**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held April 27, 2023  
Lakewood Women’s Pavilion**

**CALL TO ORDER**: The meeting was called to order at 7:08pm by President Erik Meinhart. Officers present were First Vice-President Maureen Dostal, Second Vice-President Jeff Pigott, Treasurer Catie McMahon and Secretary Nicole Parke. The President chaired the meeting. The Secretary took notes.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Club said the Pledge of Allegiance together.

**APPROVAL of the MINUTES**: The body approved the minutes from the March 30, 2023 meeting. Betsy moved. Maureen seconds.

**HOUSEKEEPING:** Club watches video of Jeff Pigott & family with dog Penny, made by club member Stewart Ryan.Meeting at Sauced after the meeting to socialize.

**RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES -** Lakewood City Councilperson Sarah Kepple, Lakewood City Councilperson Cindy Marx, Lakewood School Board Member Nora Katzenberger, Lakewood City Councilperson Kyle Baker, Lakewood City Councilperson Jason Shachner, CCDP Exec Director & City Leader Karolyn Isenhart, Lakewood School Board Member Emma Petrie Barcelona, Lakewood School Board Member Betsy Shaughnessy, Judge Tom O’Malley, Lakewood City Councilperson Tom Bullock

**CANDIDATES: For first hello, say a few words, up to 3 minutes.**

Cindy Strebig, candidate for Lakewood City Council Ward 3

William Yeung, candidate for Mayor of Lakewood - has petitions if you’d like to sign

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:**

Jason Bush, moving to Lakewood in two weeks!

Becky Teerell (sp?), moved to Lakewood in June 2019, finally coming around.

**PROGRAM:**

**Marnie Urso, Senior Policy Director for Audubon Great Lakes**

Works in regional field office of National Audubon Society.

NAS does conservation work, education, & advocacy.

I’ve worked here for 18 years.

My presentation focus on Great Lakes Restoration; I focus on state & national policy.

I’m originally from Pittsburgh, did not realize the grandeur of Lake Erie. So many people have no idea!

Five Great Lakes - HOMES

Eight states border great lakes, and two canadian provinces.

States: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York

Political significance - 2018 was huge election for Great Lakes. Switched to Democrat majority in Great Lakes states, which can be very “swingy”!

How long ago did the lakes start to form? 20,000 years ago.

Water Diversion - only 1% per year is new water. If water leaves basin and isn’t replenished, will deplete the resource. This was one time gift from glaciers!

Canadian-based company proposed shipping water to Asia in late 90s. This sparked Great Lakes Compact, to protect our resource.

Not Salty! World’s largest source of freshwater.

More than 40 million people depend on it for drinking water.

350 species of breeding birds; major breeding grounds for North America’s marsh birds.

“Canary in the coal mine”. Birds tell us what’s going on in the environment.

How many miles of coastline are along the Great Lakes? 10,000 miles; 4530 miles in USA.

More coastline on the Great Lakes than any other coast!

35,000 islands in great lakes!!!

Great Threats - coastal development (major cities, wetland loss, wetland degradation)

Lake Erie is most biologically diverse of all Great Lakes, has most profitable fisheries.

Algal blooms big problem; impedes drinking water.

Invasive species huge problem.

Climate change makes everything worse. ¾ of birds in america are at risk of extinction. Affects lake levels, temperature, bird risks.

We know exactly what we need to do to protect Great Lakes!

In 2010, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Need money & political will to protect Great Lakes.

Last year, passed $1 billion in infrastructure bill to clean up areas of concern in Great Lakes by 203o. President Biden spoke about this in Lorain, Ohio.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - have to ask for funding in Congress every year. Trump tried to cut/eliminate twice but this Initiative has strong bipartisan support thankfully. Dave Joyce is huge advocate for it. Goal is to ramp back up to $475 million by 2026 (asking for $425 mill by 2024 appropriations).

Inflation Reduction Act - largest single investment by the U.S. government in history for clean energy and climate change. Will cut emissions by 1 billion metric tons by 2030. Cities, states, and private sector will need to contribute additional reductions. Tax credits driving down the cost of renewables and storage accelerate the move to clean energy.

House just proposed debt ceiling bill, proposed a lot of rollbacks on Inflation Reduction Act. We must fight to protect the advancements in the Inflation Reduction Act!

Contact: [marnie.urso@audubon.org](mailto:marnie.urso@audubon.org)

Q: Cindy Strebig - what is Ohio doing?

A: H2Ohio by Gov DeWine does give money to Ohio Dept of Agriculture to motivate farmers to farm sustainably.

Q: Kate Baney - Has there been any change in regulation of wetland banks?

A: About to get ruling from Supreme Court on wetlands, WOTUS, which is expected to roll back federal regulation on wetlands.

Challenging; we want nutrient pollution to decrease, but also want ecodiversity to increase.

Q: Jay Ketchaver - Other than keeping republicans out of power, what can we do to help protect Lake Erie?

A: Tell electeds it’s a priority for you! Support Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. in your yard, buy natives. don’t buy invasive species. support landscapers and gardeners that understand pollinators and native plants.

**David Sangree & Rita Stevens, Lakewood Tree Advisory & Education Board**

**Rita**

Rita Stevens, appointed to Board.

Let’s talk about Lakewood’s trees!

Our Tree Report Card, Goals and Progress, Highest Priorities

The Board formed in November 2019 with goals of collaborate, promote, educate. Current members Mary Brown, Linda Grandstaff, Matt Krems, David Sangree, Rita Stevens.

Tree Canopy is original green infrastructure. Offers aesthetics, habitat creation, energy conservation, stormwater retention, erosion control, absorption of pollutants, carbon sequestration.

Tree canopy is the layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above. In 2017 the average tree canopy cover was 35% across Cuyahoga County, 23% across Lakewood. Lakewood’s percentage isn’t too surprising since more densely populated.

Between 2011 and 2017, Lakewood lost more than 18% of its tree canopy. Lost most tree canopy of anywhere in county during that time. Goal is to achieve 33% tree canopy cover by 2035. Trees at home are essential.

County can tell what is plantable space.

**David**

Founding member of Lakewood tree task force, founded in 2013. City Council started tree task force to address rapid decline in tree canopy due to Hurricane Sandy. In 2014 made 19 recommendations.

Lakewood has four arborists managing 13,718 public trees. Planted 400 trees, removed 19 hazardous trees. working on hiring Urban Forestry Specialist.

Advocating for newly planted trees, guidance for tree protection, etc.

Highest priorities - hire the city Urban Forester, implement standard procedures for tree protection, maximize return on investment (continue street tree planting program, ensure new tree survival, diversify and grow funding), grow canopy on private property (would like to do residential tree giveaway and training, continue Most Distinguished Tree Contest in Lakewood Observer)

Tips for Residents - planting, watering, mulching, pruning, protecting. Learn about trees at treesaregood.org.

Let’s walk the tree talk! Plant for future generations, make trees essential part of our home gardens, care for our trees.

Q: Emma - our houses on very small lots, have to worry about sewer lines etc. How do we know where and what to plant?

A: Consult nursery and/or arborist to give advice. Definitely something to consider. Some trees do better in relation to sewer lines.

Q: Kate - see many large trees with visible damage on them. What do we need to do to maintain?

A: We recommend a tree of 18 inches or more should have to have arborist come look at it before it’s taken down. If damaged or dangerous, tree should come down. Otherwise, should not come down.

Q: Kate - Concerned that every time we have storm, tree comes down.

A: May need to look at sturdier trees.

Q: (?) - Are there any regulations against Lakewood residents replacing grass with turf?

A: I don’t think any official regulations in lakewood.

Q: Catie - what caused decrease in tree canopy?

A: Hurricane Sandy etc. Lots of trees have been lost and not replaced.

Both age and type of tree can contribute to loss of trees

Q: Nora - lost about 6 oak trees in Hurricane Sandy. We replaced with trees we thought would work. May need more education on recommended trees

A: Our goal is more trees of diverse types. There is no “perfect” tree.

3 of us on team are knowledgeable on what trees are good for what places. Could offer advice.

**Jennifer Grieser, Director of Natural Resources for Cleveland Metroparks**

Last year was 150th anniversary of Arbor Day!

April is Ohio Native Plant Month. Ohio was first to do this! Now, we have National Native Plant Month.

We have threats - pest & pathogens, invasive species, etc.

You might be familiar with Emerald Necklace. Dark green shows watershed base. Must work with surrounding neighborhoods to protect when developing around.

Adaptive ecosystem management.

We plan, do, assess, learn & share, adapt, repeat. Collaborate!

Looking at natural resources of Rocky River Reservation.

On research side, have specialists who gather data.

Rocky River reservation slightly to our west. Has some wetland areas.

Wetland mapping - plant community data, primary headwater surveys

Long term vegetation plots throughout park system.

Conducted complete census of our small streams - over 1,000 to understand how they’re doing.

Can compile into Natural Resources Index.

Rocky River Resrvation is high conservation priority. Surrounded by development.

We have great conservation value in these urban reservations. Wetland ecologist John Rainier is also botanist. Park is over 100 years old; he’s still finding plants new to State of Ohio.

2 species confirmed for 1st time in Ohio: rough hawthorn, lovely shadbush.

River otter and a kind of swan have returned to the area!

Wildlife cameras (207+ cameras) have gathered over 19 million images. Partnered with Microsoft who have mega-detector program who can help sort out blanks.

Motus tracking - track migratory species. Have tower at Huntington and Gordon Park. “Radio fence” along southshore of Lake Erie. Able to track flight of birds, all the way up to Quebec City!

Climate Change Projects - 18 Reserves Forest Carbon Project (voluntary offset market, 1st set of credits sold, January 2022). Can use money to do forest management.

Lubrizol Foundation Grant - 3-year partnership to develop carbon account reports, climate-based forest management guidelines and a web-based tree selector tool! Will be online tool that helps determine what trees will be successful in various environmental factors.

Academic Partnerships - CSU, OSU, Case, Kent State, Miami of Ohio, Baldwin Wallace, University of New Hampshire

Chronolog

Tree & Pollinator Plantings

Prescribed Fire

Invasive Plant Management

Impervious Surface Removal -

Stormwater retrofit - bioretention cells

East Branch Rocky River dam removal (Mill Stream Run)

Foster’s run - H2Ohio-funded project. From Ohio Dept of Natural Resources. Award restoration projects.

Wendy Park shoreline erosion - upcoming project to establish nature based shoreline protection.

Cleveland Harbor Eastern Embayment Resilience Strategy (CHEERS) - floating wetlands. Lots of “straight lines” on shorelines - working to soften shorelines.

Watershed Volunteer Program

Q: (?) What is invasive species that is green with yellow bud? taking over hillsides etc

A: Called lesserselendine. We can treat it but can’t treat it everywhere. We have to strategically apply our limited resources.

**Councilperson Tom Bullock**

Learned last week that FirstEnergy confirmed pricing about a month ago. NOPEC confirmed pricing. It is now a really good deal to have 100% clean energy dependence without having to do anything to your home. Will cost 5.5 cents per kilowatt. Cheaper than default (FirstEnergy). All councilpersons teamed up to support this. Then, disruption in market. NOPEC suspended electricity side of service, but it’s about to kick back in this June. Enthusiastically recommending that we stay with NOPEC. FirstEnergy is doubling, will be 12.4 cents per kilowatt. Inflation from Ukraine war & COVID has caught up. Will multiply our carbon savings citywide by 12 folds. Lakewood leading the way in the region! Would like NOPEC to make this the default across its service territory. You have consumer options.

**Councilperson Sarah Kepple**

Climate Action Plan

Lakewoodoh.gov/lakewood-city-council → Council Videos → “Upcoming Events” Public Works & sustainability Committee → see the Climate Action Plan!

<https://onelakewood.granicus.com/DocumentViewer.php?file=onelakewood_fbebe3b6daa12012b5087e10fb4beaeb.pdf&view=1>

Provide e-comment!

Meeting 6pm this Monday, May 1st.

Lots of consideration for equity and climate justice.

Tree Canopy very important for keeping cooler temperatures.

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

President: Erik - if you didn’t sign in when you got here, please do so with Carol by the door. Have to have attended 3 meetings to be able to vote in our endorsements in August. Reminder to renew membership! Thanks to everyone who attended training for Repro Rights ballot initiative petition collection. Looks like Republicans are going to make it harder to pass constitutional amendment. County Party Dinner is May 21st. In past, club has subsidized some cost of dinner for club members. We have fewer funds this year because we spent so much last year. But, if interested in going and need some assistance with cost, please let me or Maureen know.

First Vice President: Maureen - big focus right now is Ohio Repro Rights petition signatures. Drive thru this Sunday and Sunday, May 21st at Madison Park. In collaboration with protectchoiceohio.org. Thanks to our speakers! In May, not having meeting. Will be at Sauced as social. #1 priority is to get petition signatures. For petitions, see Karolyn but also need to pay attention to voter ID law. VoteRiders national organization now in Ohio.

Political Activism: (see First Vice-President)

Book Club: Next meeting will be Wednesday, May 24th at 7pm at Bottlehouse. Reading Uncle Tom’s Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Watching “Down to Earth” season 2, focuses on sustainability.

Second Vice President: Jeff - in May not having meeting, will be at Sauced! At 6pm on Thursday May 25th. Have now agreed to have Summer Supper at Trellis at Studio West 117, on Thursday August 10th. Chris Ronayne is our speaker, working on a few others.

Treasurer: Catie - no update.

Secretary: Nicole - no update.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

Ohio legislature: (no one present)

Cuyahoga County Council: (no one present)

Lakewood City Council: Councilperson Baker - spent two sessions of Council going over ARPA proposals. $3 million had not been designated. Split it amongst ourselves, accepted proposals. Determined lots of projects. Will be finalizing later in May.

Ohio Board of Education: (no one present)

Lakewood School Board: School Board Member Betsy Shaughnessy - schoolyear is winding down. Senior Art Show today. Students so talented! Working on facilities committee. Lots in the works, Will have lots to report later on in summer.

ODP/CCDP: Karolyn - County Party Dinner is May 21st. Lakewood will be ground zero for the fight in August. We will have to turn out the vote here to defeat proposal to increase threshold needed for consitutional amendment. We can defeat them! If we all turnout, we’ll crush them. (Kyle Baker - special election costing $20 million and has bipartisan opposition). Effort was slowing down, but Ohio Chamber of Commerce found out about Minimum Wage initiative to be on ballot next year.

**GENERAL UPDATES:** N/A

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING** - May 25th social at Sauced. Next traditional meeting will be June 29, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned. Motion by Ahmie. Catie seconds.

Event notes prepared by Nicole Parke on April 27, 2023.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date