



# 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

April 18, 2022

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:01 A.M.

**Board Members Present:** Charlene Cornell, Greg Semack, Bruce Carleton, Herb Weatherly, Wayne Brooks, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart, Becky Gibson, and Curt DeVoe. Jack Cornell was absent.

**Agenda:** Becky asked to add the Shoreline webinar to the environmental section.

**President's Comments:** Charlene hoped everyone had a nice Easter. Charlene also thanked Becky for coordinating the excellent Spring newsletter. Thank you, Becky!

**March Minutes:** The March 21, 2022, Minutes were accepted as written.

**Committee Reports:**

**Secretary/Office:** None.

**Treasurer's Report:** The financials through March 31, 2022, were presented.

Bruce stated that our CPA currently conducts an annual financial review. He then explained the differences between an audit, review, and compilation. Bruce noted that the cost of a compilation is \$1,000.00 less than a review. After discussion, Herb moved to revise the HLPOA bylaws to make a compilation optional with the existing review, subject to Board approval, to be presented at the 2022 annual meeting. The motion was seconded by Curt. Motion passed.

Bruce then shared that he opened an account at the bank for an alternative payment method for our membership dues. Bruce added there are many steps to set up this system for credit cards, which he will continue to work on.

**Membership & Communication:** Wayne stated we have 431 members and noted he sent a list last week of members who have not yet renewed their membership. Wayne asked Board members to contact their neighbors who are on this list.

A discussion was held about the cost of our membership dues. After discussion, Greg moved to raise membership dues for the 2023 season to \$115.00, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed.

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Charlene asked if the Member Directory should include committee reports and Becky suggested to post them on our website.

Becky added that she has revamped the lake level history on our website and is working on the article for the summer issue of The Michigan Riparian magazine.

**Riparian Committee:** John said he continues to push for a meeting with the DNR Parks Division about improving the management system at the three Higgins Lake Boat Accesses. A response from Josh Pellow on April 12th said “We met this morning with DNR leadership regarding your request. We will be meeting once again in a couple of weeks to formulate a response. You should have something back from us in the next couple of weeks. Thanks for your patience.” Josh is the DNR/PRD/Roscommon District Supervisor.

The Spring Public Safety Meeting hosted by HLPOA is planned for the third week of May, depending on availability of key participants. Representatives from Gerrish, Lyon Townships and law enforcement will be invited. The meeting will likely be a Zoom meeting to increase participation.

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

**Albemarle Road’s Little Creek Culvert Replacement:** Funding for this project has been secured with commitments from Lyon Township, the Higgins Lake Foundation, the Higgins Lake Land Conservancy, the Walters Foundation, and the Higgins Lake Property Owners Association. Estimated costs will be around \$40,000 total. The culvert will be properly designed and placed so as to not obstruct passage of spawning fish and other aquatic organisms. This project will be completed during the 2022 construction season.

**Water Quality Analysis of Big Creek and Near Shore Waters of Higgins Lake:** The program for the summer of 2022 has begun with initial Big Creek sampling taking place in April. The sampling program for the lake will begin in May shortly after the ice is out.

**Web Site Consolidation and Editing:** The Lake Level Data and History sections of the website are being consolidated and edited so as to more closely conform to the format and presentation style of the Environmental section. This work is ongoing and is as yet incomplete.

**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 “Trash Bash” event sponsored by the MRWA

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, Fred, Becky, and Charlene attended the MI Shoreline Steward’s webinar about shoreline issues, including lake-friendly landscaping and erosion control. While there were some technical difficulties, Becky said there is a survey available to see if your shoreline is adequate.

A discussion was held about the HLLC and its agreement to align with the Tip of The Mitt Watershed Council to review the proposed sewer system for Higgins Lake. Charlene added that an engineering firm, LimnoTech, has also been involved. The Higgins Lake United organization was also discussed, as they have publicized misinformation about this project. After discussion, it was determined to send an email blast (s) to our

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members, to clarify misinformation. Other educational options were letters to the editor at the Houghton Lake Resorter newspaper, along with speaking at upcoming public hearings.

Last, Charlene shared that the AIS Landing Blitz, a program to educate boat owners about AIS, is scheduled for June 26<sup>th</sup> – July 4<sup>th</sup>. It was decided that our participation will be July 1<sup>st</sup>, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at both the North State Park and West launch. Board members were asked to invite their neighbors and family.

**PAC:** Greg stated that much has taken place regarding our new lobbying firm, Scofes and Associates and meeting with legislators for the purpose of potentially funding the sewer project. The legislators were not in session for a period of time, so we didn't have the opportunity to pursue things during the recess. Since the recess ended, meetings have taken place with Senators and Representatives to clarify what the utility may be eligible for and how best to get there. Also, we've determined that there is money for individuals for septic repair and possibly aquatic nuisance control so we're continuing to see what things we may find that could be helpful in other areas for our community.

Senator VanderWall intends to bring EGLE director Clark to Higgins Lake this summer to show her the shoreline erosion problem at Camp Curnalia near the North Park boat ramp.

The appellate court has found in favor of the plaintiff, CHLL, in the lake water level case involving the operation of the dam. The decision will either be appealed by the county, or the case will now be heard in the circuit court.

Greg believes that there will be a time schedule for a plan for a reworked sewer project soon. The previously discussed project was voted down by Lyon and Gerrish Boards, but they are in the process of creating a new assessment district and there could be a resolution to authorize in each township at a determined future date.

There will be an HLPAC meeting on April 25 to assess lobbying activity and plan for 2022 involvement.

**HLSIO:** Greg said that since last meeting many things have changed. A large part of the country has seen a breakout of a new bird flu. Because of this and largely to protect commercial flocks, the relocation permits for the state of Michigan have been suspended. We will not be allowed to trap and relocate mergansers, but we do intend to pursue destruction of Canada goose nests, because we can no longer relocate geese. Our same contractor will be employed to do this work this summer.

We requested to be able to do a research project to determine the effectiveness of treating mergansers with a drug that kills parasites called Quaziprantel. A lengthy and detailed plan was given to the DNR by Randy DeJong of Swimmer's Itch Solutions, but it was rejected. As of right now, there are no plans we are developing but we continue to look for other options.

The relocation suspension also affects Crystal Lake, Black Lake, Douglas Lake, and Larks Lake, all of whom were intending to use the program this summer.

**Ongoing Business:** Curt wrapped up the discussion about the sewer system project by stating that this morning, GLUA will formally approve the revised plan submitted by Fleis & Vandenbrink. This is at a lower cost and a smaller area. The new GLUA plan will then be submitted to both townships, followed by public meetings. Curt will be our spokesperson and he will prepare a brief testimony. Fred will also be available to testify at the public

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hearings, for environmental statistics. A discussion was then held about future email blasts to our members on important topics about the sewer system project.

Options for a venue for our annual meeting were discussed. Herb and Charlene will research these options and report back with cost, seating capacity and ZOOM capability. Charlene also noted that bios, financials, and committee reports will be needed for the annual meeting packet.

Bruce moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:11 P.M.

**The next meeting will be May 16, 2022, at 9:00 A.M.**