



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, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart

Higgins Lake Property Owners Association Board Meeting Minutes May 16, 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, Curt DeVoe, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart, Becky Gibson, and Jack Cornell.

Agenda: Becky asked to add chemist Chuck Schepke under New Business, regarding a recognition letter.

President's Comments: None

April Minutes: The April 18, 2022, Minutes were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: None.

Treasurer's Report: The financials through April 30, 2022, were presented. Bruce noted that on the balance sheet, the \$2,500.00 prepaid expense was for the May payment to our lobbying firm, Scofes & Associates. The expense was included in the April results due to the Bank processing the May payment in advance. This entry will wash out in the May statement.

Also, the lobbyist category in our budget shows a projected \$21,000 expense for the year. We now expect that cost to run at \$2,500 per month for the full year resulting in a \$30,000 annual lobbyist expense. This is explained by the likely need for Scofes' continued work in support of the sewer system and it's funding through the end of the year.

Last, Bruce said he continues to work on the credit/debit card payment option for membership dues and is currently working with Huntington Bank's Merchant Services Department and Fiserve. Bruce hopes to have this available in the fall.

Membership & Communication: Becky stated we are sending weekly email blasts about various topics, and she also wrote the article for the summer issue of the Michigan Riparian magazine. Becky added that we currently have 458 members.

Charlene said that she and Wayne are working on the 2022 Member Directory. Charlene also reported that the 2nd prospect membership mailing was mailed last week.

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Riparian Committee: John reported on the Roscommon Public Safety meeting on May 11. The Marine Patrol is fully staffed and will continue eight-hour shifts, with schedule a function of boat activity on the lake. Central Dispatch reporting is unchanged from last year and will be reported with one of the weekly email blasts to members. PA56 road end signs will continue to be installed at locations recommended by law enforcement and the boat tags are in routine usage. On short term rentals, there has been no further legislative action in Lansing, and none is expected in this election year. Townships are in a wait and see mode.

John also discussed a letter from Chief Ronald Olson, DNR Parks and Recreation. The letter was in response to requests for a meeting on improved management practices to avoid further damage from aquatic invasive species at the three DNR boat accesses on Higgins Lake. The response stated that DNR spends significantly more funds on Higgins Lake than on other inland lakes and it is the only lake in the state that has a boat wash or cleaning station on each inbound and outbound lane at each access site. He also said that staffing each site for boat inspections was not feasible and instead they choose to educate boaters and more broadly seek their cooperation. The letter suggested no further plans for improvement on the part of the DNR in spite of their failure to prevent the four existing AIS species from entering the lake and little hope that it will prevent others on the EGLE watch list.

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following:

Recent Floating Algae Bloom (FLAB) Observations: Many who were around the lake as the ice was going out this spring may have been startled to see numerous gelatinous floating globs of brown and blue-green algae moving along the shore with wave driven currents. These globs have been growing on the sand surface under the ice and snow all winter long. They received sufficient sunlight from above and a steady flow of nutrients from septic effluents in the sub surface aquifer below. There, they have been undisturbed by wave action and developed into substantial mats on shallow sand bottoms.

With the ice cover gone, these algae mats are then stirred up by wave action to drift along the shore. In Higgins Lake, invasive mussels filter and consume micro-plankton but reject anything containing cyanobacteria, thus concentrating their presence in the lake. Such bacteria may be found in these globs. Algae masses like these are to be treated with caution, as they may be toxic to animals and humans. To learn more, please refer to the excellent article in HLPOA.org under the Environmental Committee Tab, written by Melanie Brown.

Big Creek Brook Trout Habitat Improvement Project: HLPOA and the Big Creek Lane Association have received an EGLE Permit to proceed with a project focused on narrowing and deepening the creek to improve the habitat for larger brook trout. The approved plan involves placing a number of single log vane current diverters in the creek at strategically chosen locations. Volunteers from HLPOA, the Big Creek Lane Association, and other interested persons and students will be involved in construction this summer. Some funding will be required, and contributions will be welcome!

Higgins Lake Level History and Data: This section of the HLPOA.Org website has been reconfigured and updated. Chuck Brick has put in a great deal effort to create several new graphs that are easy to understand and add value to the USGS daily lake level sensor at the South State Park. Please have a look at the new presentation format.

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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 for another year.

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

Regarding the RLS Study, Fred will work on revisions to the contract to better suit our needs. Charlene also asked Fred to prepare a PFAS study for our next meeting.

PAC: Greg reported the following:

There will be three people who will not seek re-election to the county Commissioners positions: Bob Schneider, Tim Muckenthaler, and Ken Melvin. Candidates for Melvin’s district are Dave Hanson, Tim O’Rourke, and Eric Ostregen.

There is a petition to recall the Gerrish Township Board. The hearing was last Monday, about contesting the validity of the petition language. The hearing denied the claim. The Gerrish Township Board is now appealing. This could possibly be later this week. The judge has up to 40 days to rule.

The lobbying effort on behalf of the sewer project has continued and our representative has been very active. We expect that the budget process will be ongoing for some months now and we intend to continue keeping our information in front of the appropriate people until the funding process has been concluded.

HLSIO: Greg stated that John Ogren has not heard yet from the contractor about destroying Goose nests. The contractor was supposed to accomplish this prior to the end of May. John will continue to communicate with the contractor until he has an answer as to what has taken place.

Greg shared that Neil Cooley has resigned from his HLSIO Board position. Neil was one of the original members of the HLSIO and his contribution has been very significant. His participation will be missed. Two new members were elected to the HLSIO Board, Mike Purkey and Duncan Lawrence. Both will be in attendance at our next meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, 2022.

Ongoing Business: Regarding the sewer system project, Curt reported that the revised GLUA plan was not approved by the townships, adding Lyon Township has delayed further consideration until June 21st. Curt said we need to focus on the revised plan at the next public hearing on May 23rd at 9:00 at the Gerrish Township Hall. People will be able to testify about the GLUA application for financing the clean water state revolving fund and engineering plan. Curt suggested that Fred and John both attend this hearing with their environmental expertise. Curt will also be in attendance.

Charlene then discussed our annual meeting, where the location has not yet been determined, should a hybrid meeting take place. Charlene also reminded everyone that we needed bios, financials, and the motion to include

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compilations in our bylaws. Last, committee reports are due in 10 days and will be included in the Member Directory.

New Business: Charlene stated we will have a table at the June 11th environmental event at the RAM Center. HLF and Raven Labs will also be participants. Fred volunteered to represent us from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, along with 2 volunteers. We will offer various environmental pamphlets.

Becky asked about recognition for Chuck Schepke, who has been involved for the past 5 years in our student water sampling program. It was agreed that we should do this, and Becky will prepare a letter.

Bruce moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Fred. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:42 A.M.

The next meeting will be June 20, 2022, at 9:00 A.M.