. Theys is working on a second program to work with a group of students on a Conservancy property to remove invasive species. A potential project area is Hildebrandt Woods which is close to Fontana Elementary School. Ms. Aldred said the East Troy High School has a Forestry and Botany class, and she will contact them to see if they would like to participate. Mr. Todd said that he would contact Dr. Samantha Polek, Principal at Reek School.

30 by 30 activities – forests and farmlands – Ms. Yancey said she had attended a Climate Change seminar and it is critical to protect forests and farmland to offset negative impacts on our climate. One program is to pay landowners to keep their properties as they are. Ms. Yancey said the Conservancy can help by increasing awareness of the importance of open space, and suggested that Bromley Woods might be eligible for the payment program and result in a yearly amount of revenue of \$640.

Redefine Advocacy and Community Outreach Committee roles – Mr. Todd suggested that Mr. Bostrom, Mr. Nickols and he meet to discuss the two committee's roles. Ms. Yancey will set up the meeting.

Water Action Volunteer (WAV) Coordinator Update – Mr. Todd has had meeting with Ms. Peggy Compton, regarding starting a WAV group in Walworth County. The WAV program

provides tributary and stream data over a longer time period which is important to see a trend. The data that Ms. Compton's group is collecting is high quality and is entered in the EPA database. Ms. Yancey recommended that the program start date be this fall.

Communication – **Social media: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter** – Ms. Olivieri has a schedule for future social media posts, and said that she has received positive feedback from posts, with an increase in followers and likes.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Happ, as acting Secretary of the Meeting

GENEVA LAKE CONSERVANCY, INC.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

Friday, March 19, 2021 4:00 PM – via Zoom

A meeting of the Fund-Raising Committee of the Geneva Lake Conservancy, Inc., a Wisconsin nonprofit corporation, took place on Friday, March 19, 2021 at 4 pm. via Zoom. In attendance were co-chairs Mr. Cobb and Mr. Nickols, and Ms. Holland. Staff present were Ms. Yancey, Executive Director, and Ms. Happ, Assistant Executive Director. Ms. Happ acted as Secretary.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Cobb.

Kettle Moraine Bird Festival – Ms. Happ said that the invitations for the Bird Festival are in process, and that arrangements for the event include a tent in the pasture area at Bromley Woods. The luncheon and talk will take place under the tent. Wayne Rohde, a local expert on warblers, will make a presentation.

Picnic on the Prairie – The July 17 event will be at Molly and Jeff Keller’s home in Spring Prairie. Speaker will be nationally known Doug Tallamay, author of “Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants”.

Olmsted award – Ms. Happ said that since this award is intended to be given at least every three years, it should be awarded in 2021. Mr. Cobb suggested that Mr. John Notz would be a good recipient due to his work with historic land preservation, including speaking on landscapes as well as contributing his time and funds to projects, such as Oak Hill Cemetery in Lake Geneva. The Committee agreed and asked Ms. Happ to prepare a nomination to be considered at the Conservancy April board meeting.

Major Donor event – Ms. Happ said the major donor event will be on June 12 at Sarah and John Cobb’s home. Ms. Happ shared the major donor event invitation from 2013. Mr. Cobb remarked how well received Merilee Holst’s remarks were and that donors were very interested in the Conservancy’s advocacy work.

Update on 2021 Mailing, Ad and donor touch point schedule – Ads – Ms. Happ said the Conservancy calendar will be placed in ads in the summer issue of “At the Lake” magazine as well as in the Geneva West Chamber annual publication. **Spring mailing** – Ms. Yancey offered to write the letter that will be sent in the spring to donors that have given less than \$500 the past three years. Included in the mailing will be the Conservancy’s calendar.

Sponsorship program – Ms. Happ shared the 2021 sponsorship brochure with cards that specifically promote one event. No changes were requested to the sponsorship materials.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Happ, as acting Secretary of the Meeting

Geneva Lake Conservancy

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 6th, 2021

4:00pm

Via Zoom Conference Call

Opening

The regular meeting of the FINANCE COMMITTEE was called to order at 4:00pm by Mr. Parker

Present

Messrs. Bromley, Brunner, Cobb, Parker, Mses. Yancey & Karow
Ms. Karow acted as Secretary.

Review 1st quarter financials & restricted accounts

Mr. Parker presented the 1st quarter financial statements. Mr. Parker noted that this was the first time that the GLC balance sheet reflected over one million in assets. He commended the group for their hard work over the last year to realize this positive growth. Mr. Parker noted that he'd like to see less detail reported for the cash accounts and requested Ms. Karow to revise report prior to the board of director's meeting. Mr. Cobb asked about the reserve balance in the GLC owned lands account and if there was a minimum balance that should be held in that account. Mr. Parker noted that this topic would be discussed later in the agenda. Ms. Yancey noted that she anticipated receiving the news very soon on whether or not the GLC would receive the Knowles Nelson grant to allow GLC to move forward with the purchase of Bromley II & III. Mr. Parker continued to review the P & L statement and Mr. Cobb noticed that donations were half of what they were at the end of 1st quarter 2020. Ms. Karow notified the committee that she was out of town for the last week of March and when she returned, she dated the deposits April 1st. Ms. Yancey requested that deposits received while Ms. Karow was out of town be dated in the 1st quarter. Ms. Karow will revise the financials prior to the board of director's meeting. Mr. Parker then presented the summary of the restricted accounts analysis noting that there hasn't been much activity in the 1st quarter for income but that expenses show that maintenance of restricted properties & activity planning is beginning for the season. Mr. Parker requested that Ms. Karow prepare a summary of the balances in the unrestricted cash accounts so that the board can see unrestricted funds available for investment in the market. He noted that restricted funds that needed to remain liquid include the land acquisition fund and program funds. Mr. Parker made a motion to forward the Committee's recommendation for Board approval of the 1st Quarter 2021 GLC financials with noted changes that Ms. Karow will make, to the full board at the April 10th, 2021 meeting. Mr. Cobb seconded the motion. All in favor.

Reclass of excess budgeted funds from Health Ins. Allowance account to Land Maint.

After 2021 health insurance allowances are paid out, there will be a surplus of \$5,000 in the budget for that account. Ms. Yancey requested that those budgeted funds be re-allocated to the owned lands maintenance account. Mr. Parker says he does not see the need to reclass these

funds and Mr. Cobb concurred stating that changing budgets mid-year can get confusing and is not a good practice. Considering that both accounts are in the unrestricted P&L, the bottom line will still come out the same. Ms. Yancey noted that her practice with other land trusts was to notify the board of any spending in excess of budgeted amounts and that she sees that the owned lands maintenance account may exceed the budget this year.

CD's Maturing at First National Bank and Trust

Ms. Karow brought to the board's attention that there are 3 CD's that matured on April 1st, 2021 and the grace period to decide non-renewal is April 11th, 2021. One CD is for the Unemployment reserve fund and that CD needs to remain in place per WI DWD guidelines. The other 2 CD's were opened to earn interest. 1st CD had initial investment of \$41,000 of general operating reserve funds this CD balance is now \$42,088.45. The 2nd CD had an initial investment of \$75,000 of restricted funds from Mr. Rohner for Rohner park this balance is now \$76,991.10. Mr. Parker agreed that the 2 CD's should not be renewed so that the funds can be put into an investment with greater returns through vanguard. Ms. Karow to contact the bank to initiate transfer of funds into the GLC operating reserve money market account. Mr. Parker made a motion to not renew the operating reserve CD and to not renew the Rohner donation CD and transfer funds into the GLC operating reserves money market account. Mr. Bromley seconded the motion. All in favor.

Review and approve engagement letter from Wegner CPA's for 2020 Audit

Mr. Parker reviewed the engagement letter provided to GLC from Steve Kleiss of Wegner CPA's for the 2020 audit. Ms. Karow noted that the audit fee increased \$350 over last year's audit. The committee agreed that this was an acceptable increase. Mr. Parker made a motion to forward the committee's recommendation to accept the Wegner CPA's engagement letter for the 2020 audit for Board approval. Mr. Cobb seconded the motion. All in favor.

Review and approve engagement letter from Dana Chabot for restructuring GLC accounting

Mr. Parker reviewed the engagement letter provided to Dana Chabot, retired CPA that worked with the Gathering Waters organization and is versed in LTA requirements. Ms. Karow shared that she had a lengthy zoom meeting with Dana where she shared GLC's financial statements and procedures so that Mr. Chabot could formulate this proposal. Mr. Parker stated that he was unable to open the detail proposal. Ms. Karow to forward. Ms. Karow shared that the detail proposal indicates a step by step process for streamlining GLC chart of accounts to help produce financial statements that will better reflect restricted vs. unrestricted funds and provide the board with a clearer view of operating funds. Mr. Brunner noted that it is critical to ensure that the financial statements reflect GAAP principals and he would like to request that Mr. Chabot plan to present the changes to the board when the restructure is complete as he feels it is the committee's fiduciary responsibility. Ms. Karow noted that Mr. Chabot asked if the GLC felt that the changes could go back to January 1st, 2021. She stated that her preference would be to revert back to January 1st, 2021 since the GLC hasn't recognized many transactions in the 1st quarter and she didn't feel it would take too much to go back. The committee concurred. Mr. Parker made a motion to forward the committee's recommendation to accept the engagement letter from Dana Chabot for consulting services to restructure GLC accounting for Board approval. Mr. Cobb seconded the motion. All in favor.

Review and approve Rohner donor letter

Ms. Yancey presented the revised Rohner donor letter from Soffa & Devitt attorneys. Attorney Russell Devitt provided an updated donor memorandum that makes the use of the donor funds a little more flexible given the uncertainty of the future. Mr. Parker and Mr. Brunner both stated that they believe this updated donor memorandum accomplishes what the board wanted to see. Mr. Parker made a motion to forward the committee's recommendation to accept the revised Rohner donor memorandum for Board approval. Mr. Bromley seconded the motion. All in favor.

LTA Guidelines for Operating Reserves

Mr. Parker reviewed the standards and practices for land trusts articles detailing the guidelines for building and maintaining operating reserves as well as the guidelines for building and maintaining dedicated and restricted funds for long-term stewardship and defense of easements. Ms. Karow obtained these guidelines from the LTA accreditation manual on the LTA website. There was discussion regarding how much funding to put into operating reserves. Mr. Parker indicated that the article suggests land trusts that have a seasonality cash flow as is the GLC, receiving 75 percent of all contributions in the fourth quarter of the year, will need higher reserve levels. LTA guidelines suggest that there is no "right" level of operating reserves but that a traditional target is a minimum of 3 to 6 months of operating expenses or 25 to 50 percent of the annual operating budget. Mr. Parker recommends that the committee wait to receive audited financials before making a recommendation to the board regarding the reserve funding.

Mr. Parker moved on to discuss the LTA guidelines for land stewardship. He noted that that LTA requires that there be at least \$3,500 per conservation easement in board-designated or restricted stewardship funding. Ms. Yancey stated that the GLC has 35 easements so there should then be \$122,500 in funding for easements. Mr. Brunner asked what role the auditors play in confirming this reserve stewardship fund balance. Mr. Parker indicated that the auditors provide this information as a footnote in the financial statements. Ms. Yancey indicated that each easement has a worksheet detailing stewardship and legal funds.

Mr. Parker asked if there are management plans in place for each GLC owned land as he believes there is a "hole" in the funds for owned lands and possibly the operating reserves could be used for this. Ms. Yancey indicated that there are management plans for all but the Zabler property and expects to receive the management plan for the Bromley property very soon. There will not be a management plan for the Piening property because for now, this property is not an owned land. Mr. Parker suggests that a budget be prepared taking each of the management plans into consideration. Ms. Yancey said most land trusts do not do that because management plans are typically executed when grants are received. Ms. Yancey states that GLC does calculations for each owned land based on LTA guidelines but does not include year to year stewardship to steward the property. Mr. Parker requested to be provided with the calculations and if needed, operating reserve funds could make up for any shortfall. Ms. Yancey indicated that though she agrees that the stewardship and operating reserve funds should be at their required minimums, she believes that the current surplus of funds may have a more immediate need. She indicated that she is anxiously awaiting news to see if the GLC will receive 2 grants to cover the costs of purchasing Bromley II & III. If a grant is not received, she would like to see the board move forward to authorize those funds meet the shortfall so that the Bromely property can be acquired this year. The committee agreed. Mr. Parker said that he did not see a need to make any final decisions on the surplus of funds at this time.

Vanguard Funding

Mr. Parker asked why this item was on the agenda as he thought that the investment funds had already been funded. Ms. Karow said she did not recall that anything was finalized but would look back in meeting minutes and act upon this appropriately. Mr. Parker requested that these funds be funded as soon as possible and his recollection was that Mr. Nickols suggested a dollar cost average investment of the funds and gradually fund them over the next 3 months. Ms. Karow believes that wire transfers can accomplish the funding and will look into how to do so and report back to Mr. Parker & Ms. Yancey.

Adjournment

With no other business to discuss, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00pm was made

by Mr. Bromley. Mr. Cobb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Jodi Karow: _____