



Friends of Cedar Lake Minutes

April 17, 2014

Attendees: Dale Todd, Mike Kuntz, Felicia Wyrick, Martin Smith, Gregg Stark, Leland Frieie, Fred Mishler, Rich Patterson, Marty St. Clair, Mary Meisterling, Greg Sundeberg, Gary Thompson, John Hager, Gregg Stark, Kate Hawkins, Andy Molison, Mike Butterfield, Tim (Bugs) Moran, Charlie Visek, Wayne Springfield.

Meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Minutes from March 14 were approved.

Committee Reports

Media Outreach

Wyrick reported that since the last meeting she was on WMT in the morning to discuss our efforts to revitalize the lake. Met with Shaver Rd. businesses and their concerns about flood protection. The city's preferred plan protects the lake but the Army Corp of Engineer's plan does not. Letters to the editor continue to appear. Had a good meeting with Greater Cedar Rapids Foundation and Les Garner invited us to apply for a President's Fund Grant. He also offered to help us with our 501c3 application. Also met with a group of Mt Mercy students who are talking about what could be done to help water quality at the lake.

Future outreach will be an appearance on a morning KMRY talk show. Website has launched!! www.friendsofcedarlake.com. We're meeting with Moundview Neighborhood Ass. after we adjourn. Sag Wagon has organized a cleanup April 16. Table at EcoFest on April 26. Coe students will be paddling on the lake that day as well as part of the college's Earth Day celebration. It was suggested that possibly we could ask the City to place sandbags along the current put in area to make it easier to launch.

History of Cedar Lake Plans

Ron Gonder gave an overview of his involvement in lake revitalization plans, beginning in 1979 when the Community Development Allocations Committee funded a feasibility study for recommendations for the Cedar Lake Park. Any time the City got CDBG money they would invest in a park improvement such as the parking lot area. Ideas for improving the lake were quite diverse including an amusement park, waterfalls or water fountains. The committee disbanded in 1985.

There was discussion about the ownership of the lake. Meisterling noted that Alliant owns the lake and the City leased it from Iowa Electric Power and Light company in 1982 when then Mayor Canney was interested in using it for community recreation.

Water quality was an issue even back then when chlordane became an issue nationwide around 1983. That's when the fish advisory came into effect. The salvage yard was also a concern and the City used TIF money to move it to the other side of the lake; Stickle purchased it from Fedder and Sons.

Technical Advisory Committee

Patterson shared his observations about Murphy's Lake, Prairie Park Fishery and Cedar Lake. PPF is manmade, has depth and is pretty sterile. He learned from Paul Sleeper, DNR, that contrary to their belief that the water wouldn't sustain trout throughout the summer, they are surviving. ML is artificial and has a maximum depth of 17 ft. and has outstanding fishing. CL is shallow and urban and has a diverse variety of wildlife, particularly birds. He suggested that it may be more prudent to manage CL as a birding area vs. a viable fishery.

The group will continue to look for ways to make fishing at the lake better, even though the other two lakes don't have the environmental challenges. More data is needed about the sediment so we are making decisions based on information. If it is determined that one of the cells needs to be capped, that's acceptable. But we don't want to do nothing and have a dead lake.

Todd also reported that environmental issues such as water quality has seen bi-partisan support in the Iowa Legislature so there may be funds available to help us. We also need to investigate the City's responsibility for the sediment and determine the impact on storm sewers as the depth in the lake fills in.

Patterson also has been looking for a source of depth mapping equipment. Thompson suggested that if Alliant grants permission, he has the equipment to determine a relative depth at least. He'll coordinate with Patterson to try to make this happen by next meeting.

Greenway Planning

Todd noted that the relevance of the Greenway plan to our group is Confluence, who did the current initial Cedar Lake plan for us, has been hired by the City. They are already doing planning around the river so why can't we do it all together so there is consistency and efficiency.

Commissions Merge

Stark reported on the merger of the River Recreation and the Parks and Recreation Commissions. The new commission should be better positioned to support efforts like ours because it will bring a more comprehensive approach. Wyrick said that one of the main motivations for combining the two commissions is to pool City resources to help park and rec efforts become more efficient operationally and financially.

What's On The Bottom?

Stark brought up the question of what's on the bottom of the lake and how it impacts paddlers. For example, if you're going to take youth there for training, then it's in the boat, out of the boat, how to get back in the boat. So if the lease says you can't swim, then this training isn't possible and you can simply paddle on the lake.

Todd raised the question of why you can't pull the stuff off the bottom of the lake. Everybody is worried about liability, but there is liability with everything we do in the City. If there's concrete on the bottom and rebar then it needs to be removed since there are people on the water. If there are toxins on the bottom, then we need to talk about the best way to deal with it. Currently, these discussions aren't happening and they need to be instead of just carte blanche saying we can't disturb the bottom with no information. There was discussion about what could be done if we could drain a cell at a time and find out what we're dealing with.

Sewer Back Up

There was discussion about the impact of the lake filling in on the sewer system. Back up issues seem to be most prevalent in the smaller sewer sections, i.e. alleyways. Todd said it would have been interesting to have made some observations of what happens around the lake and the watershed during a heavy rain event such as we've had this spring. The water was creeping up Grande Ave.

Flood Protection

There is still indecision about whether the council will adopt the Preferred Plan or the Army Corp Plan which doesn't protect the lake. The businesses on Shaver Rd didn't know there was even a possibility that they wouldn't be protected. There was discussion about the types of flood walls being considered, how bedrock as a foundation plays into these decisions and the differences in costs between the two plans.

In Summary

Todd reiterated the importance of having open discussion about the problems and solutions regarding what's best for the health of the lake.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20.

Next meeting: May 22 at 5:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Felicia Wyrick