



Higgins Lake Property Owners AssociationSM

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

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Board Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2021

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

Board Members Present: Charlene Cornell, Greg Semack, Bruce Carleton, Herb Weatherly, Bob McKellar, Mark Lutz, Jack Cornell, Fred Swinehart, Becky Gibson, John Ogren, and Wayne Brooks.

Agenda: Charlene asked that we add a request from HLF to the annual meeting segment.

President's Comments: None.

March Minutes: The March 15, 2021, Minutes were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: None.

Treasurer's Report:

Bruce reviewed the March 31, 2021, first quarter financial results together with the activity shown in the general checking account register for the month. On the income statement he noted that revenues for most categories were tracking as expected compared to budget for this time of year with Member Dues at 83% of goal and Directory Sales at 55% of goal.

Although Legal Fund Contributions are showing 70% of the \$2,000 budget, it is expected that both the Income and expense side of this category will exceed budget due to the ongoing AMVETS litigation. We are hopeful that our membership will support our effort to protect the lake from this intrusive action.

The Statement of Financial Condition shows a typically strong cash position from dues collection with the majority of expenses yet to be paid. The General Account ledger showed no unusual items to discuss.

Membership/Communication: Wayne reported we have 442 members, and a post card mailing will be sent to those who have not renewed. Wayne shared that Charlene sent a personal email to those who have not yet renewed. Board members were asked to contact any acquaintance with a reminder to renew. Wayne also discussed the possibility of mailing a 2nd notice to prospects. Greg moved to proceed with a mailing to prospects, seconded by Herb. Motion passed.

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Wayne said that the response has been very good from businesses who will advertise in our 2021 Member Directory.

Becky noted that we received many complements on our Spring newsletter, which she posted on Facebook.

Becky will be sending an email blast about the MI Shoreline Conference webinar, which was recorded. She will also be submitting an article for the Houghton Lake Resorter Summer Supplement about the history of HLPOA and committee highlights.

Riparian Committee:

John said that progress on short-term rentals in Lyon Township was delayed because of the absence of the Township Supervisor. The street addresses for 30 rental properties have been identified.

The likely dates for the next Zoom meeting with local law enforcement are May 19 or 20 at 9 AM. Bill Carey confirmed his availability for both dates.

Environmental Committee: Fred thanked the editorial team for the excellent coverage of the environmental activities in the spring newsletter. He received many very favorable comments from family and friends of the lake. Fred then discussed the following:

1. Progress on the replacement of the perched culvert on Dewey Road that currently blocks free passage of aquatic species up and down Big Creek is proceeding according to schedule. Roger Saxton of the Roscommon County Road Commission stated that the design engineering was completed. The final design specifies a 72" D-shaped culvert whose bottom will be placed about one foot below the normal bottom of the stream to expedite the easy passage of fish and other aquatic species up and down the stream. This solution was approved by Huron Pines based on their wide experience with this type of stream remediation project throughout Northeast Michigan. The package was submitted to EGLE on 3/31/21 for permit approvals. Final cost estimates will be developed next month as quotes for materials begin to arrive. Some additional funds may be required and interested supporters should send their contributions to the HLPOA's Environmental Committee with the Dewey Road Culvert Replacement designated on their check.
2. Fred stated that a new opportunity has arrived on our radar. It turns out that our recent decision to join the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly is beginning to pay some dividends. Watershed-wide organizations have access to funding sources that are substantial and unique to riverine systems. In following up on one such opportunity, it turns out we did not receive any money, but they did write a letter of support for our Dewey Road project. However, the new management there did not realize that Higgins Lake and in particular its tributary creeks were the Northern most headwaters of the Muskegon River! Another important stream in the Muskegon Watershed is the Cut River itself. The impression at MRWA was that everything for them began at the outlet of Houghton Lake. Melanie corrected this impression, and in fact has recruited Marty Holtgren, Lead Scientist for MRWA, to our cause. We have begun to work together as a team on a new project!

We are kicking off a baseline benthic species survey in cooperation with the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly this spring. Marty wants to come out and help us with sampling, picking sampling locations on Big Creek and in the Cut River. They are sending us a sampling kit list, and Melanie has enrolled in their Zoom training session. She also offered to guide them on a kayak trip down the Cut to see first-hand where this river all actually begins.

The expected equipment costs will be minimal, perhaps \$100. We will be looking for some volunteers to help with sample collecting. The sampling plan will be set up in consultation with Marty. We are both hoping to get some baseline benthic data on Big Creek before the culvert work and after the culvert replacement on Dewey

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road. We are still planning to be at Higgins in June, then return next summer to assess any changes due to the restoration of stream access for the biota, and also to see any beneficial results from in-stream habitat improvements.

3. Some additional programs are being added for consideration this summer. The list below is current, depending on available funding, volunteer participation and covid-19 restriction limitations.

1. Continuing sampling and analysis study of near shore waters
2. In-stream habitat improvement for Big Creek
3. Micro-plastic contamination in the lake.
4. Base line study of algal presence in the lake.
5. A "Trash Bash" MRWA sponsored event. (waterway litter clean-up event)

All of these programs are envisioned to include Roscommon Area High school students to the extent possible given limitations to participation due to Covid-19 safe practice requirements as allowed by the RAPSK-12 administration.

PAC: Greg stated that the Gerrish Township Marina will be opening on May 21st. Waiting list for boat slips is over 180 names and they are no longer taking applications due to the size of the current list.

The Gerrish Township Board passed a resolution to install the utility authority, and also approved the Articles of Incorporation.

The Lyon Township Board is to pass the same items later this month.

HLSIO: Greg said that the Consumers Power grant request was declined and as a result revenues and expenses in the 2021 budget were adjusted. He added that this outcome was not a surprise and that much had been learned about grant requests. Other grant request opportunities were discussed. Melanie Brown has made some suggestions about potential future grants.

Phil Czech prepared the 990 EZ report for HLSIO saving the expense of an outside accountant.

Greg asked Melanie to follow up on an email from Wayne Swallow about the swimmer's itch lotion he has been working on. He is in the process of developing a cream to prevent SI.

Neal Cooley circulated his draft suggestion for the HLSIO web page. He will merge comments from Melanie along with any suggestions from others and we will be discussing these at our next meeting.

John Ogren reported that he filed the application for the Goose Roundup permit and expects it to be approved. The season for goose relocation is June 7-July 3 and he will work with Goosebusters to finalize dates for Higgins Lake.

Greg has filed the relocation permit application for merganser ducks (3 years).

Ongoing Business: Regarding the AMVETS lawsuit for illegal operation of a marina in a residential zone, Charlene stated that court dates have been set in September and October. She will follow-up with our attorney, Bill Carey.

Charlene then provided the date of July 1st for the Landing Blitz at the North State Park and the West launch. We will participate along with HLF.

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New Business: Charlene shared that our annual meeting packet should be mailed 30 – 60 days prior to our meeting. The packet will contain an agenda, annual meeting minutes, annual financial reports, committee reports, biographies, and a proxy. We also received a request from HLF to have an information table at our annual meeting. After discussion, it was determined that we will decide on how the annual meeting will look and who may be involved by our next Board meeting, when it may be more apparent what might be allowed based on Covid-19 restrictions. HLF also requested that Dr. Luttenton speak about water issues, but we will be having Dr. Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones address our members in reference to her lake study. We would not be able to have two speakers on a similar subject.

Regarding the DNR 2021 plan, Charlene stated that it is a 4-step plan, depending on Covid-19. The plan includes a DASH boat work in the lagoon, chemically treating both launch sites, and conservation officers having the ability to render tickets. HLPOA is purchasing boat wash wands to provide to the state parks, on loan until the DNR/PRD equipment can be ordered and delivered.

Adjournment: Bruce moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Herb. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:22 A.M.

The next meeting will be May 17, 2021 at 9:00 A.M.