

R Lake Geneva REGIONAL NEWS



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DENNIS HINES PHOTOS, REGIONAL NEWS

Several sponsors and their children feed some goats, June 22. Lake Geneva officials conducted a goat sponsoring campaign to help fund the goat-grazing project. Mayor Charlene Klein scheduled a special day for the sponsors to view the goats.

Goats grazing at Hillmoor

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Goats are now grazing grass on the former Hillmoor Golf Course property.

About 50 goats from Vegetation Solutions LLC of Richland Center recently arrived at the former Hillmoor Golf Course property to clear several acres of grass.

Members of the Lake Geneva City Council unanimously approved a conditional use permit, March 27, to allow for husbandry land use on the former Hillmoor Golf Course property, 333 E. Main St., to allow goat grazing to occur on the property.

The city council members approved a contract with Vegetation Solutions, Dec. 27, 2022, to provide goat grazing services on the property.

The project was proposed to help clear several acres of grass at the former golf course.

City officials estimated that it would cost about \$975 to transport the goats to and from the property, about \$350 a day to rent the goats and about \$550 a week for public works employees to check on the goats.

A goat sponsoring campaign was conducted to help fund the project.

People may still sponsor a goat for \$35 by sending cash or a check, made out to the City of Lake Geneva Goat Fund, to City of Lake Geneva, 626 Geneva St., Lake Geneva, WI. 53147.

The goats arrived during the week of June 12 and are expected to remain on the property for about three weeks.



About 50 goats from Vegetation Solutions LLC have arrived at the former Hillmoor Golf Course property to graze grass.

Benjamin Robel, co-owner of Vegetation Solutions, said the goats initially will clear about a three-acre area of grass near the former driving range then another three to four acres if time allows.

"It depends on how much they go through and how much time we have here," he said.

Robel said the goats are checked on daily by himself and city staff. He said, so far, the goats seem to be adapting well to their

temporary home on the former Hillmoor Golf property.

"They're doing just fine," Robel said. "They have plenty of vegetation, plenty of water and plenty of people checking on them."

Robel said the amount of food the goats eat and the amount of water they drink varies each day. "It depends on how hot it is," Robel said. "It depends on how much they drink, but they will probably drink half a gallon per head, per day— maybe 20 gallons

total a day?" Robel said the young goats are often kept with their parents.

"If you wean them or separate them, the lambs don't know who to follow and they have this bond," Robel said. "The mom shows them where the water is. The mom shows them how to load into the trailer. The mom teaches them to stay in the fence— all of that stuff."

Please see **GOATS**, Page A2

Reading program expands

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All children in Walworth County, up to the age of 5 years old, are now eligible to receive a free book each month.

Officials from the Walworth County Reading Project have expanded their program to include all of Walworth County.

The Walworth County Reading Project was established in July 2022 to help bring the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program to the area, which allows children to receive a free book a month until their fifth birthday.

The reading project initially was offered in Lake Geneva and the Bloomfield/Genoa City area, but the organization recently obtained enough funding to offer the program throughout Walworth County.

Carrie Spiegelhoff, president of the Walworth County Reading Project Board, said the Walworth County Reading Project was one of 15 organizations to receive a \$10,000 grant from the Gage Marine Corporation.

Officials from Gage Marine

Please see **PROJECT**, Page A2

Rotary Club plans butterfly garden

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Butterflies could be fluttering around the Lake Geneva Public Library sometime next spring.

Members of the Lake Geneva Rotary Club plan to establish a monarch habitat garden near the back of the Lake Geneva Public Library on the west side of the building.

The Lake Geneva City Council unanimously approved plans for the monarch habitat garden, June 26.

Members of the Lake Geneva Board of Park Commissioners unanimously approved to recommend plans for the butterfly garden to city aldermen, June 20.

Please see **GARDEN**, Page A2



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Garden

From A1

The Rotary Club members first presented plans for the monarch habitat garden during the June 20 board of park commissioners meeting.

Jill Rodriguez, project coordinator, said the Rotary Club members developed the idea for the butterfly garden while discussing the organization's strategic plan.

"We just finished doing a strategic plan through the Rotary Club and the one thing that come out loud and clear is that our members are very concerned about protecting the environment, which is a newer initiative of Rotary Club International," Rodriguez said. "We tossed a bunch of ideas around then we talked about potentially doing a monarch habitat garden. Everyone was excited. Everyone was onboard."

Rodriguez said the Rotary Club members feel the back of the Lake Geneva Public Library building, 918 W. Main St., will be an ideal location for the butterfly garden.

"It would be adjacent to the building, so we would mulch around the edges," Rodriguez said. "It would be sort of self-contained so mowing wouldn't be an issue."

Members of the Rotary Club will construct and maintain the butterfly garden. Funding for the project will come from a grant from Rotary District 6270 and matching funds from a local organization.

"The Rotary Club is committed to building and maintaining," Rodriguez said. "So ongoing, we would do whatever it took to sustain it, make sure we don't have milkweed pods everywhere and continue it as an ongoing thing."

The Rotary Club members also plan to install a sign that includes information about monarch butterfly habitats near the garden.

"It's just really educational, so we think that would be a great ad-



NIC COURTY, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Members of the Lake Geneva Rotary Club plan to install a butterfly garden near the Lake Geneva Public Library.

dition," Rodriguez said. "The sign would be included. We look to have some assistance from public works to install it. But we do have money in the grant to prepare the grounds."

Rodriguez said the Rotary Club plans to work with the Geneva Lake Conservancy, University of Wisconsin Extension Service, Northwind Perennial Farm, Lake Geneva Public Library and Lake Geneva Public Works Department on the project.

"What's really exciting is the partnerships we're developing to potentially do this," Rodriguez said. "We're working with Northwind Perennial Farm. Julie Hill from the extension has done a lot of work on pollinators and butterfly gardens, so they're kind of our partners.

The library is totally on board with it and they plan to make it a very educational experience as well as a natural habitat. The children's librarian has expressed an interest in having a little plot where every year, as part of this program, kids can come out and either hatch chrysalis or plant vegetables if they want."

Rodriguez said the Rotary Club plans to start the project in the fall and complete it in spring 2024.

"We're going to do a monarch-poolzoa event and invite the public," Rodriguez said. "I think then they can buy into it and take ownership. We could do a lot of children's programs. We're going to work with the experts to create the garden, because I don't pretend to be an expert."

Cindy Forster-Feuredi, president

of the park board of commissioners, said she is in favor of a butterfly garden being established near the library.

"I love the idea," Forster-Feuredi said. "I think it's fantastic."

Alderwoman Linda Frame, who also is a member of the park board of commission, said she also likes the idea of the butterfly garden.

"I think it's an excellent idea," Frame said. "I'm excited."

During the city council meeting, Alderman Ken Howell asked if the monarch butterfly garden would be operational throughout the year.

"I'm just curious," Howell said. "It's a nice idea, but I'm just wondering about it."

Rodriguez said the butterfly garden will remain dormant during the winter.

"It will be a garden with plantings that will go pretty much dormant during the winter, because it's not enclosed," Rodriguez said. "We will have butterfly bushes, milkweed and a variety of other perennial plants."

Alderwoman Shari Straube proposed that the Rotary Club sell some of the plant seeds at the end of the summer so people can plant them in their own yard.

Rodriguez said that is something the Rotary Club members could consider.

"That's a wonderful idea," Rodriguez said. "Think big."

Mayor Charlene Klein said the butterfly garden will be a welcome addition to the area near the library.

"It's going to be a great educational experience," Klein said.

Goats

From A1

Mayor Charlene Klein said she is pleased with the amount of grass the goats have grazed on the property, so far.

"They're doing a good job,"

Klein said. "So they're making some progress."

Klein said the goats will not be accessible to the public for the rest of the time they are in Lake Geneva.

"We keep the goats locked," Klein said. "I just had a day for the sponsors."

Vegetation Solutions has been in business for about 13 years.

The company has provided grass-grazing services for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, O'Hare Interna-

tional Airport, City of Chicago, park districts, school and nature centers.

Robel said the goats will be transported to several communities this summer.

"They have a list of places to go this summer," Robel said. "This is the traveling team."

The City of Lake Geneva purchased the former Hillmoor Golf Course property last year for about \$6 million from White River Holdings LLC.

A Hillmoor Ad Hoc Committee has been formed to help the city find potential uses for the property.

Project

From A1

recently awarded \$150,000 in grants to 15 different organization to honor the business's 150th anniversary. About 98 organizations applied for a grant.

Spiegelhoff said the Gage Marine grant and funding from other local organizations and businesses has helped the Walworth County Reading Project to expand its program.

"It's hard to put it into words. We're so excited. It's been so rewarding to have the program grow so quickly," Spiegelhoff said. "Just to have the generosity of the community behind us it clearly shows that it's a project people will support and are excited about. So we're thrilled

to have the support of the community and to be able to help families and kids."

Doug Bartz, Walworth County Reading Project Board member, said he is honored that the Walworth County Reading Project was one of several organizations to receive a grant from Gage Marine.

"To be chosen for one of those was an honor," Bartz said. "To be recognized for the work and to be recognized that children are definitely in need of building that bond with their families and having reading time, it's an honor."

Owners of Lake City Social, 111 Center St. in Lake Geneva, also are helping to raise funding for the reading project.

Through July 9, Lake City Social customers may round

up their bill to have additional funding donated to the reading project, also \$3 of every "Good Karma" bloody Mary drink that is sold will go towards the organization.

Lake City Social also will host a fundraising event from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., June 29 in which 20% of the proceeds from food and beverage sales will be donated to the Walworth County Reading Project.

Spiegelhoff said the June 29 fundraising event also is to celebrate the program expanding throughout Walworth County.

"It's a chance for us to celebrate opening up to the entire county and getting the word out," Spiegelhoff said. "All of the fundraising will go to kids and sending books out."

Bartz said members of the

Walworth County Reading Project Board will be at the event to inform residents about the project and to sign children up for the program.

"So if anybody has any questions about what the project and what we do, we will be there that night," Bartz said. "It's a celebration for us as well but it's also looking at the future of sustaining this program in Walworth County."

Spiegelhoff said past sponsors and donors of the program also are welcomed to attend the event.

"We're definitely inviting both families and our sponsors to come join us that night for a social night out," Spiegelhoff said.

Parents can register their children for the program by vis-

iting www.imaginationlibrary.com and entering their zip code. For more information about the Walworth County Reading Project, send an email message to walworthcountypreadingproject@gmail.com.

Children will receive their first book within eight to 12 weeks after being registered, then they will receive one book a month after that.

Spiegelhoff said about 800 children in the county have been registered for the program, so far.

"Imagination Library is really our sole project," Spiegelhoff said. "The response has been great. We have had almost 800 children register for the program and that's growing every day. I can see that being a thousand children within a few months."

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