

# **AGENDA**

## **Whitewater Landmarks Commission**

**Thursday, October 2, 2014 – 6 PM**

**City Manager's Conference Room**

**312 Whitewater Street, Whitewater, WI 53190**

### **Call to Order**

- Call to Order and roll call
- Introduce Pat Blackmer
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes – September 4, 2014
- Set date and time of next meeting – Thursday, November 6, 2014 - 6:00 PM
- Hear Citizen Comments: No formal Landmarks Commission Action will be taken during this meeting although issues raised may become a part of a future agenda. Participants are allotted a three minute speaking period. Specific items listed on the agenda may not be discussed at this time; however citizens are invited to speak to those specific issues at the time the Commission discusses that particular item.

### **Reports**

- Friends of the Mounds (Helmick)
- Historical Society (Marshall)
- Birge Fountain (Kienbaum)
- Whitewater Effigy Mounds Preserve and Maintenance (Helmick)
- Animal Control at Whitewater Effigy Mounds Preserve (Helmick)

### **Unfinished Business**

- Plaques for Landmarks (Popke)
- Budget – Present budget \$1600
- Water tower - Landmarks Status (Suzanne)
- Old Armory – Landmarks Status (Helmick)

### **New Business**

- Fundraising – looking for people to do it.

### **Future Agenda Items**

### **Good of the Order**

### **Adjournment**

**MINUTES**  
**Whitewater Landmarks Commission**  
**Thursday, August 7, 2014 – 6 PM**  
**City Manager's Conference Room**  
**312 Whitewater Street, Whitewater, WI 53190**

**Call to Order**

- Ken Kienbaum called the meeting to order at 6:09 PM
  - Commissioners Present: Suzanne Popke, Alan Marshall, Sarah Bregant, Ken Kienbaum
  - Staff Present: Alan Lockett
  - Guests Present: Taylor McDarison, Pat Blackmer
  - Absent: Richard Helmick, Suzanne Haselow
- Approval of Agenda
  - MSC Kienbaum/Marshall to approve agenda, moving up Plaques for Landmarks to be discussed immediately after hearing of citizen comments.
  - Ayes: Kienbaum, Popke, Marshall, Bregant
  - Noes: None
  - Abstain: None
- Approval of Minutes
  - MSC Bregant/Marshall to approve minutes as printed
  - Ayes: Kienbaum, Popke, Marshall, Bregant
  - Noes: None
  - Abstain: None
- Set Time and Date of Next Meeting
  - Thursday, October 2, 2014 at 6:00 PM
- Hear Citizen Comments
  - None

**Unfinished Business**

- Plaques for Landmarks
  - Cameron Clapper is in favor of going forward with the project and will be taking the proposal to the Common Council meeting on September 16, 2014 to ask for the initial \$300 to get the ball rolling. The Commission's next move is to draft a letter informing property owners of the city's intent for the plaques. To be included in the letter is the fact that Taylor McDarison will be making tiles for each historic landmark the Commission decides to include, and if the property owner would not like to display the plaque, the City will retain the unused plaque and store it for new owners, should they choose to display the plaque at that time. Taylor is also intending on leaving the molds for the plaques she makes so that if a new property is entered into the historic registry, it might have a plaque made as well. The plaques would be approximately 11x11 in size and be completed in May of 2015.
- Budget

- Alan Lockett helped draft a line-item budget for the Landmarks Commission
- MSC Marshall/Bregant to recommend a budget of \$1600 to the City Council. Line Items include Education: \$600, Transportation & Lodging: \$500, Printing: \$200, Contingency: \$300.
- Ayes: Kienbaum, Popke, Marshall, Bregant
- Noes: None
- Abstain: None

Meeting ended due to lack of quorum at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sarah Bregant

DRAFT

# A walk around one preserve reveals need for vigilant maintenance

**RUSS HELWIG**  
WEEKLY WALK



**O**n Aug. 20, four of us started our adventure for the day by visiting the Whitewater Effigy Mounds Preserve. It had been a couple years since I had hiked there.

We enjoyed the wildflower garden at the sign near Mound Parkway. But upon entering the preserve we found it to be in need of maintenance. The path to the mounds was mowed, but the signs are deteriorating and one sign was missing from its post. It was difficult to imagine what the mounds looked like as they were covered by tall weeds. In the middle of the preserve there was a large oak that had split in two, and one half was lying on the ground. It did not fall on any mounds.

It was nice to see the prairie west of the preserve, where we observed a great selection of prairie grasses and flowers.

We then drove to the parking lot off Fremont Street north of town by Whitewater Creek. After checking out the creek we walked across the road to walk around the prairie. We found some patches of sweet clover, which is invasive and it was displacing the

prairie plants.

A couple of green herons were spotted near the pond. A snake quickly slithered across the path, and we saw a few leopard frogs. A variety of bees and other insects were enjoying the wildflowers. We found cream gentians near the path along with compass plant, stiff goldenrod, rosinweed and many other blooming prairie plants.

On this muggy day we had covered a bit over two miles in two hours.

#### **Marvin Herman reports on the Aug. 19 and Aug. 20 walks:**

*There were 14 hikers, a huge number for a Tuesday hike, who met at the U.S. Highway 12 meeting place on a day that followed substantial rain in the area the night before. An Illinois family of five wanted to hike the Ice Age Trail and we were pleased to accommodate them with a nice walk around Lake LaGrange in reverse, a distance of just under three miles.*

*When we stopped at Russ' bench, we met a man with an English bulldog and he walked the rest of the way with us, the dog snorting heavily all the way as dogs of that breed tend to do.*

*There were no pesky flying things to contend with and all enjoyed the hike very much.*

*The following day, Norwin Watson led 13 hikers on a long walk on the Nordic trails, a com-*

*ination of blue and green blazed trails resulting in a hike of 5-1/2 miles.*

#### **Jake Gerlach gave this report on Wednesday's walk:**

*Four people and a dog went to the Department of Natural Resources headquarters. From there we started clockwise around the nature trail. When we got to the Ice Age Trail we turned left toward County Highway S. We found many juicy, ripe blackberries that we had to sample. We also saw quite a few wildflowers; we particularly liked the sunflowers and the purple of the rough blazing star.*

*The total distance was slightly more than 2.5 miles.*

#### **Ellen Davis reports on the Aug. 20 short walk:**

*Due to a time constraint, I opted for a short, fast hike around Lake La Grange. Accompanied by master gardener Barb, we started with the biggest hill. At the summit, we noted a scattering of rough blazing star beginning to bloom, and invasive spotted knapweed. The leaves of the grey dogwood bushes were already turning red — a striking contrast to the white berries.*

*The new trail through the woods was aging nicely, accumulating moss along the uphill side along with lichens and bracket fungus and an assortment of young understory plants.*

*Neither the great blue heron nor the resident pair of egrets were present at the end of the lake. Goldenrod was coming into bloom, and I learned that the flowering plant I'd identified as swamp milkweed was actually a shorter version of Joe Pye weed — and the one with tiny white flowers that looked like baby's breath was in the spurge family.*

*Barb's mission on this hike was to locate a "small" patch of phragmites along the lakeshore. These tall, tasseled reeds were easy to spot, adjacent to a bed of cattails. Another invasive, phragmites spreads via underground tubers, crowding out other more desirable native species. This was a substantial invasion worthy of DNR action.*

*Big blue stem grass was abundant in the prairie sections, along with more rough blazing star, goldenrod, a few prairie coneflowers and asters in bud. Sumac sported the occasional orange or red leaf. We moved quickly along the trail, distracted only at the cornfield where we found an ear of corn on the ground with one bite missing.*

*Happy trekking, Russ*

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**Russ Helwig** is a volunteer with the Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. He leads hikes on Wednesdays and on Tuesdays when desired. All ages are welcome. (262) 473-2187, [www.iceagetrail.org](http://www.iceagetrail.org).

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## OUTDOOR EVENTS

■ **Sept. 7, Hike at White River County Park:** Meet at 9 a.m., carpool option available from the Converses, W8339 R & W Townline Road, Whitewater. Contact Jerome Converse at (262) 473-7304.

■ **Sept 13, Trail work:** Meet at 9 a.m., at the U.S. Highway 12 Ice Age Trail crossing. Help cut back bushes and other invasive plants. Contact: Jerome Converse, (262) 473-7304.

■ **WANTED/NEEDED:** Volunteers with a love for the outdoors who would like to assist present adopters in maintaining sections of the Ice Age Trail in Jefferson and Walworth counties. Contact Bonnie at (262) 495-3412.

■ **Tuesday and Wednesday weekly walks:** Russ Helwig leads hikes at 4 p.m. Tuesdays and 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays at the U.S. Highway 12 Ice Age National Scenic Trail crossing located about four miles east of Whitewater, about a quarter mile east of the intersection of U.S. 12 with Sweno Road. The parking lot is at the west end of Sherwood Forest Road, which is a short road that intersects U.S. Highway 12 at each end. Walks of different distances are held on Wednesdays and also on Tuesdays when desired. All ages are welcome. A current state park pass is required to park a car at the U.S. 12 meeting place.

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**From:** Matt Amundson [MAmundson@whitewater-wi.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 23, 2014 8:54 AM  
**To:** 'rrhelmick@att.net'; Trykowski, Denay; Virginia H. Coburn; Chuck Nass  
**Cc:** krncoburn@yahoo.com; watertowerlady@hotmail.com; wdsable@gmail.com; nanceds@sbcglobal.net; ourfarm@netwurx.net; lloomer\_pgdisley@sbcglobal.net; Trykowski, Denay  
**Subject:** RE: EMP observations Sept. 20, 2014

Hello Everyone,

Just to add to the discussion, the original plan (as most plans) has been modified by the Parks and Recreation Board a number of times since it's adoption. To clarify some of the questions raised:

- Burns – the frequency has been increased as the two burns prior to this spring had poor results due to wet conditions. The spring 2014 burn was the most successful to date.
- Mounds – the mounds have been cleared and seeded with short stature prairie plantings. I've been told (as is spelled out below) that it will likely take 2-3 years to see growth.
- Mowing – The Parks and Recreation Board at the suggestion of Chuck Nass approved the use of mowing the large areas 3-4 times per year to control invasive plants.

The Parks and Recreation Board will welcome input on these and all issues.

Thanks!  
Matt

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**From:** rrrhelmick@att.net [mailto:rrhelmick@att.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 23, 2014 8:48 AM  
**To:** Trykowski, Denay; Virginia H. Coburn  
**Cc:** krncoburn@yahoo.com; watertowerlady@hotmail.com; wdsable@gmail.com; nanceds@sbcglobal.net; ourfarm@netwurx.net; lloomer\_pgdisley@sbcglobal.net; Trykowski, Denay; Matt Amundson  
**Subject:** Re: EMP observations Sept. 20, 2014

To my knowledge, the EMP has had at least three burns within the last three years. The Long Range Preservation and Maintenance Plan that was adopted by the Park & Rec as well as the common council called for a prescribed series of burns. I believe that the city has been attempting burns at a more frequent basis than what is suggested in the plan. One of the reasons for this may be all the difficulty in scheduling a burn: humidity, ground moisture, ground debris, wind, availability of the trained, city crew, as well as city fire department personnel. None of the previous burns as been as successful as hoped. One beneficial outcome of these attempts has been the training of city personnel to conduct the burns rather than employing outside parties.

Also, it has been my understanding that the mounds themselves have been chemically cleared of all vegetation and reseeded with low statured, prairie plants. I am no authority on plantings of any type. If this has not been done, I am unaware of it. I am also unaware of the growing characteristics of these plants.

The common council has placed the sole responsibility for maintenance at the EMP with the Park & Rec Board. Any maintenance activity that is done there needs to be approved by the Park & Rec Board or, at least, be authorized by Matt Amundson. The board is aware of the many needs presented by the EMP. It may be helpful if others spoke of their concerns with them. The boards' members, phone numbers and email addresses, are easily obtained through the city's web site.

R-

----- Original Message -----  
**From:** Trykowski, Denay

**To:** Virginia H. Coburn

**Cc:** Karen Coburn (krncoburn@yahoo.com) ; Mariann Scott<watertowerlady@hotmail.com> ; Dan Sable (wdsable@gmail.com) ; Nancy Dade (nanceds@sbcglobal.net) ; Renae Prell-Mitchell (ourfarm@netwurx.net) ; Richard Helmick (rrhelmick@att.net) ; Linda Loomer (lloomer\_pgdisley@sbcglobal.net) ; Trykowski, Denay

**Sent:** Monday, September 22, 2014 10:22 PM

**Subject:** RE: EMP observations Sept. 20, 2014

Hi Ginny,

I'm familiar with the protocol for newly planted prairies, but this Oak Savanna remnant is not that. It has gone without consistent management for quite some time, and the invasives have been there a long time, and getting worse. There have been a couple controlled burns, one this past spring, that didn't get everything. Prior to that, I think only one burn was attempted, using a professional company like Midwest Prairies or Tallgrass Prairies, but the weather didn't cooperate, so it was not finished. Since then Chuck's city staff is charged with controlled burns, and the professional management company has been dropped due to costs. It looks to me that everything recently mowed was left on the ground to reseed. In past visits, there were not a lot of native plants visible among the invasives, but there were a few here and there. My guess is that shrubs and saplings were not dabbed with herbicide, and will re-sprout. If there were any desirable native saplings, they were all mowed. When Renae-Prell Mitchell took a few of us through the site a couple years ago, I noticed one native Carrion Vine among the tangle, but I think it got mowed too. So far the 2 "regular" burns have not controlled much, which is probably why the recent mowing was done, just to be able to see the mounds.

Richard Helmick was working on advising the city to plant the low-growing grasses & sedges directly on the mounds. I don't know what has happened with that. No word yet from him.

For the full sun prairie in the back field behind the Oak Savanna, I thought that was doing pretty well, although there were a lot of invasives coming in there too. It was a newly-seeded prairie, maybe 3 or 4 years old, but I don't know if it was ever burned. It might have been. I was surprised that they mowed it too, but maybe that is in the management plan. I saw Cream Baptisia cut down, but maybe it will come back stronger next year, and maybe the seed pods will disperse and grow next year.

If volunteers went through and tried to bag the cut weeds lying on the ground, I'm not sure the weeds can be identified easily now. If there are any natives, they would need to be identified and left there. However, I'm going to guess that the Burdock and Queen Ann's Lace were not in seed yet, so they might be OK. But the vast amount of Garlic mustard might have been in seed. Also, now all the biennial Burdock rosettes and young plants at ground level are enjoying the light and gradually shading out some of the areas with their big leaves. There is a lot of it toward the entrance, and Creeping Charlie too. What do you think?

Denay

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**From:** Virginia H. Coburn [mailto:virginiacoburn@coburn.com]

**Sent:** Monday, September 22, 2014 2:24 PM

**To:** Trykowski, Denay; Karen Coburn (krncoburn@yahoo.com); Mariann Scott<watertowerlady@hotmail.com>; Dan Sable (wdsable@gmail.com); Nancy Dade (nanceds@sbcglobal.net); Renae Prell-Mitchell (ourfarm@netwurx.net); Richard Helmick (rrhelmick@att.net); Linda Loomer (lloomer\_pgdisley@sbcglobal.net)

**Subject:** RE: EMP observations Sept. 20, 2014

RE: fall cutting, it may or may not be part of a management plan, sometime in early establishments it is helpful to reduce the overall volume of weed seeds. The seed heads would have to be removed, not left on the ground. I've seen newly planted prairies where they mow high a couple times to keep the bad stuff from flowering at all, hoping the new prairie plants are growing beneath the bad. For more established areas, it is thought the good plants will outcompete so it's not so necessary to remove every weed. If you have labor available, cutting and bagging can't hurt. Cut shrubs and saplings should be dabbed with herbicide or as you say they will resprout. But again, regular burning should control them. Low-growing grass and sedges would look really good on the mounds – prairie dropseed, little bluestem etc. but you need to get a seed bank in there.

Hope that is helpful,  
Ginny

Virginia Coburn  
262 473 0301

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**From:** Trykowski, Denay [<mailto:trykowsd@uww.edu>]

**Sent:** Sunday, September 21, 2014 1:05 AM

**To:** Karen Coburn ([krncoburn@yahoo.com](mailto:krncoburn@yahoo.com)); Virginia H. Coburn; Mariann Scott<[watertowerlady@hotmail.com](mailto:watertowerlady@hotmail.com)>; Dan Sable ([wdsable@gmail.com](mailto:wdsable@gmail.com)); Nancy Dade ([nanceds@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nanceds@sbcglobal.net)); Renae Prell-Mitchell ([ourfarm@netwurx.net](mailto:ourfarm@netwurx.net)); Richard Helmick ([rrhelmick@att.net](mailto:rrhelmick@att.net)); Linda Loomer ([lloomer\\_pgdisley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lloomer_pgdisley@sbcglobal.net))

**Subject:** EMP observations Sept. 20, 2014

Hi EMP affiliates and friends,

In response to **Karen's** questions below, I walked through the **EMP** this evening, Saturday, as well as to the back prairie field. It appears to me that most of the mounds themselves are partially covered with very tall plants, taller than me. I can't exactly identify the tallest – looks like some kind of goldenrod, but I don't ID the goldenrods very well. I didn't think it was Canada Goldenrod, too tall, but maybe something else. It has already bloomed out, so I had difficulty identifying it by leaves and spent blooms from a distance. The mosquitoes weren't too bad, but the few I encountered were very persistent, so I kept moving along.

Yes, there are invasive species on the mounds. My guess is that after the spring burn, nothing was seeded on the mounds, so whatever was in the soil sprouted. I couldn't judge well. Most of the plants are tall, and I thought it was **Richard's** plan to plant low-grow native grass and sedge seed mixes on the mounds. I could be mistaken. If the mounds were seeded, it might take another year or so for the grasses to materialize, but in the meantime there is lots of competition from other tall plants, Queen Ann's Lace, etc.

I didn't see any vines on the mounds, and I only saw a few native plants growing near them. This is a mixed shade/sun savanna ecosystem, not a full sun prairie, although there are some sunny areas too, so the soil and light conditions won't be the same as for the plants out in the full sun display garden.

**Karen**, when you were out there last week, did you notice the huge Burr Oak that split right down the middle? What a sight to behold. Half is still standing, and the other half is sprawled on the ground.

Leaving it there would help maintain all kinds of wildlife, but I'll bet the city will cut it up and haul it away. I hope not. It will provide a lot of sustenance and protection for other species as it slowly biodegrades.

**Karen**, last week did you notice how all the ground has been mowed or bush-hogged, at about 5-6" everywhere except around and on the mounds? Or had that not been done yet?

**Richard**, was fall mowing in the master maintenance plan, or do you suppose the mowing was done recently in response to the negative article in the Walworth County Sunday Aug. 31? The mowers even cut the entire back prairie field. Everything is leveled except the trees and the mounds. I can't remember if that is part of the maintenance plan, an early fall mowing.

**Ginny**, is early fall mowing part of a savanna restoration? I can't remember. The small shrubs and saplings will just re-sprout. What I did see is that the savanna mowing opened the ground to more light, and now there are many carpets of low Burdock, low Garlic Mustard, Creeping Charlie, and some other invasives coming up. I didn't notice many natives, but I wasn't looking closely. The spring burn didn't seem to knock back the Burdock at all.

I didn't see any wildlife except squirrels. I neither heard nor saw any birds.

Toward the entrance, there are some big tire marks in the mud, where it appears a large vehicle drove in, perhaps to unload a big mower or bush hog, and made some ruts.

These are my uninformed observations. **Denay**

**P.S.** I will be weeding the native plant display garden at the sign, probably this coming week or so, depending on weather and my schedule. I will remove some of the seed heads from a couple species that are really aggressive, and trim some of the tangled collapsing dormant plants. The seed heads are important as food sources for some birds and small critters over the winter, so I won't be too aggressive. I'll also shovel the pile of mulch where it is needed most. I noticed that some of the natives didn't read the catalogs about mature height. Some got a lot taller than the nursery labels indicated.

I would like to remove most of the ID flags remaining, but I don't want to rid them all, as I won't remember their identifications. Plus, some of the remaining flags identify which plants didn't come back after the winter, and I'd like to replace them.

**Suggestions are welcome** as to how to acquire professional-looking signage for each species growing there. Last fall I went to the Chicago Botanical Gardens, and they had very nice plant signage, but it was made of heavy metal and looked very expensive.

Also, a local resident living on Mound View St. suggested that we have photos of each of the native species in the display garden on the web site. He said he would suggest that to Matt.

**From:** Karen Coburn [<mailto:krncoburn@yahoo.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, September 18, 2014 5:56 PM

**To:** Trykowski, Denay

Hi Denay.

What invasive plants do you see at the Mounds. Was there yesterday, but couldn't really tell. An awful lot of vines choking things. Do the mounds have prairie plants growing on them????

K