



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
March 11, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes
Zoom Virtual Meeting

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, Curt DeVoe, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart and Becky Gibson. Wayne Brooks was absent.

Agenda: Charlene said we will have a guest speaker, Sam Boumis, our representative from the lobbying firm, Scofes & Associates Consulting Inc., at 9:30.

President's Comments: Charlene thanked the committee chairs for sending their committee reports for the 2024 Member Directory.

SB 662: Greg stated that Sam Boumis is joining our meeting to answer our questions about Senate bill 662, which allows for less management of the dams/lake levels and also makes creating SAD for dam management easier. The Senate passed the bill, and it is now waiting to go to the House.

February Minutes: The February 19, 2024, Minutes were accepted as written.

Committee Reports:

Secretary/Office: Herb reported there is still ice on the south end of the lake.

Treasurer's Report: The February 29, 2024, financials were presented and there were no questions. Bruce added that next month we will have the March figures and will be able to judge our performance for the 1st quarter.

Membership & Communication: Becky informed us that we currently have 383 members and we recently emailed those who have not renewed this year. Also, a 2nd mailing is forthcoming for prospects.

Riparian Committee: John reported the following:

DNR Accesses Data Collection, 2024: Invited HLF (Higgins Lake Foundation) to participate again this year and waiting for a response. Last year we worked under the HLF insurance umbrella and hope to repeat that this year. Data collection will focus on inspection of arriving boats at the South State Park and also include inspection of parked trailers at the North State Park, the West Access and other active boat accesses around the lake.

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DNR Testing for AIS: Dr. Randall deJong, Associate Professor, Biology, Calvin University, provided a \$6,125 estimate for spring and fall testing at 10 locations for Hydrilla, recently found in southern Michigan, and Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). He also estimated a cost of \$2,550 to develop DNA tests for starry stonewort (SSW), and curly leaf pondweed, recently found in Houghton Lake. I do not recommend proceeding with this work this year or in the future unless we discover that it is being used successfully elsewhere. Instead, we will look for someone to help with conventional rake toss testing.

MTT 2023 DASH (Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting) Boat Harvesting in Lagoon: Rachel Robert's, South Higgins Lake State Park Manager, provided the report that indicated limited EWM in the lagoon and some SSW on all 24 days of operation. A total of 560 bags were harvested, about the same as in previous years. The SSW is not present in heavy matts but mixed into bottom weeds.

Guest Speaker: Lobbyist Sam Boumis of Scofes and Associates said that he represents HLPOA on matters that are important to us. Sam recently alerted us to SB 662 which the HLPOA opposes. After discussion, Greg asked what plan there might be to lobby this bill? Sam replied that letter writing from our members to the committee members that will consider this bill in the house would be very helpful. The single best thing we could do is to initiate a write-in campaign for all of our members. Communication should be directed to the 7 members of the Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Committee, along with members' local representatives. Sam plans on speaking to the 7 committee members individually, giving them our points of view. Everyone thanked Sam for his input today. Greg will develop bullet points and reasons of opposition to send to our members, along with a link where they can find their local representatives to contact.

Environmental Committee: Fred reported the following:

GLUA Support Activities

By far the most important environmental project for the benefit of the environmental quality of Higgins Lake in our lifetime is the implementation of a modern sanitary sewer around the lake. The need for this change from the current environment of septic systems throughout the watershed has been shown to be required by every Federal and State regulatory agency, by every Federal and State scientific organization, every University research study and our own student scientific work that have considered the issue.

We have been actively supporting the Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority (GLUA) to successfully proceed with this project in every way that we have been able. This month's activity has been focused on raising sufficient funds to allow authorization of an aerial LIDAR survey of the proposed Wastewater Treatment Plant site and the low-pressure effluent collection system. From our efforts and those of others, sufficient funds have been obtained to allow GLUA to proceed with that vital work element in a timely manner.

Availability of Grant and Ear Mark Funds

For the next year, GLUA is going to require extensive foundation and Individual financial contributions to maintain their desired schedule. These funds are typically more quickly available than State and Federal grants and loans.

Most foundations, according to their bylaws, are only able to contribute directly to 501(c)(3) organizations and cannot directly contribute to Governmental organizations like GLUA. The HH and GA (Herbert H. and Grace A.) Dow Foundation is an exception to that limitation, and we are working to obtain support from them. We have

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submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) and are preparing for a meeting with their management in April in an effort to obtain an invitation to apply for funds at their summer Board meeting.

HLPAC: Greg reported the following:

In local politics, the mileage sought by Roscommon County failed in the November election and the commissioners are now turning their focus on the August primary as the next time they will seek a mileage increase from the county.

Current Gerrish Township Police Chief Brian Hill will be appointed to be the next supervisor in Gerrish township and will assume that role on April 1st.

HLSIO: Greg reported the following:

A contract has been reached with SIS (Swimmers Itch Solutions) for merganser brood removal and also a couple research projects. We will continue to record SI (Swimmers Itch) cases and locations to add to the data from the last couple years as one research project and we will study even more closely the merganser parasite gestation period as another project. Both are aimed at furthering our understanding of SI so as to be able to control it more effectively in the future.

We will also be able once again to use egg and nest destruction to control the Canada goose numbers on the lake. In order to do so we need the county commissioners to create another resolution saying they endorse HLSIO to do so. This resolution was brought forward in their last meeting's work session and will be voted on at their meeting on Wednesday (3-13) of this week. I attended their last meeting via Zoom and presented our request through commissioner Ostergren.

SB 662 is a bill that would allow municipalities to treat the court ordered lake levels of their lake much more casually was introduced in the state senate and passed out of committee and then again on the senate floor. This bill also allows special assessment districts to be set up much more easily in order to pass dam costs on to riparians. A similar bill will be introduced in the house and will go to the committee for Natural Resources, Environmental, Tourism and outdoor recreation committee. The HLPOA opposes this bill as, among other things, it attempts to codify irresponsibility in local government and has been written without any input from lakefront property owners.

Ongoing Business: Greg stated that federal funds to support the sewer project in the 2025 budget have been recently requested through U.S Senator Debbie Stabenow.

New Business:

Annual Meeting: A discussion was held about the venue for our annual meeting on July 13, 2024. It was decided to have an in-person meeting. Herb will research costs at different locations. Bob asked that bios be submitted for the candidates whose terms expire this year. There was also a discussion about possible guest speakers and topics of importance to our members. This will again be discussed at the next meeting. Last, Herb moved to approve the proxy form today, seconded by Bob. Motion passed.

Mackinac Bridge Fundraiser: Charlene shared that the raffle for the Mackinac Bridge Climb is available this year and asked if we should complete an application for this fundraiser. The overwhelming response was yes.

Adjournment: Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:34 A.M.

The next meeting will be April 15, 2024, at 9:00 A.M.

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