

West Lakes Association
Spring 2023 General Meeting - Minutes
Saturday, June 10, 2023 – 10:00am

Attendees: Barhydt, Doug; Bond, Greg & Pam; Bougher, Jim & Anne; Coons, Garth & Cheryl; Diamond, Mike & Susan; Ellert, Keith & Cheryl; Foughty, Cliff & Diane; Frank, Jim & Barbara; Heidenreich, Becky; Henry, Joan; Henry, Mike & Darlene; Hephner, Tom & Judy; Hofer, Hans & Denise; Honti, Zsolt & Tammy; Howe, Allen & Pamela; Janozik, Tom; Junk, Buzz & Tami; Kemerly, Steven & Rita; Knefely, Jim & Linda; Macy, Ted & Nancy; McClement, Charles; McDonald, Gary; McIntosh, Randy; Minter, Daryl & Joan; Mull, Randy & Jo-Lynn; Myers, Joel; Nichelson, Tyson; Nichols, Cindy; Nicol, Patrick & Bussiere, Sandra; Ninness, Rob & Lucy; Page, Kevin & Becky; Perks, Tony; Plaggemars, Judy; Pletcher, Jason & Sabrina; Reed, Tevon & Chondra; Reidenbach, Dean; Ricker, Brad & Amy; Risser, Ned & Rosie; Robbins, Duff & Stephanie; Robinson, Joe & Christy; Schaefer, Mike & Jeanne; Schmidt, Ellen; Schreck, Lynn D.; Sickles, Alan; Silver, Stan & Jane; Sproat, Ron & Janis; Thomas, Ken & Jean; Walcutt, Jeff & Larrabee, Elizabeth; Wappes, Lorraine; White, Dave & Sandy

Meeting was brought to order by President, Jean Thomas who started with a heartfelt welcome and thank you for everyone in attendance. She introduced and recognized the then present Board members and their spouses; Randy Mull, Vice President and his wife Jo-Lynn; Secretary, Linda Knefely and her husband, Jim; Treasurer Rosie Risser and her husband Ned; Jones Lake Directors, Cliff and Dianne Foughty, Waldron Lake Directors, Becky Heidenreich and Michael Schaefer; Steinbarger Lake Directors Jane and Stan Silver, Tamarack Lake Director, Randy Mull and Director at Large, Paul Veldman. She then gave her email – westlakespresident@gmail.com - and encouraged anyone to email her with any issues on the lake that they think we may not be aware of.

Next, new members were recognized – two new members, to the meeting and to the Association, introduced themselves.

Treasurer's Report – Rosie Risser

First off – Rosie reiterated that she is just giving the facts of the budget. A Treasurer's Report with 2022 –2023 Actual YTD and the 2023 Budget as of 6/7/2023 was provided with the Agenda. Rosie went through each line explaining the basis for the expense/income - first for last year (2022); then for this year (2023) so far, and then she went through the budget which is based on the five year average.

A few questions were asked - #1 the cost of the sediment removal (this was referred to Jean to answer later in the meeting) and #2 an additional \$2.00 charge that one member was charged for the new online payment system (this was also directed to Jean to look into).

Janis Sproat presented the Association with \$990.00 which was earned from the sale of peanut brittle during two fundraisers. She explained the process of receiving start up monies from Trivent to purchase the supplies and recognized those present who had helped make 100+ batches to sell. This is a viable fundraiser that could be done every year – in the fall she will post information and a call for helpers on facebook.

Rosie was recognized with a standing ovation for all of the work she does as Treasurer – and it's a lot! A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made; all in favor, a majority of "Ayes" was heard; motion was passed.

Minutes from the Fall 2022 General Meeting

Motion to approve these minutes was made – motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

New Electronic payment option for dues and donations – Jean Thomas

The new electronic payment option is now operational and is on a trial basis. We are using Square which is a reputable online system used by many businesses. There is a per transaction fee which amounts to \$1.46. Invoices have been sent out and so far, 16 online payments have been made.

Newsletter

The next issue will be published mid-summer, or the end of July. It will be sent to all members with emails, put on the West Lakes website and on Facebook.

Presentation on Effectiveness of Weed Spraying – Michael Schaefer

Michael gave this presentation in much more detail at the Fall 2022 General Meeting, however, due to the length of that meeting, several members had already left and missed this important presentation. Michael's priority is usually water quality, but he had taken on the issue of vegetation vs tree removal, aside from the #1 priority of flooding. Handouts were passed out and Michael explained the gauges at Dukes Bridge and in Cosperville, and using the flooding in 2019, noted the dates of rain, lake levels, tree removal dates, and weed spraying dates. The graph decidedly shows that the weed spraying had the most effect on the water flow. He went on to explain that the "horseshoe" area beyond Duke's bridge is where the bulk of the spraying is necessary, and this 5-mile area (tip of Eagle Island to the transition area) is flat. In his opinion, removing trees in this specific area (850 to Duke's Bridge) is a waste of money.

A question was asked for him to prioritize the cause of flooding – vegetation or sediment. This led to an explanation about velocity. I am sorry to say, as secretary, I was pretty much lost during this discussion/explanation so I would encourage anyone interested in this and a more accurate explanation to contact Michael directly (h2oAuthority@yahoo.com) – my apologies.

Aquatic Weed Control – Guest Speaker David Keister

Dave, on behalf of Aquatic Weed Control, is happy they, along with the DNR, are a "tool" we use for vegetation control on our river. The LARE (Lake and River Enhancement) grants are down 60% and we were fortunate to receive our \$5,000 grant this year as a number of lakes received nothing. With this \$5,000 grant, they treated 23 acres on May 11 to hammer the currently growing invasive plants. This spraying won't last the entire year. It will only control plants that are active at the time of spraying. We must spray this early as the LARE grant requires that we spray before the water reaches 60 degrees. By mid-June/July plants will become thick again and they will be working with us on what needs to be done. As an average, they get 80% weed control which lasts about 6 weeks.

Private residents who have paid to have their lakefronts sprayed will see this done on Tuesday, June 13. For the reasons mentioned above, they have waited until mid-June so there are more growing plants that the spraying will affect, residents will be in better shape for the July 4 holiday, and if a second flush is required it isn't as bad. Dave reassured that the herbicide they use is safe for fish, safe for swimming – although waiting ½ to 1 hour would be advisable. There is an irrigation restriction of 3 days; if your neighbor treats their lakefront – within 50 feet of your property - it would be best to wait at least 1 day before irrigating your yard.

Lily pads – Aquatic Weed Control needs to obtain a permit to spray lily pads on a main lake; channels are usually not a problem. Their spraying only works on submerged weeds so they would spray in the fall so the herbicide is taken into the roots. Controlling lily pads is a 3 year process.

Conservancy District – Paul Veldman

With all due respect to Michael Shaefer's presentation, Paul, in his opinion and with a history of removing approximately 850 trees, feels the water flow problem needs a 2-prong approach. Paul was later thanked for all of his work in removing these many trees.

Paul explained the What, Why, How, Who of a Conservancy District and these are all addressed in detail on the handout [Conservancy FAQs](#) that was available. The What of our Conservancy would be the formation of a special taxing district organized for the specific purpose of Flood Prevention and Control. The Why – we currently use volunteers for flood control and management, which at times has been dangerous with several close calls. We are here to enjoy our lakes, not clean them. Who – West Lakes and we are in talks with 5 Lakes. When – this is a 1-2 year time frame. We would hope to have the petition drive and take the petition to circuit court by next year. What to do now?? Educate and understand what this entails so we know what we are getting in to.

Questions

- Sylvan Lake has a conservancy – the Rome City Conservancy formed for the maintenance and operation of the dam and recreation. Their boundary is Sylvan Lake and all of Rome City. In the late 90s we asked to join their conservancy and they were not interested in us doing this.
- To approve the conservancy a 30% threshold – 1 in 3 – is needed. 30% of residents need to say ‘yes’; 100% would participate.
- This is establishing a taxing district – with a tax to your property taxes. It is too early to say how much. Part of the process would be listing our projects with a budget. The initial rate would be this cost divided by the number of residents. This rate would be adjusted as the budget is approved each year and could go up or down.
- Boundary has not yet been determined; would include those impacting or impacted by the lakes; there are residents up and down streams.
- We would sign the petition after all the information is collected and known.
- A board would be appointed by county commissions; we already have a Steering Committee and have met with an attorney.
- We would have a better chance of receiving LARE grants as a conservancy; a conservancy would take a lot of our current concerns off our backs; we could go from an environmental association to a more social one.

Situation on Jones Lake – Jean Thomas

Jean asked for a show of hands of how many people have recently gone under the bridge into Jones Lake. Very few responded, which made her point that not many people know of the problems they are having there. She briefly described the area in question and what is happening. With the low water - at this point the channel opening for waterflow out has been significantly reduced. This problem came up fast, the situation is fluid and ideas/changes are being made rapidly so there was not much to update. The Jones Lake Group (they had to form their own Non-Profit Corporation in order to apply for the LARE grants) did apply for 2 grants and have received one.

Jean pleaded that if we lose Jones Lake (like we have already lost part of Tamarack) it affects all of us, all of our property values will go down. She introduced the new campaign for our lakes, “For the Love of Our Lakes”. She asked that all of us talk to our neighbors, members or not they can donate for a specific purpose, everyone loses, and everyone benefits; there is a lot of work to be done and we need everyone’s help.

She ended by thanking West Lakes Marina for the use of their space for our meeting and acknowledged that Cliff and Diane Foughty, through Trivent, donated \$250.00 towards today’s meeting and that free T-shirts were available at their table.

One member was interested in forming an Easy Bridge Club – this will be put on Facebook and in the next Newsletter.

The 50/50 drawing was held with the winner donating his share back to the association. The Shot Ski was raffled and won by Ron Sproat.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03pm

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Knefely