

Highland Silver Lake Advisory Commission meeting

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Members present: Randy Ammann, Gary Pugh, Bill Blechinger, Craig Korte, Scott Geest

Ex-officio members: Mark Rosen; Director of Parks & Recreation, Ryan Hummert, Natural Resources Manager

Guests present: Josh Kirchoff

Motion was made to approve the October 15, 2020 meeting minutes by Bill B., seconded by Scott G.

Staff Report: Ryan Hummert gave a brief update on the status of the lake and included a summary of the Fish Biologist's report and plans for the fish-rearing pond. Although the lake has a good balance of fish, they lack size. Therefore, the plan for the spring is to dump minnows into the new pond, then stock the pond with bass in early summer. From there, it will be surveyed as to whether to start a rotating schedule of bass, crappie, bass, crappie, etc.

Public Forum: Guest, Josh Kirchoff asked if the 319 Grant included paying to encourage cover-crops. Director Rosen and Ryan H. explained that the grant was devoted to structures and grass waterways. It was stated that there is a learning curve for farmers because NRCS and Madison County Soils is very deliberate in promoting them but not many want to due to added fuel and chemical costs to kill off the cover crop before they plant. Josh asked about promoting no-till practices and again, the same explanation was mentioned as to why some farmers won't. Josh asked if there was anything that could be done to cut down on the Cormorants because they are a nuisance. Ryan H. stated that he has tried to convince people at the state level but they don't seem interested in curtailing the population. Finally, asked about ways to introduce more vegetation into the lake; i.e. underwater vegetation to help with fish cover. Director Rosen stated that this is something he will inquire with SIUE because they will be providing some services with the agreement the city recently partnered with them on.

Unfinished Business: Director Rosen asked the commission if a No Wake buoy would be better at Interstate 70 or if we could simply put signs on the existing poles that are installed for the oil-boom. The commission seemed to agree that this might be a more feasible option at this time but also encouraged that a buoy should be placed at the spillway. In addition, there needs to be some information shared with boaters to refrain from 'parking' their boat in the center of the columns that support the I-70 bridge. Not prohibit fishing but keep boaters from blocking the most accessible route.

New Business – Director Rosen updated the members that the comprehensive plan is moving along and a survey was mailed to some landowners as well as placed on the department's website.

SIUE students will be partnering w/ the city to develop informational boards for the pond & wetland to explain its purpose and that the health of the lake is our ultimate concern. There was some bad "press" on it when people saw trees being removed without knowing why.

Finally, Craig K. agreed to remain on the commission for another term.

Requests of the Commission Members: Bill B. asked if there could be an ADA waterfowl blind. Rosen & Hummert said there is a way to make that happen but it would be a tough sell for the city council because the location would be more on the park side, rather than away from park guests that use Old City Lake and dam for fishing & walking. Bill also encouraged the commission to host a lakeshore clean-up again so April 24, 2021 will be the date. Rosen & Hummert will start gathering sponsors and workers.

Bill B. made a motion to adjourn the meeting @ 7:45PM and Scott G. seconded it.

Next meeting will be April 15, 2021.