



Friends of Cedar Lake Minutes

March 19, 2015

Attendees: Dale Todd, Felicia Wyrick, Martin Smith, Charlie Visek, Mike Kuntz, Gregg Stark, Gary Thompson, Mike Butterfield, Dan Miller, Rich Patterson, Mari Phelan, Joe Sanfilippo, Delores Sanfilippo, Mark Jacobs, Dustin Hinrichs, Ryan Anderson, Chuck Swore, Leland Freie, Karen Erger

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

Minutes from 2/19/15 were amended as follows:

Karen asked to have the last sentence of the 501c3 paragraph deleted. Minutes were approved after amendments.

By-Laws and Lobbying Restrictions

Karen offered that if any of the committee members have questions they are free to reach out to her at any time on her cell, 319-389-0312 or through e-mail, karenerger@gmail.com.

It's exciting that we have 501c3 status. There are two ways to apply and we chose the short form that was offered by the IRS last summer. Instead of 150 pages we applied using the 3 page form which gave us expedited status.

This status became important recently when we were asked by Stacie Johnson to apply for a grant for an ISWEP program. While her application was valid, the organization that she was applying through had let their 501c3 status lapse. While we supported her efforts because it was beneficial to the Cedar Lake Watershed, we felt that the timing wasn't right for our recently received status.

Our status was approved from a "good faith understanding" that our annual donations wouldn't exceed \$50k. Her grant was for \$91k. Even though we could have defended our "good faith" position because this opportunity came to us serendipitously, the FCL Board wasn't comfortable with this being the first funding out of the shoot. We wanted to start out on the right foot with the IRS.

As far as lobbying, if a political candidate is an obvious supporter of Cedar Lake, we can't lobby for them, such as on social media and encourage our friends to vote for him/her. What we can do is provide legislators with information and tell them that what we think they're doing is in line with our goals.

Karen also applauded the discussion about the by-laws, as well as the five person board, that occurred at the last meeting in her absence. These are some requirements to keep our incorporation and this is just a start. If we find at some point that we need to change the by-laws, expand the Board or change it, we can. Bottom line, it's the collective expertise of the group that will keep our efforts going. The Board is a formality that is required for our non-profit status.

Rich agreed with Karen's position and reiterated we're all on board with our role of advocating and education. He also supported the efficiency of a smaller board.

MOU

The first meeting is next Tuesday. Again, two individuals from each entity will make up the group. Representatives for FCL will be Dale and Felicia; City – Ralph Russell and Steve Hershner; County – Ben Rogers and Linda Langston; Alliant – Mary Meisterling and Jenna Wischmeyer. Each entity will present their goals for the study group and our hope is that either Dale or Felicia will be elected Chair or Vice Chair to keep driving the FCL goals forward. We'll provide the MOU group with an overview of our efforts to bring them up to date.

FCL goals include:

- Letter to the State Legislature before this session ends to continue funding for the DNR Lake Restoration Program so when we are able to apply, there is money available.
- Obtain buy in for the City to apply for an EPA Environmental Assessment Grant this fall
- Extend the Confluence contract with the City to include Cedar Lake

A Phase 1 assessment of the data that has been gathered to date will be the first step. Next step is Phase 2 assessment with core samplings of soil around the lake and the sedimentation on the bottom of the lake. Even though Alliant has been resistant of the latter step in the past, it will likely be required as part of decommissioning process and the company seems to be on board.

Remediation requirements for the ash ponds needs to stay in the conversation, considering our conversation with DOT that they don't have any restrictions around the interstate supports other than 14-15 ft. access for repairs and maintenance.

Outreach

We had signs and a table at the State of the City address. Thanks to all who helped with that effort which brought more widespread attention to the Friends of Cedar Lake. The Mayor continues to be in our corner for revitalization.

We also presented to the Lion's Club and the League of Women Voters, who will be a good resource for watershed management efforts.

We're tabling at EcoFest, Saturday, April 25, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Felicia will set up and tear down but would appreciate a couple of volunteers to take over from 12 -3.

Charlie has helped put together a design for signs to promote the MOU effort. We'll propose the design at the first MOU meeting.

We're also working on designs for T-shirts with our talking points on the back to engage more people. The important thing is that we all keep the goals of our group in mind when we talk to people so we're sending a consistent message. Charlie is also researching car windows decals.

We need to push for signage to help emergency response vehicles to know where folks using the trail who might need help can be found. Charlie has put that plan together and we will bring it up at the MOU meetings.

Good of the order

Karen reminded the group about the opportunity to table at Irish District Fest June 20th and Felicia said we're in! It's a fun event so volunteer or just come hang out. .

Rich shared with the group about his visit back to Cedar Lake, New Jersey, where he grew up. It was a toxic lake, much worse than the toxins and sedimentation issues we're facing here. Concerned groups came together and it is now a healthy fishery. This reiterates the fact that cleaning up our lake is possible and fish populations can come back really quickly.

Flood Protection

Second Round: At this point, protection for the lake is still uncertain. Our goal would be to ensure that sedimentation is prevented from coming into the lake from the river. There may be ways to protect the lake from Cedar River sediment. If we see a plan that accomplishes this goal without flood protection, we'll consider it. The Mayor continues to be in support of the Preferred Plan, which Council approved after the flood. We acknowledge that the City needs to protect its funding for Army Corps plan, but we will continue to push for protecting the lake. Most people in the Cedar Lake/Daniels Park area do not realize that having a gap in the flood wall could easily result in a four foot increase in flood waters when there are flood events.

Paddler Advocacy

Gregg is going to talk to Parks and Rec Department about helping with better put in access for paddlers.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM

Next meeting: April 16, 2015 at 5:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Felicia Wyrick