



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
August 21, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting

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, Jack Cornell, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, and Fred Swinehart.

Agenda: No changes.

President's Comments: Charlene thanked Greg and the HLSIO committee for all of their help with the HLSIO fundraiser dinner last week!

Minutes: The July 17, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes were accepted as written. The July 22, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes, for the re-election of Officers, were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: None.

Treasurer's Report: The financials through July 31, 2023, were presented and there were no questions. Bruce led a lengthy discussion about the Zelle Quik Payment app for online membership payments. In conclusion, Bruce stated that while Zelle easily and safely accepts funds for contributions, it creates another layer of work for the treasurer and administrative assistant, as necessary membership information cannot be included. Jack shared that there are software programs available for non-profits, with a cost involved. Jack will research this and report back at the next meeting. Charlene thanked both Bruce and Jack for their research.

Membership & Communication: Wayne reported that we have 494 members and hopes we can reach 500 yet this year.

Becky stated that she and Fred have updated our website with several environmental updates.

Riparian Committee: John reported the following:

Data Collection at the DNR Boat Accesses: Making good progress. Have collected most of what we need and plan to finish the rest by Labor Day. Data so far shows that of boats launched at public accesses, the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) accesses account for 84% of activity with the remainder at Gerrish Marina, Lyon township access, Maplehurst and Kelly Beach. The three DNR accesses have about 98% of parked trailers

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with visible weeds which is a prime indicator of AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) risk. Of that total, the South State Park accounts for 84%. Final numbers should not vary much from these totals.

We need more interview data from arriving boat operators and will focus on this during the remaining weekends. Data collected so far indicates that of boats and trailers arriving at the South State Park, about 6% have visible weeds, 3% at the North State Park and none so far at the West Boat access.

Road End Signs: The Road Commission issued permits for replacement posts at Columbine, St. Louis and Thorpe. Chase Schepke will install posts soon. Hope to have the remaining signs installed before Labor Day.

Fall Roscommon County Safety Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 20th, at 11 AM at the HLPOA office building. Please let me know if you have agenda suggestions. We will review the agenda at the September HLPOA board meeting.

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following:

Flow Rate Measurement in The Cut River: Stream flow data has been collected on three different dates. The flow rates are computed from field measurements recorded by the students using a spreadsheet application created by student Ben Hornicle, from West Newton Massachusetts.

- On 06/30/2023 the flow rate was determined to be about 40 cu. ft./sec.
- On 07/12/2023 the flow rate was determined to be about 37 cu. ft./sec.
- On 08/04/2023 the flow rate was determined to be about 34 cu. ft./sec.

These results are posted on the HLPOA web site in the Water Level Data tab. The next flow rate determination is scheduled for late August or early September. These flow rates are well below the recommended 50 cu. ft./ sec. minimum flow from prior fishery-related studies.

This and future Cut River flow rate data will be posted on the HLPOA.Org website in the Water Level Data subsection.

Near Shore Student Water Quality Sampling and Analysis: The next sampling and analysis session is scheduled for this Wednesday, August 23rd.

Support for the Gerrish-Lyon Utility Authority: Considerable effort has been spent by a grassroots team to secure positive petition signatures from property owners in Lyon Township. Extensive discussions have been initiated with Tom Darnton, president of The Tip of The Mitt organization, to clarify their intent and position relative to the STEP (Septic Tank Effluent Pumping) waste treatment proposal for Higgins Lake. That conversation is ongoing at this writing.

Testing of Drinking Water Wells: We are still 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 for further information.

HLSIO: Greg reported the following:

Curt Blankespoor and Randy DeJong of SIS (Swimmer's Itch Solutions) did a bird survey on July 24 and located one brood of mergansers with five ducklings. They were able to recover scraping from a dock of the duckling

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feces for our research project on merganser parasites. It is likely that there are other broods on the lake, but no others were spotted. SIS did a second survey on August 18th and found one brood which had more ducklings than the brood found on July 24th. They now believe that there are 2 broods on the lake with an outside chance of there being 3. So, 15 to 20 ducklings.

Greg met at Crystal Lake on July 27th with SI (Swimmer's Itch) representatives of Crystal Lake, and they reported on their major outbreak of swimmer's itch cases. Last year about 100 merganser ducklings were left on the lake as a result of prohibitions by the DNR on relocation of wild bird because of avian flu concerns. 192 cases were recently reported this year versus a total of 19 by the same date in 2022, July 9th. Some of their cases were severe.

Greg said that he believes there will be an uptick in SI cases next spring here at Higgins Lake but do not believe it will be as severe as what Crystal Lake is seeing, due to the fact that we have less mergansers on our lake this season than that they had on their lake last year.

Greg discussed the need for efforts over the next few months to encourage the DNR to allow merganser relocation in 2024 to combat Swimmer's Itch. Several actions were discussed including the following;

- Information on economic aspects of increase SI cases.
- Requesting documentation of the DNR decision process for banning relocations for 2022 and 2023.
- Creating an SIS report on swimmer's itch cases at Crystal Lake vs Higgins Lake.

We intend to contact the local Fish and Wildlife people here at the Roscommon office and also lobby the people above those that we normally deal with to best make the point that we cannot have our program suspended.

Communications: Melanie reported that an SIS paper on the success of merganser relocation at Higgins Lake will be posted on our HLSIO website when available.

In regards to the Water Study Research project, Duncan Lawrence said that there have been 194 reports thus far involving 672 swimmers with 13 total case of swimmer's itch verses 10 for the full year of 2022. All but 2 of the cases were mild.

The HLSIO conducted its fundraiser dinner last Thursday and despite the rainy weather it was extremely well attended. Everybody went home happy! Many thanks to all the HLPOA board members for their help in selling tickets and donating to the event.

PAC: Greg reported the following:

On August 3rd the Gerrish Township board passed a resolution in opposition to the SAD (Special Assessment District). This will be sent to the County Commissioners and could possibly be helpful in case we need a legal challenge down the road.

Curt and Greg continue to interview law firms to help us with SAD opposition. Most recently we met with attorneys from Honigman and with Phil Ellison. Phil was suggested to us by Cliff Bloom. It is our recommendation that we ask Phil Ellison to represent us in this matter.

The county recently sent out a notice as they need to do by law, advising the residents of the proposed SAD that there will be a hear to discuss amending the legal level of Higgins Lake on Sept 15th. The hearing cites the petition to create the SAD and Confirm the boundaries that was filed on 6-12 (actually 6-16). That petition had nothing to do with amending the lake level.

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The county has already spent over \$120,000 now to create this SAD, and they're not done. All of this cost will be borne by the people assessed within the SAD Boundaries. Whatever the county might want to do regarding the dam will be borne by the SAD, potentially without representation by lakefront property owners.

Every member or potential member of the HLPOA is in the SAD. We do not have political voting power because most of our members don't vote here. If we are to stop the SAD we need to do it in Court.

Greg moved to have attorney Phil Ellison represent the HLPOA in the matter of the Higgins Lake Special Assessment District for the dam, which was seconded by Bruce. Motion approved by John, Herb, Bob, Jack, Becky, Charlene, Wayne, Fred, and Curt. Motion passed unanimously.

Ongoing Business: Regarding the sewer project, Charlene stated that Lyon Township petitions are still coming in daily.

New Business: On the topic of the HLPOA Annual Meeting, Bruce said he thought it went very well. Kathleen shared that 45 members attended and 20 by proxy. Charlene asked that an annual meeting committee be formed to make a determination to recommend what type of meeting would be most efficient for next year: in-person, zoom, or hybrid. John said he liked having members gather in person, and Becky added that it provides a community feeling, such as with the *Sips, Chips and Dips* fundraiser.

Adjournment: Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.

The next meeting will be September 18, 2023, at 9:00 A.M.

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