

Summary of Advocacy for Levingston Cove
Sonya Kurzweil, Ph.D.
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It all started when the city was rebuilding a retaining wall at the town beach around 2007. The space there was extremely limited. Historically, the town beach was tiny. It was soon to be expanding as the city was in the process of acquiring the adjacent one acre Hannon property which it did in 2007. This offered an extensive lawn for swimmers from the beach. Many however seized on the limitations of that period and began swim-at your-own-risk from the coves. Eventually, a proposal to change the ordinance to this effect was turned down by the Parks and Recreation Commission in around 2011. However, the city stopped any attempts to enforce any regulations around this time and Levingston Cove began to show signs of severe erosion.

I had been on Mayor's Cohen's Crystal Lake Task Force (2006-09). That group was tasked with creating a design for a new bathhouse. A grandiose year around plan costing upward of \$5 million (in 2008) was put forth. The design process cost over 100K. Ultimately, there were many objections to the plan and it was shelved and has been since—leaving us with our current decrepit bathhouse. We should come back to table around this project.

Seeing the cove overrun and the policy of not enforcing regulations taking its toll, I reached out to then Parks Commissioner Bob DeRubeis to assemble another task force. Bob responded (Aug 2012) with organizing the Crystal Lake Working Group, but the focus of the group centered completely on water quality issues. This is of course very important and some good things came out of that focus. In the meantime, I had continued advocating for conservation measures at Levingston Cove, along with Louise Levingston, one of our original members of the Friends of Crystal Lake. Louise and I were involved in the 2000 restoration of Levingston Cove. BTW that cost about 80K. This one was about \$2 million. By 2011 we were particularly concerned that in just a handful of years the cove was again showing signs of deteriorating.

The Crystal Lake Working Group finally came around to focusing on Levingston Cove in around 2017. Members of the Crystal Lake Conservancy secured funding for a round of designs. It is their design vision along with other city workers which prevailed in spite of a good deal of opposition. The process was particularly bruising as the extended review process, through many city commissions, seemed mainly proforma without actual attempts to incorporate what neighbors and knowledgeable residents were advocating.

While many do feel that the intimate, naturalistic character of the cove has been dismantled, the good news includes stable, level walking paths, lovely rain gardens and a variety of conservation features. We have been told that the landscape company who worked on the cove will replace plantings that fail for two years. What we are awaiting is what rules and regulations will be reinstated to protect the environment and substantial ecological investment as well as the decency of the neighborhood.

One more thing, have you noticed the history installation at the new fishing deck? Check it out. The historic panel seems to go out of its way to vilify a one time ice harvesting businessman *by name* and makes no mention at all of Louise Levingston. Clearly, no one in the neighborhood who knew Louise was consulted, though you will be told that many people were involved. That's right, there is a monumental granite marker at the main entrance to the cove bearing her name and yet no mention of Louise Levingston on the one historic panel in the "Louise Levingston Cove at Crystal Lake".