



Higgins Lake Property Owners AssociationSM

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President: Charlene Cornell, **Vice Pres:** Greg Semack, **Secretary:** Herb Weatherly, **Treasurer:** Bruce Carleton
Directors: Chuck Brick, Wayne Brooks, Becky Gibson, Mark Lutz, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart

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Board Meeting Minutes

August 19, 2019

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:00 A.M.

Board Members Present: Charlene Cornell, Greg Semack, Chuck Brick, Becky Gibson, Bruce Carleton, Mark Lutz, Bob McKellar, Wayne Brooks, Fred Swinehart and Herb Weatherly. John Ogren was present by phone.

Agenda: No changes.

President's Comments: Charlene reminded everyone about the dinner she will be hosting Wednesday evening. Dr. Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones and her team will be in attendance.

July Minutes: Chuck and Wayne suggested changes under the new business and environmental committee segments. With these changes, Herb moved to accept the July 15, 2019 Minutes, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: Herb reported that we had researched another program for our bulk mailings, but it was not compatible with our membership data base.

Herb also said he will be contacting our landlord soon to secure our next years' lease.

Treasurer's Report: The Statement of Income through July 31, 2019 was presented.

Bruce also reviewed the check registers for our general, legal and environmental funds, noting receipts and disbursements. Bruce noted that the legal fund is down to \$323.00, advising we may need to transfer money from the general fund for future legal expenses, unless more legal contributions are received.

Membership and Communication: Becky shared that she has been in contact with Dr. Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones and Krista, from the Houghton Lake Resorter, for a photo shoot and article to be published about the testing and data collected about the current study of Higgins Lake.

Wayne and Becky both discussed the importance of monthly email blasts to our members to inform and educate them on what the HLPOA is involved with.

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Wayne reported that Bob had contacted a PR consultant and showed him our last newsletter. The consultant commended us on the newsletter, but suggested we start them with an emphasis on benefits, successes and how we make a difference. The consultant added the importance of Facebook communications. Becky said that Brad Gibson will continue with our Facebook postings.

Wayne reminded everyone of the topics he emailed the Board for the Fall newsletter and said the due date is September 6 to submit the articles.

Wayne said our membership count is at 489 vs. 506 one year ago.

Charlene suggested that Wayne provide a form for the 2020 directory advertisers, so that many can be contacted now, as several businesses close for the winter.

Riparian Committee: Bruce shared an article from the Grosse Pointe News, where a boat playing loud music was sent a violation through the mail. From shore, officers identified the boat from its' registration numbers. Bruce suggested we use this as an example of how violators can be notified.

Greg said there will be another meeting with law enforcement in September as a year-end review and John Ogren intends to meet with the entire Riparian Committee prior to this meeting to get their input. There have been reports of road end problems based on new homeowners and the situation where homes are being rented on a regular basis. This will get some attention during the next Riparian Committee meeting.

Although there have been many more people at Higgins Lake this season than in recent years, both Sherriff Stern and Chief Hill feel that Riparian issues have been few and that there has been good cooperation with our members.

One of the members made a point to say that they have had some incidents at a road end near his home and he wanted to compliment the response time of the Sheriff's deputies and their handling of the situations, many of which have been defused quickly.

John is looking into buying more road end signs. He has a price of 12 for just under \$300. Then they would need to be installed. John is still looking into entire project and should have entire report done by next meeting.

Environmental Committee: Fred stated that the Higgins Lake Foundation hosted a meeting July 15th at the RAM Center, where Dr. Luttenton of Grand Valley State presented and discussed various aspects of his work around the lake. John Ogren and Becky Gibson attended and reported on the program for us. John purchased several of the reports that were offered for sale and we are reviewing them with the committee.

Fred discussed the July cycle of the student program to sample and analyze the near shore waters around the lake, which showed very high coliform beach plate results. This troubling situation caused us to seek support for an extra analytical cycle to be performed in August. As we had not budgeted for this extra cycle, we asked for support from our membership. Kevin Kessler generously agreed to underwrite the effort. The student work is proceeding this week. The first three cycle results are now up on our website for public review. The August data and that to follow from the fall cycle will be published as soon as they are available.

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Fred reported that a major unaddressed issue for the Environmental Committee is the obvious increase in near shore phytoplankton, weed and algae growth over the past few years. We are trying to formulate a program for addressing this issue. We plan to discuss this problem with RLS very soon. All of the recent studies from the USGS in 1999, MSU in 2014, and widespread anecdotal observations by many long-term residents around all agree that the near shore regions of the lake are deteriorating rapidly. Technically the scientific description of this situation is that the near shore regions of the lake are rapidly moving from a formerly pristine oligotrophic state to a condition of a more nutrient rich mesotrophic condition where algae, phytoplankton and weed growth is significantly increased. This is a very troubling situation and major remediation efforts will be required to reverse this trend and restore the lake to its former condition.

Fred shared that Rick Larobardiere, a member of the Environmental Committee, met with Josh Leisen from the Huron Pines Nature Conservancy on Friday August 16th. They surveyed together the environmental situation with both Big Creek and Little Creek. These tributaries have been causing much riparian concern with debris flow, sedimentation and discoloration of water along the shoreline. They started from the bridge over Big Creek near the lake and continued upstream and inspected the culverts at road crossings as far as Military Road. Josh took a number of pictures. Some of the culverts were definitely “perched” meaning they were above the normal level of the stream surface and thus effectively prevented passage of aqueous species for spawning purposes. As these creeks once supported both trout and other fish spawning runs, and no longer do, this is an item of definite concern. Remediation of stream flow issues, reestablishing fish spawning possibilities and reduction in particulates and coloration from these creeks is a problem that will require some study before recommendations can be brought to the Board. Our plan is to form a committee of interested members to develop a remediation plan following the advice and counsel from the experts at Huron Pines.

An informal meeting of the HLPOA Board with the RLS survey crew will be hosted by Charlene Cornell at her cottage on Wednesday evening, 08/21 at 6:30. A potluck has been organized and it will be a good opportunity to see how the assessment program is proceeding.

PAC: We continue to work with Senator’s VanderWall’s office in order to get help with the DNR’s handling of AIS at their launch Sites. Their latest communication to us indicates that they intend to seek a meeting in Lansing with DNR agency representatives to discuss the lack of follow through that has taken place this season.

HLSIO: We have removed 2 broods this season and that may be all there will be. There have been a group of juveniles that seemed to have hung around all summer that may have contributed to SI cases being reported. Generally, the brooding season has ended, and we likely won’t have another to relocate.

Our fund-raising dinner at Witt’s barn will be taking place on Thursday 8-29. Ticket sales have gone well, and we hope to be sold out.

IN MISIP news: HLSIO was able to get an additional reimbursement for 2018 relocation costs of just under \$3,000 from MISIP.

There is still no indication that MISIP will get the appropriation funding (\$250,000) that we have been getting for the last three years. The state budget likely won’t be done before October and that is where the appropriation comes from. Approximately \$100,000 of this year’s state money was spent in SI research which would be at future risk if the appropriation is not part of the budget. An additional \$150,000 was used this year for trapping and relocating and administrative expenses for MISIP lake association members.

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We will make plans for Higgins Lake with private funding even if no state funds are available. Brood removal involving bird surveys and some sense of general monitoring will be required to be done as in the past so we may enjoy the extremely low level of infection that we have had in the last few years.

Elections Committee: Bob reported that he had contacted two members that were interested in joining HLPOA committees. Fred moved to appoint Phil Czech to the Membership & Communication Committee, seconded by Greg. Motion passed. Bob then moved to appoint Glenn Fausz to the Elections Committee, seconded by Herb. Motion passed. Bob added that this appointment satisfies our bylaws requirement.

Ongoing Business: Charlene stated there are not any updates to report on the AMVETS filing but did ask Bruce to total our expenditures for this lawsuit to make sure we are in line with our \$4,500.00 financial obligation. Bruce replied that the expenditures total \$2,184.00.

New Business: It was reported that approximately \$6,100.00 has been received from our members for the RLS study, in addition to the \$15, 500.00 committed from our HLPOA Board members and families.

Charlene reported that the DNR hired Fred Denman's new and improved MTT dash boat to clean the lagoon. Diver Michel Smith acquired a permit for an additional 8 more days of work.

The Board discussed the August 2018 Higgins Lake Land Conservancy letter to its supporters, where the Conservancy addressed the ongoing CHLLL lawsuit. The letter included several statements by the Conservancy on this suit. The Board will review the 2010 Spicer Group report on Higgins Lake and the Cut River Dam, in light of our public October 2018 Resolution. This topic will be discussed again at the September Board meeting, after everyone has had the opportunity to study both the Spicer Group report and our Resolution.

Adjournment: Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mark. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:26 P.M.

The next meeting will be September 16, 2019 at 9:00 A.M.

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