



Higgins Lake Property Owners AssociationSM

PO Box 55 211 N. Main Street Roscommon, MI 48653

Website: hlpoa.org email: hlpoa0@gmail.com

Ph.: (989) 275-9181 Fax: (989) 275-9182

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 17, 2023

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, Jack Cornell, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart, were present. Curt DeVoe was absent.

Agenda: Kathleen noted to add the April 6, 2023, Minutes for approval.

President's Comments: Charlene thanked everyone for their help with SAD and other areas. Their help is greatly appreciated and to be commended.

Minutes: The March 20, 2023, Minutes were accepted as written. The April 6, 2023, special meeting Minutes were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: None.

Treasurer's Report: The March 31, 2023, first quarter financials were presented. Bruce said that in comparing these results to last year, the numbers track very closely to the 2022 similar period. Bruce then stated that the interest rate on our savings account is very low, and the account needs to be replaced to qualify for a higher rate. Bruce has explored other alternatives and found that we can obtain in the 3% range for a Money Market savings account or up to 5%, with a commitment to a 14-month maturity. Since the bank requires two signers to be present to open a new account, Bruce and Herb will meet at the bank next week to replace the current account with a higher yielding savings account.

Membership & Communication: Wayne stated we have 433 members vs 431 one year ago. A second letter to prospects will be sent.

Wayne also said the 2023-member directory is nearly completed and the directory advertising fund is over budget! Wayne gave a special thank you to Sally Voorhies, of Dealers Supply, and her associates for all their help with the directory (lay-out, ad design), along with other projects. Thank you, Sally!

Becky added that the spring newsletter should be ready to forward to our members soon! Becky thanked all those who contributed articles. Also, a big thank you to Becky!

Riparian Committee: John reported the following:

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The final version of the RLS (Restorative Lake Sciences) 2022 report is expected by the end of April. We will circulate the report to directors with a recommendation on the final disposition of the report.

For the planned data collection project at the three DNR boat accesses, I have asked for volunteers in an article in our spring newsletter and from the Riparian Committee. We will need a total of six volunteers.

The Roscommon County Safety Meeting with local law enforcement will be a Zoom meeting on May 23. The preliminary agenda follows:

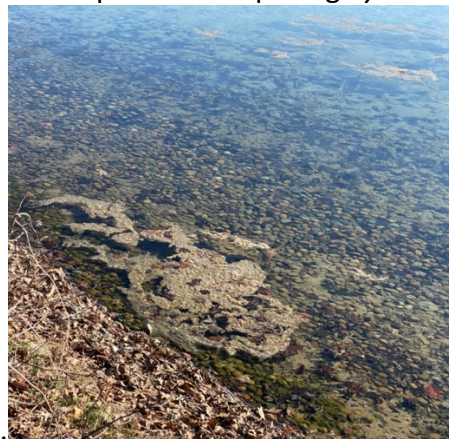
1. Marine Patrol Update
2. Central Dispatch Update
3. PA 56 Signs and Boat Tags
4. PA 56 Enforcement issues for boats anchored or on hoists beyond dock ends, near road ends.
5. Update on short term rentals
6. Other agenda items

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following: “Ice out” day was declared this year as April 15th by HLPOA board member Herb Weatherly. Many people also observed a thing which occurs often in the spring at this time. Some gooey looking brownish stuff shows up near the shore and many wonder what it is and if it is harmful. An explanation follows:

FLAB: What is this stuff? adapted from *Tip of the Mitt, Watershed Council, Summer 2018* What is that “gooey slime” floating in the lake? This filamentous slime is algae that has grown over winter in the benthos (bottom) of the lake. The algae is not dangerous or harmful to the environment. Codenamed “FLAB” (floating algal benthos), the algae begins growing on the lake bottom, then detaches in the spring from shifting ice and wave action.

Cymbella, is a single-celled algae with cell walls composed of silica and serves as a base of the food chain in water ecosystems. The slime material may appear golden brown or darkish green in coloration. In cold winter months, algae growth is very slow because of low light conditions under the ice and limited availability of phosphorous and nitrogen. To cope with low light and nutrient availability, *Cymbella* has a growth pattern of clumping into filamentous stalks.

The shifting ice melt tears the algae into clumps that float on the water’s surface. As the clumps decompose, they may have an unpleasant smell. The clumps of decomposing *Cymbella* are a good food



source for macroinvertebrates and, in turn, for fish.

Cymbella

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We continue to seek participants for an analytical study of drinking water wells in the Higgins Lake watershed. A discussion of this effort follows:

Proposed New Regulations for PFAS Chemicals in Drinking Water

The Federal EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency) has completed environmental studies indicating that no amount of some PFAS (perfluoroalkyl substances) chemicals are safe for human consumption in drinking water. In particular, no amount of PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) above the currently detectable limits of 4 PPT (parts per trillion) is allowable. Both of these chemicals have been shown to be highly carcinogenic at extremely low exposures. None of the many other PFAS chemicals are considered safe but are not specifically addressed in this proposed regulation.

The new regulation is directed to the discharge of treated water from waste treatment facilities. Technical solutions to removing these chemicals from such concentrated waste treatment streams have been developed, but they would be impractically expensive for treating distributed waste streams, such as in a distributed septic system environment.

PFAS chemicals are present in Higgins Lake. They have been shown to bio accumulate in locally caught rainbow smelt to a level that EGLE (MI Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy) has recommended their safe ingestion to only a few servings per month. It is expected that ongoing tests of pike, trout and perch will also lead to recommended limitations for their consumption as well.

This recent proposed EPA regulation and the existing EGLE recommendation have potentially significant impact on some drinking water wells the Higgins Lake Watershed. Because PFAS chemicals are found in Higgins Lake, and because Higgins Lake is fed by ground water from the local watershed, it follows that drinking water wells that access this ground water may also be contaminated by PFAS and other “live forever” chemicals.

Testing for PFAS chemicals is complicated and quite expensive. Only a few laboratories in Michigan are certified to perform these analyses. However, the presence of ANY level of nitrates or nitrites in drinking water, even if below the maximum EGLE allowed safe level, indicates contamination by septic effluents in the ground water. These chemicals are like the “canaries in the coal mine” and warn of impending danger. In cooperation with the Central Michigan District Health Department, we are planning to select a cohort of proven nitrate or nitrite contaminated drinking water wells in the Higgins Lake Watershed for PFAS testing to verify this connection.

We are encouraging any of our members who have older wells, or wells with depths less than 100’, to have their wells tested for nitrate or nitrite contamination. If ANY level of these ions is detected, and if further testing for “live forever” chemicals, like PFAS, pharmaceuticals, or synthetic hormone contamination would be desired, please contact HLPOA Environmental Chair, Fred Swinehart at fred_swinehart@chartermi.net.

PAC: Greg reported the following:

The HLPAC had a meeting on April 4th in order to discuss the situation with the Proposed Higgins Lake, Houghton Lake, and Lake St Helen SADs. A letter was drafted and agreed upon by the board and was sent to HLPOA members on Wednesday April 5th.

HLPAC members have been involved with getting the word out to HLPOA members and other lake organizations regarding the proposed SAD at Higgins Lake. Charlene read a letter at a recent Roscommon County Commissioners meeting into the record, stating the reasons why HLPOA is opposed to the formation of this SAD. Many other residents spoke in opposition during the two Roscommon County Board of Commissioners meetings last week. If anyone wants to see these meetings the videos are available to view on you tube video.

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The result of these meetings was that the Higgins Lake SAD was tabled as it became apparent that there was much negative public sentiment about the effort to create the SAD and alternatives that might be considered. Also, the expansion of attorney Hissong's role in the lake level lawsuit was voted down by the board. Many of the attorney's misleading statements were pointed out including such made by former circuit court judge Michael Baumgartner who stated that he felt the board had been misled. He also pointed out that the board had created a potential liability for additional costs of engineering work of \$240,000 and additional lake studies of \$1.5M, as is indicated in the work created by attorney Hissong. Both Gerrish Township supervisor Dave Udy and Lyon Township supervisor Larry Maduri spoke and commented that they were not in agreement to proceed with the SAD.

The Houghton Lake SAD may also have problems as the interim financing to begin the study has not materialized. Exactly what this means is not yet determined but it puts the operation of the SAD on hold for now.

Greg has a meeting set up to speak on Tuesday night with members of the board of Camp Curnalia and is still hoping to get contact information from as many of the lake associations as possible in order to enhance their awareness of the situation and potentially get everyone to work together to accomplish what is necessary to communicate to the County commissioners. Commissioner Ostergren will also be involved in the meeting with Camp Curnalia to help answer their questions.

HLSIO: Greg reported the following:

The HLSIO board met on March 29th. HLSIO will be doing some website updating in the next 45 days that will include the addition of new materials since the end of the 2022 season, news about accepting donations via PayPal and the public announcements about the relocation suspension being created and the research studies that we will be doing this summer. We will be doing research work adding to the database started last summer documenting where SI is occurring and where it is not. Duncan Lawrence is running this program helping to coordinate the volunteers and the reporting. An article asking for more volunteers is part of the spring newsletter. We will also be sponsoring a research study to find out exactly how long the time period is from when birds are infected and when they start shedding parasites that are looking for snails. This will give us accurate information of what the time frame is to relocate ducks without creating SI on our lake. We feel as though this is the difference between a successful relocation program and one that might not be very successful. We will be hiring Goosebusters again to handle our program to reduce Canada Geese. John Ogren will be running this program again.

Ongoing Business: There was no update on the Camp Grayling expansion or sewer project.

Our annual meeting is scheduled for July 22, 2023. After discussion, Fred moved to have our annual meeting in-person, seconded by Bob. Motion unanimously passed. Guest speakers were discussed, and Charlene will contact HLPOA attorney, Bill Carey, to see if he is available to join the meeting.

Charlene shared that our July 6th fundraiser, *Sips, Chips, & Dips*, will be held at the Cornell beaches, with more details to follow.

New Business: Charlene noted that May 1st is the deadline for members to be included in the 2023 Member Directory. She also reminded Board members that committee reports are due, asking that they be submitted within 10 days.

Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Fred. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:57 A.M.

The next meeting will be May 15, 2023, at 9:00 A.M.

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