



# 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  
January 15, 2024, 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 wished everyone a Happy New Year!

**December Minutes:** The December 18, 2023, Minutes were accepted as written.

**Committee Reports:**

**Secretary/Office:** Herb reported that he recently signed the office lease agreement, where the \$250.00 monthly rent amount remained the same as last year. Herb also shared that a warranty was not available for our computer, due to its age.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bruce reviewed our direct QuickBooks December 31, 2023, year-end financials that captured our full year 2023 activities. Bruce noted we had very favorable operating results generating a net income of over \$41,000 for the year. The positive over-budget results were attributed on the Income side mainly to contributions in excess of budget to our Legal Fund and fund-raiser, while on the expense side we spent less than was budgeted in both the Environmental and Lobbyist areas. Bruce added that we have a solid financial position with \$131,000 in net assets. Since the Board has the discretion to have our annual CPA financial statement prepared as a Compilation, Review or Audit, Bruce moved to have a Compilation completed for 2023 as was done for the 2022 year-end. The motion was seconded by Jack. Motion passed. Bruce then led a discussion about the proposed 2024 budget, where some changes were made after comments from last months' meeting. Herb moved to accept the proposed 2024 budget as presented, seconded by Greg. Motion passed.

**Membership & Communication:** Wayne stated we now have 293 members vs 242 1 year ago. Wayne then reported that in response to our recent mailing, we are receiving advertising checks for our 2024 Member Directory. Becky shared that we received a lot of positive response from our recent email blasts. Becky also reminded everyone that articles are due tomorrow for our Winter newsletter.

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A membership dues increase was then discussed. Bruce moved to increase the annual HLPOA membership dues from \$115.00 to \$125.00 for 2025, seconded by Greg. Motion passed. The increase will be announced in the Spring newsletter and at our July annual meeting.

**Riparian Committee:** John reported the following:

**2023 Data Collection Project-DNR Accesses on Higgins Lake:**

As reported last month, Josh Pellow, Regional Manager of Parks and Recreation, will host an online meeting on January 25. There has been no other feedback from the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) in response to our report that was submitted to him on October 11, 2023.

There will be a summary of the report in the winter HLPOA newsletter, and the full report will be posted on the website.

A resolution is being drafted to support the changes we will recommend to the DNR. Approval for the resolution will be requested at the Feb. 19, 2024, board meeting.

Also, HLF (Higgins Lake Foundation) recently shared the 2023 DASH (Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting) boat harvest report. The DASH boat was on the water for 43 days, treated 5.9 acres and harvested 310 bags. (That compares to the 2022 season with 39 days on the water, 3.1 acres treated and 552 bags harvested.) All 18 permit areas reported EWM (Eurasian Watermilfoil); seven with thin density, 5 with moderate and 6 with dense. SSW (starry stonewort) was reported in eight permit areas: 3 moderate and 5 thin. The areas with greatest density of both species are Flag Point, Pine Bluffs, the dam, Old Point Comfort and Detroit Point.

**DNA Testing for AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species):** Awaiting cost estimates from Randy DeJong.

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

Flow rate and environmental data were collected on January 8th for the Cut River at the County Road 100 crossing. The results are reported on the HLPOA/Environmental website drop down tab. The flow rate was about 34 cfs (cubic feet per second) and the phosphorus level was 0.01 mg/l (milligrams per liter), which is very low.

During the summer months when populations around the lake are higher, phosphorus levels in the Cut River average 0.4 mg/l and the summer flows measured in 2023 were about 35 cfs on average. This resulted in perhaps 5 or 6 tons of phosphorus going down stream via the Cut River in the months from May through September of 2023. As Scott Faulkner of the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly says, "The phosphorus from Higgins Lake is the "bad news gift" that just keeps on giving to the Muskegon River." An around-the-lake sanitary sewer would eliminate this serious source of pollution.

The near shore water sampling and analysis program with Roscommon Area Public High School chemistry students is on track to proceed again this year. A kick-off pizza party is scheduled for March, with activities in the field and in the Raven laboratory beginning shortly after ice-out in late April or early May of 2024. Local financial supporters are being approached as usual.

Other activities have been in support of the Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority (GLUA) requesting the Michigan State Legislature to grant substantial "Ear Mark" funds in support of the proposed sanitary sewer project. A meeting

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with the Director and the Board Chairman of the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly was arranged, including Senator Bumstead's staff representative. Their counsel was offered, and their support was assured. Subsequently, our local House Representative Borton and Senator Huizenga were requested to ask for a substantial grant to be approved for GLUA.

Additional grant fundraising is ongoing, but in addition we are asking that all members of HLPOA participate individually, if they are able and willing to do so. Not all grants sought are awarded, and although we have an excellent team working this space, and even if successful, substantial State and Federal grant funds are not expected to be available in 2024. A goal of \$300,000 new individual and local grant funds available to GLUA for 2024 spending will be required if Waste Treatment Plant site development is to be completed in 2024. Let's keep this vital project moving forward!

Designated contributions may be made to the HLPOA General Fund, the Higgins Lake Foundation, or directly to GLUA toward this goal. Please do what you can to support this, the most environmentally important project for Higgins Lake of our lifetime, for ourselves, our children, grandchildren and all the generations of Higgins Lake lovers who will follow!

**HLPAC:** Greg reported the following:

In local politics, there are some changes. Darlene Sensor is the new Chair and Rex Wolfson is the new Vice chair of the county commissioners. The county continues to be in financial difficulty and will be trying to ask for a millage increase in 2024. Commissioner Sensor has been working on things regarding the county budget and now as chair she will be able to bring things quickly to board discussions.

Dave Udy will resign at the Gerrish Township board meeting on 1-16-24. His last day will be March 31<sup>st</sup>. The plan is for the board to appoint someone to take the supervisor job as of April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Gerrish Township Planning Commission has introduced discussions about potential septic and short-term rental ordinances. The new Lyon township septic ordinance is being reviewed and the short-term rental ordinance of Markey Township is one being evaluated. More discussion will take place at future meetings and will likely involve input from the new supervisor.

**HLSIO:** Greg reported the following:

HLSIO got the OK they were hoping for when the DNR sent us an email on January 4<sup>th</sup> advising us that we will once again be able to relocate merganser ducks. We will not be able to relocate Geese, but we will likely try to do the same egg and nest destruction that we did last year. This is more difficult to successfully eliminate all the geese, but we will talk about this more at our HLSIO meeting next week.

We sent an email to our members about the relocation suspension. We had put off making changes to the website until this issue was settled, so we will be doing that shortly.

**On-going Business:**

**Dam SAD Appeal:** Greg reported that the appellate brief has been filed with the Court of Appeals and information about the case is available on Phil Ellison's website, the address of such was sent to our members last Thursday. All cross-appeal filers have until February 12<sup>th</sup> to file and information about this was contained in the email. The court date is still expected to be next summer with a potential decision in the fall.

**Adjournment:** Bob moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Herb. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:38 A.M.

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**The next meeting will be February 19, 2024.**

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