



## Friends of Cedar Lake December Meeting 12/12/13

### Attendees

Dale Todd, Daniel Gibbons, Mike Kuntz, Mike Butterfield, Felicia Wyrick, Martin Smith, Greg Stark, Leland Frieie, Fred Mishler, Rich Patterson, Marty St. Clair, Mike Easley, Marty Hoeger, Susie Weinacht, Greg Sundeborg, Kate Hawkins, John Hager, Greg Brenneman, Mike Greenland

### Agenda

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Meeting was called to order at 5:08 p.m.  
Minutes from November 14th were approved.

### New Business

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#### Committee Reports

##### **Media Outreach**

Wyrick reported that a site map has been developed and hopes to have the site design and preliminary content by next meeting. Our Facebook has over 650 friends and we have had over 5,000 viewers.

Todd, Wyrick and Patterson will be meeting with The Gazette Editorial Board the week of 12/16. Rick Smith seems to be paying attention to our efforts and has the most history and perspective of anyone on staff. Todd has collected every Gazette article since the 1800's about the lake and it is available on CD for anyone who is interested.

##### **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Dale introduced Patterson as the new chair of the committee (TAC). Patterson got involved in the Cedar Lake initiative because he's interested in what the City is doing with the flood walls and how this project can tie into that. For example, where is the dirt for the levee going to come from? Maybe we can use the hole



that the dirt comes from to create another lake? Or if it is determined that the lake needs dredging or suction, maybe the hole can be used to dispose of that material.

The committee has begun to evaluate the data that is currently available.

## New Business

Representatives from the State DNR as well as Paul Sleeper, our local DNR rep took a tour of the Cedar Lake area and gave us more detail on how to get on the state's list of lake restoration projects. Patterson noted that everyone involved agrees that this project is very complicated from a water quality and political perspective, but it can and should be done.

He also noted that in order to qualify for the lake restoration funding, ownership of the lake needs to transfer from Alliant to the City. However, we can still move forward with the application process, as long as the DNR feels confident that the transaction/transfer will eventually occur. Wyrick reported that the reps were very positive and are willing to share applications submitted for other urban lake projects to streamline our information gathering process.

The key issue for everyone is the level of contamination. Nobody knows what that is. Nobody knows what's in the sediment. Once we know that, we can determine what techniques can be used to mitigate the contamination. There are other communities that have cleaned up lakes that were in fair worse shape than Cedar Lake.

The State DNR representatives reiterated how important it is for us to convince people at the State level that this project is important. Once we do that, we can tap into resources such as Iowa State Extension, etc.

We know that this effort is complicated. We have asked for a meeting with Alliant and the City to try to get everyone on the same page. The City has had a plan in the past, the Cedar Lake Park Implementation Plan was developed in 2000 with city staff. We believe that Alliant is working on their plan. We think we can put together a plan that protects the City and Alliant from liability and helps leverage additional funding. The DNR program pays 65% of restoration costs; we just have to come up with 35%. Maybe there are EPA funds as well.

There was discussion about the perception that the lake is unsafe so there isn't any current usage demand. If you took a survey, there probably wouldn't be a lot of interest in paddling there. Same thing with fishing; it is known as a place to take kids to catch a lot of little fish but not for avid fishermen. There are no health concerns with the lake right now in terms of paddling, etc. The question is what is on the bottom.

There was discussion that dredging might not be the only option for cleanup. Perhaps suctioning could be an alternative. Patterson presented the idea that perhaps the sediment could be used to fill the space that the dirt for the levee is removed from.

Hawkins noted that the lake is a great place to paddle right now. Wyrick commented that engaging groups like Sticks in the Water will help us overcome the misperceptions about the lake. We need to get people out on the water so the community can see that it is safe to use right now; it's not 2,3, 4 years



down the road after we get the mitigation issue taken care of. This will help us engage a wider scope of the community.

The DNR expects to lift the fishing limitations sometime this year because the chlordane levels have reduced to an acceptable level. We should also keep in mind that with the lake freezing this winter there might be a fair amount of fish kills since it is a very shallow body of water with limited oxygen and a lot of oxygen consuming creatures living in it. The use of the water for cooling purposes by Alliant in the power plant kept the lake from freezing and the coal plant is no longer operational. A fish kill would add to our argument that the lake needs help and a plan.

The DNR representatives would like to see flood protection for the lake. They don't want to see the lake become a sediment trap for the river when it backs up. There are two components to this project: the recreational amenities around the lake and the water quality and the lake ownership issue.

Todd presented some preliminary masterplan designs supplied by Confluence, a landscape architectural firm that is opening an office in Cedar Rapids. They did some work on Gray's Lake in Des Moines. That lake didn't have the chlordane issues that we have but in the past the lake received little attention and public use. A private donation funded most of that cleanup effort. David and Elizabeth Kruidenier donated \$1.5 million to start a capital campaign. Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis is another success story. The plan emphasizes connectivity to the surrounding areas.

There was discussion about ownership of the land surrounding the area. Marty Hoeger is gathering this information. Todd asked the group to provide feedback on the plan. Marty made the comment that there is some low hanging fruit that we should be working on now to show that we have activity going on, i.e. a boat dock, without spending very much money. As a group we can build some momentum and show progress. We don't have to wait for the Alliant/City ownership issue to be settled.

Marti St. Clair from Coe College proposed the idea of having a paddling event in the spring for their students. This will help get people on the lake, present opportunities for publicity.

## Next Meeting

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Next Meeting: Thursday January 23, 2014 5:00 p.m.

Cedar Rapids Water Department Administration Bldg. 1111 Shaver Rd NE, Lower Level Conference Room

Meeting adjourned at 6:05.

Respectively Submitted:

Felecia Wyrick

