



# 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  
April 15, 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, Wayne Brooks, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, and Fred Swinehart. Jack Cornell was absent.

**Agenda:** Charlene said that Attorney Bill Carey will join the meeting at 9:30.

**President's Comments:** Charlene shared that previous HLPOA Board Director, Ken Dennings, had passed and funeral information is forthcoming.

**March Minutes:** Becky noted a change needed in the environmental section. With this correction, Becky moved to accept the March 11, 2024, Minutes, seconded by John. Motion passed.

**Committee Reports:**

**Secretary/Office:** None.

**Treasurer's Report:** The March 31, 2024, financials were presented. Bruce noted that the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter financials will be posted on our website, after adjusting a figure in the directory advertisements area. Bruce stated that overall, we are tracking close to last year's numbers.

**Membership & Communication:** Wayne said the member directory project is nearly complete, while we are waiting for the last payments from advertisers and members yet to renew. When finished, a date will be determined to stuff envelopes. Wayne thanked Herb, Bob, and Charlene for their recent assistance in preparing the 2<sup>nd</sup> bulk mailing to prospects. Also, we currently have 414 members. Wayne then asked for board members' help in contacting those who have not yet renewed.

Regarding the spring newsletter, Becky asked that articles be sent to her by April 29<sup>th</sup>.

Charlene shared that she, Becky, and Susan Semack, will be meeting with a new marketing company this week, to discuss PR, membership, and communications in general.

Last, Greg suggested that we notify our members that assistance would be helpful from anyone with interests in the various fields we engage in, such as marketing, fundraisers, mailings, and the environment. We are confident that HLPOA members have skill sets we could utilize! In another notification, we would like to pursue anyone interested in becoming a board member. These requests will also be included in our newsletter.

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**Guest Speaker:** Attorney Bill Carey addressed recent amendments to the MRTA (Marketable Record Title Act). The amendments deal with whether deed restrictions may become unenforceable if the restrictions are not rerecorded at least every 40 years. At this time, while the amendments have been adopted into law, the deadline for rerecording has been modified twice. A lengthy discussion was held about the legal aspects of preserving important building and use restrictions. There is currently a deadline for rerecording of September 29, 2025, for anyone intending to file a Notice of Claim under the MRTA. Some Higgins Lake associations and subdivisions may especially be impacted by MRTA changes.

Mr. Carey then addressed short-term rentals. Some townships in Roscommon County are adapting regulations to deal with this. Both of these subjects will be further discussed at our annual meeting, and Bill will be attending.

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

**DNR Accesses Data Collection, 2024:** The project will focus on inspection of arriving boats for weeds at the South State Park and inspection of parked trailers for weeds at the three DNR accesses, Kelly Beach, Maplehurst Drive, Stateline Road and Gerrish Marina. We will work jointly with HLF (Higgins Lake Foundation) and operate under their insurance umbrella. HLF has hired a summer worker who will take the lead on the South State Park inspection of arriving boats.

**AIS Testing at Boat Accesses:** Having given up on DNA testing for early detection of AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) at least for the time being, we are exploring fall and spring rake toss testing options. Vicki Springstead agreed to check with Dr. Luttenton on adding this testing to his annual work program.

**Roscommon County Safety Meeting:** The spring meeting will be on May 15 at the HLPOA office, and the agenda is being developed.

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

#### **EPA Requires Testing of Drinking Water for PFAS**

In a new national ruling, the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) has issued the first-ever national, legally enforceable drinking water standard to protect communities from exposure to harmful per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as “forever chemicals”. Exposure to PFAS has been linked to deadly cancers, impacts to the liver and heart, and immune and developmental damage to infants and children. This final rule represents the most significant step to protect public health under [EPA’s PFAS Strategic Roadmap](#). The final rule will reduce PFAS exposure for approximately 100 million people, prevent thousands of deaths, and reduce tens of thousands of serious illnesses.

Per- and poly- fluoralkyls are present in Higgins Lake. They are found at dangerous levels in the fish that live in the lake, as evidenced by EGLE’s (MI Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy) issuance of limitations on consuming rainbow smelt, for example. An EGLE PFAS sampling program has determined that there is no point source for these pollutants, and thus they arrive in the ground water that flows into the lake from the watershed. This is discussed on the HLPOA.org Website referenced below:

<https://hlpoa.org/higgins-lake/environmental-lake-level/water-quality/>

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The Proposed STEP (Septic Tank Effluent Pump) Sewer System will prevent these PFAS compounds from entering the lake through the ground water. The sewer system will concentrate PFAS chemicals in one place at the waste water treatment plant, where they can be economically treated and removed from plant's discharge stream. In this way, PFAS will eventually disappear from Higgins Lake, and eventually remove Higgins Lake as a PFAS source for the entire Muskegon River Watershed.

Until then, our strong recommendation continues that everyone around the lake should have their drinking water tested for the presence of nitrates or nitrites. The presence of ANY level of these chemicals indicate that the aquifer from which the drinking water has been drawn is being contaminated from septic system effluents.

Drinking water so contaminated will also contain PFAS and other human sourced hazards like pharmaceuticals, viruses, and other chemicals too. So, until the sewer is completed, in these contaminated drinking water situations, bottled water is highly recommended be used for all purposes involving human ingestion.

### **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, by every University research study and by 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 obtaining supporting funds from a major local benevolent family foundation. After submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI) last month, GLUA received an invitation to continue the process of seeking their financial support by submitting a formal grant request to their board of directors for consideration this summer.

After discussion, Fred moved to donate \$10,000.00 to GLUA for their expenses, seconded by John. Motion passed.

**HLPAC:** Greg reported the following:

HLPAC met on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Among the discussions we talked about potential candidates for Township and County positions and how we might help support candidates for state office in our area. We will be using a new company to prepare our quarterly filings. Thanks to some research done by our HLPAC treasurer, Bob McKellar, the filing costs should be cut substantially starting with the April period.

Local politics: In Lyon township, current supervisor, Larry Maduri intends not to run again and thus far the only person who has filed to run for the position is Paul Bertrand. We believe that the other incumbent candidates will run again in Lyon but don't know if there might be others running for those positions. In Gerrish Township, Brian Hill has been appointed to fill the remaining term as Gerrish Supervisor and has already begun to put his mark on Township affairs. Eric Muszynski is the new Gerrish Township Chief of Police, Norm LaBonte is the new Lieutenant and John Wybraniec is the new Sergeant. All were officially sworn in at the Gerrish Township April meeting.

County meetings seem to be operating well. The county plans to seek another milage increase in the August election cycle and they are currently discussing exactly what that will look like. Discussions about the Houghton

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Lake dam SAD are ongoing with apportionment in the forefront. Chase Shepke has done a terrific job of identifying the problems with the dams and also determining what the solutions should be both immediate and longer term.

#### Higgins Lake Dam SAD

All briefs have been filed for the appeal and Attorney Phil Ellison expects that the case will be heard in May or June with a decision in the fall.

#### **HLSIO:** Greg reported the following:

HLSIO board met on 4-3-24 and finalized approval of the contract we will use this year with Swimmer's Itch Solutions for Brood removal, snail infection study, water research data and parasite study. Mike Purkey was named to head the fundraising dinner project. Greg confirmed with the new owners of Fred's that they will be providing the catering and Mike will be talking to Jim Witt about whether we may be able to use his barn again. A tentative date of August 15<sup>th</sup> is what we are currently planning.

The county board of Commissioners unanimously approved our request for a resolution allowing goose control this season. All permits for goose control and merganser duck relocation have been submitted and we believe everything is now in order to accomplish the things we need for 2024. John Ogren has advised that goose control could take place as early as April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Website updates have been made and we feel everything that we wanted done is now in place on the HLSIO website.

**Ongoing Business:** Herb reported on costs for different locations for the July 13<sup>th</sup> annual meeting. After discussion, it was decided to have our meeting at the Roscommon High School. Board members also suggested various guest speakers, which will be reviewed at our next meeting. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, we will set-up for the annual meeting at 9:00, with a rehearsal to follow at 9:30. Last, Charlene will compose the cover letter and agenda for the annual meeting packet.

**New Business:** Charlene stated that the Landing Blitz is scheduled for early July and asked for volunteers. John and Fred will participate at the North State Park, while Wayne & Susan Brooks will be at the West Launch. This is a program to raise awareness about preventing AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) through recreational boating. Thank you, John, Fred, Wayne, and Susan!

**Adjournment:** Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:24 A.M.

**The next meeting will be May 20, 2024, at 9:00 A.M.**

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