



# Higgins Lake Property Owners Association<sup>SM</sup>

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

## Higgins Lake Property Owners Association Board Meeting Minutes February 21, 2022

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, Wayne Brooks, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart, Becky Gibson, and Jack Cornell. Curt DeVoe was absent.

**Agenda:** No changes.

**President's Comments:** Charlene wished everyone a Happy President's Day!

**January Minutes:** The January 17, 2022. Minutes were accepted as written.

**Committee Reports:**

**Secretary/Office:** None.

**Treasurer's Report:** The financials through January 31, 2022, were presented. Bruce added that the budget has been finalized with the revision approved at the last meeting.

**Membership & Communication:** Wayne reported that we have 348 members, of which 37 are new. Reminder postcards will be mailed soon to those who have not yet renewed. Wayne also stated that we have received commitments from 13 advertisers for our 2022 Members Directory, adding an April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline was given to the advertisers.

Becky said that we received many compliments about our 2022 Winter newsletter and noted the efforts of member Karen Cornell for her work in coordinating this project. Thank you, Karen!

**Riparian Committee:** John reported that he is working on an agenda for the meeting with the DNR to discuss management of boats being launched at their three launch sites. The objectives of the management process are to minimize the risk of additional AIS entering Higgins Lake, to minimize the spread of existing AIS within the lake, and to prevent Higgins Lake AIS spreading to other lakes. The primary actions required to achieve the objectives are inspecting boats and trailers before launch, interviewing the boat operator about the recent usage history of the boat and washing the boat before launch. The lagoon and launch site approaches must be

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kept clean of weed cuttings and boats and trailers inspected after leaving the launch ramps to prevent contamination of other lakes.

The county gypsy moth suppression program was also discussed. A news blast will be sent to members about the opportunities to add property to the annual spray areas at the owner's cost, the March 18 deadline for applications and the process for making an application.

**Environmental Committee:** Fred reported the following:

**Albemarle Road's Little Creek Culvert Replacement:** This collapsed culvert inhibits passage of aquatic species less than 100' upstream from the lake. Estimated costs to replace with a properly designed and installed culvert would be around \$40,000 total. A grant of \$10,000 funding from the Walters Family Foundation has been secured by Huron Pines for this project. Roscommon County, and Lyon Township support will also be sought, however at the moment that doesn't appear to be available. We will approach the same partners that allowed completion of the Dewey Road culvert project in 2021. Given similar support from these local organizations an HLPOA contribution of up to \$7,500, contingent upon completion of the project, would cover our share of the expected costs. This project is already planned for next summer's Roscommon County Road Commission activity. EGLE permits have already been secured. Fred moved for HLPOA to commit up to \$7,500.00 to Huron Pines for the Albemarle Avenue culvert replacement, contingent upon completion of the project. The motion was seconded by Bruce. Motion passed.

**2021 Water Quality Sampling and Analysis of Near Shore Waters:** We have completed our fourth year of student sampling and analyzing the near shore waters of our lake for chemical and biological contamination. One disturbing observation based on this data is that our lake experiences a generic coliform bacteria bloom each summer. This bloom is increasing in concentration with each passing year, indicating a rise in nutrient loading, most probably due to inflows of septic system aqueous effluents. A summary report from this data has been posted on our website. This student program will continue in 2022. Anecdotal observations show a similar increase in brown and blue green algal blooms near shore each summer. However, as yet we have not implemented a quantitative program of near shore analysis to track this worrisome situation. This is a high priority for our 2022 planning. The Michigan Lakes and Streams Association has asked to highlight the student sampling and analysis program with a feature article in their Riparian magazine summer issue. We are very pleased to have been so recognized and will work on this with them.

**Editing the Water Level Web Site Section:** The portion of the HLPOA website dedicated to water level data was discussed at length. The conclusion of the group was that credible data, such as that from USGS and similar sources should be included. However, extended discussion of that data was often complicated and confusing. We offered to work with the communications committee to simplify and edit the content of that section for improved readability.

**Other Possible Project Activity:** Some additional programs are being considered:

1. A Full Lake Survey by RLS to Assess Changes in AIS Since 2019.
2. A Baseline Study of Algal Presence in the Lake.
3. A Micro-plastics Pollution Study by RAPHs students and HLPOA members.
4. A volunteer trout habitat remediation project for Big Creek.
5. A "Trash Bash" event sponsored by the MRWA.

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**PAC:** Greg reported that effective February 1st, lobbying firm, Scofes & Associates, is working on our behalf. Lobbying will begin as they start in order to further the sewer project's efforts to acquire funding from public sources. The firm has already met with GLUA, and has a meeting scheduled for this Thursday, 2-24, with Senator Bumstead and a meeting with Senator VanderWall on February 28th. Greg is receiving emails from Scofes & Associates and will forward any pertinent emails to the Board members.

A discussion was held about Assessment Districts as this was brought up at a recent Roscommon County Commissioner's meeting. It appears as though the county intends to have such a district set up in order to pay for repairs to the Houghton Lake dam. It also appears as though the county intends to set up a similar assessment district to pay for work on the Higgins Lake dam, should such be necessary in the future.

Greg reported that the current clerk for Gerrish Township, Kathleen Patchin, will be leaving that position in April.

**HLSIO:** Greg stated that while the SI season has not yet begun, they have had conversations with the DNR about relocation sites for mergansers. Specifically, they are trying to get Tawas City re-instated. Last, Greg said that potential research projects for this summer are being discussed with SIS.

**Ongoing Business:** Charlene and Fred attended the February GLUA meeting, with nothing new to report. The next GLUA meeting is scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 A.M. at the Gerrish Township Hall.

**New Business:** Charlene spoke of our annual meeting and the date of July 16, 2022, was determined. Herb will contact the Roscommon Elementary School to secure a reservation. John added that a ZOOM meeting would be beneficial, so the possibility of a hybrid meeting was discussed.

Charlene asked Elections Committee chair and co-chair, Bob and Herb, to determine who is up for re-election this year.

**Adjournment:** Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Becky. The meeting adjourned at 10:44 A.M.

**The next meeting will be March 21, 2022, at 9:00 A.M.**

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