



# Higgins Lake Property Owners Association<sup>SM</sup>

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Higgins Lake Property Owners Association

Board Meeting Minutes

August 18, 2025

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, Dennis Corte, Becky Gibson, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart, Patty Dennis and Curt DeVoe.

**Agenda:** No changes.

**President's Comments:** Charlene thanked everyone involved with the HLSIO fundraiser dinner, which was well attended and a good time had by all!

**June Minutes:** The June 16, 2025, Minutes were accepted as written.

**July Minutes:** The July 19, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes, were accepted as written.

**Annual Meeting Minutes:** The July 19, 2025, Annual Meeting Minutes have not yet been completed.

**Committee Reports:**

**Secretary/Office:** None.

**Treasurer's Report:** The June and July financials were presented and there were no questions. Bruce stated that the June 30, 2025, second quarter financials need to be posted on our website. Bruce then explained that at Jack Cornell's request and as had been previously reported, Jack would no longer be preparing the monthly statements on QuickBooks. Jack prepared the June QuickBooks financials and Bruce used QuickBooks to prepare the July financials. There are some minor transition issues being worked on by Jack and Bruce, with the plan to have these resolved by the time the third quarter September statements are prepared.

**Membership & Communication:** Becky asked that articles be sent to her by September 15<sup>th</sup> for the Fall newsletter.

Wayne mentioned the directory advertising forms, where they are at the beginning stages and looking for a new format. The possibility of selling ad space/sponsorship in our newsletters was also discussed. The committee will bring a recommendation to our next meeting.

**President:** Charlene Cornell, **Vice Pres:** Greg Semack, **Secretary:** Herb Weatherly, **Treasurer:** Bruce Carleton  
**Directors:** Wayne Brooks, Dennis Corte, Patty Dennis, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart

*90 Years dedicated to preserving the quality and beauty of Higgins Lake*



Total Coliforms, cfu/100ml	36.1	3.0	13.4	0.0	38.4	689.3	870.4	1986.0
E-Coliforms, cfu/100ml	10.3	0	4.1	0	0	10.6	13.5	6.3
pH	7.58		6.79	6.38	7.95	7.02	7.62	7.25
Total Dissolved Solids	37		141	186	155	170	195	161
Flow Rate, cfs	33.0	33.5	36.0	62.0	66.5	51.8	49.7	40.8

Notice that all available nitrogen is being consumed by algae and weed growth in the Lake an the Cut River at this point.

\*An 0.05 ml/l level of Phosphorous in a tributary creek or river is considered by the EPA to be a pollution source.

\*\* CFU + Colony forming Units per 100 ml.

Flow rate measurements were made with the assistance of Lily Gorman on 08/06. The flow rate was estimated to be about 40.8 cubic feet per second.

### GIS Layered Mapping of Septic Systems and Wells

The Central Michigan Division of the Health Department (CMDHD) continues to make good progress on their project of Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping of the drinking water wells and septic fields in Lyon and Gerrish Townships. Several HLPOA volunteers are helping with the work as crowded vacation schedules allow.

Future funding for this project is an issue. The current CMDHD 2024 budget is sufficient for the above activities until September 30, 2025. Funding for this project in the 2025 Fiscal Year has not yet been secured in the current State of Michigan budget negotiations. Grant Funding to support this work from EGLE Non-Point Source (Section 319) Funding may be applied for in January 2026 for spending in the 2026 FY beginning Octobe1, 2026. Therefore, local and regional funding may be required to maintain project momentum through calendar year 2025/2026.

**HLSIO:** The following was reported by HLSIO President Duncan Lawrence:

#### HLSIO August Update

There has been relatively limited activity on the lake for the past month, but we believe we've made progress.

- Fundraising Dinner - A very successful event. Over 125 guests joined the festivities at Witt's Barn, delicious prime rib catered by Fred's and music by Taylor Perry.

- Merganser Removal in 2026 - we have reason for optimism. Greg Semack had a meeting with the head of DNR and many DNR department heads. set up by our lobbyist with the help of our state Representative Ken Borton. The DNR has committed to more dialog and a possible visit to Higgins. This is excellent news!
- Swimmers Itch - while our water study continues to show low levels among participants, cases reported on our website are higher than last year, especially in the last couple weeks
- Snail infection rates - these remained low at our July 1, 2025, snapshot. Only one infected snail from 2,000 tested (attached 2015-2025 rates)
- Merganser Broods - there are 4 broods on the lake, with about 40 ducks/ducklings currently on the lake. At this point we expect increased SI next year even if we can resume our relocation program for 2026. Due to the broods on the lake this summer more snails will likely be infected
- Additional efforts in process: we have drafted a letter to send to USFW requesting consideration of our options. We are also planning to submit a Freedom of Information Act request, in hopes of better understanding their rationale (which could guide our response). We will be arranging meetings with the DNR in the fall.

### **PAC:**

Greg reported that the Higgins Lake dam SAD appeal was heard on August 6<sup>th</sup>. A decision is not expected for at least 2 months. It was also reported that the County held an informational meeting on the evening of August 6<sup>th</sup> to give background on the Higgins Lake SAD and how the assessment is being calculated. At this point the County is moving forward with assessing those in the SAD in the December tax bill. In addition to lakefront owners and others with lake access, the townships and the state will also be assessed for property they own/control on the lake.

Greg said there is a September 2nd County meeting, where the amounts of assessment roll and Computation of Costs for the Higgins Lake dam SAD will be announced. A discussion was held about getting a notification to our members and prospects. Along with Facebook and an email blast, a mailing was suggested using a postcard vs a letter. The goal is to reach as many people as possible, and the theme would be, "Why you need to be concerned about this". We could also have a link on our website. The Communication & Membership Committee will research these options to possibly design a postcard and compose what should be included in this notification.

### **Local politics**

**County:** the County held a 4<sup>th</sup> meeting last Wednesday which was presented as a "Myth Buster Meeting". Within the meeting, the County presented an itemized list by date of all things pertaining to the Dam. Herb commented it appeared to be an accurate and comprehensive list.

**Gerrish Township:** Greg mentioned that Gerrish continues to work on finalizing a Short-Term Rental ordinance. Greg also mentioned that some individuals are considering lawsuits against these rental properties based on their running a business in a residential area.

**Lyon Township:** The Lyon Township planning commission is also looking at a Short-Term Rental ordinance as well as a Septic Ordinance. The supervisor is supporting a septic ordinance that would require inspection only at point of sale but does not appear to have support from other members of the Board.

Greg announced there is a fundraiser for State Representative Ken Borton on August 28th at the Cut River Grille from 5:00 – 7:00 P.M. Representative Borton has been instrumental at getting new contacts at the DNR to help us with problems we face at Higgins Lake.

**Ongoing Business:** Charlene stated the *Sips, Chips & Dips* fundraiser netted \$3,530.00. While this was a fun event, attendance was down, and a lot of work was put in by volunteers. It was suggested to hold this event every other year and Charlene thanked everyone who assisted in making this such an enjoyable evening!

Next, the annual meeting was addressed and the new location at the RAM Center was overwhelmingly agreed to be a better location. It was asked should the date be moved to June vs July. After discussion, it was determined to continue with the July date, as this date is familiar with the public and more riparians are here for the summer. Becky said the date for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in July 2026, was available at the RAM Center and she will secure that date. It was suggested to have a hybrid meeting, and Becky said RAM IT is available to assist with this. Becky will research the cost.

**Adjournment:** Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dennis. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:07 A.M.

**The next meeting will be September 15, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.**