

## **Hitchcock Lake Improvement Association Regular Meeting – September 30, 2019**

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by President Kathy Mrazik.

II. Roll Call – Board Members Present: Kathy Mrazik, Andy Giordino, Lina Marunas, Ed Sullivan, Robert Browne, Cheryl Corey, David Judd, Jeremy Chicano, Laurie Greco, Judy Miceli, Cindy Cayer, Noreo Gabriel

Members: Tom Tella, Mike Mrazik, Michael & Ashley Ruotolo, John Del Donno, Mark & Nancy Fontanella, Bill Olmstead, Bruce Corey, Susan Chase, Mark & Lisa Sussman, Mike Martone, Silvia Marunas, George Bradigo, Christine Parsons, June Gemino, Chuck Miceli

Guests: Mayor Tom Dunn; Mark Possidento, town engineer; Debbie Golden, Town Council Representative; Thomas Battles, HRP Associates

III. Minutes of July 2019 – A motion was made by Andy Giordino and seconded by Ed Sullivan to approve the minutes of the July 2019 meeting as posted on the HLIA website.

IV. Special Guest Presentation re: Dam Repair

The following is a summary of the discussion with Mayor Tom Dunn, Town Engineer Mark Possidento, Council Member Debbie Golden, and HRP Associates Corporate Director of Engineering Services Tom Battles regarding the issues with the North Lake Dam Gate and South Lake causeway valve.

The north lake dam is over 100 years old and the key is difficult to turn which could indicate a problem with the gate. The masonry blocks have naturally started to shift out of place and could block the gate and the housing that protects the south lake causeway valve was possibly vandalized and needs repair. Mr. Battles did not inspect the south causeway valve.

Mark Possidento reported that there is \$120,000 left from a 2008 CT STEAP grant that was awarded to the town for Hitchcock Lake and Cedar Lake. At the time, under this grant, Hitchcock Lake had a Watershed Management Study completed and the town installed catch basin sump pump systems to catch floatables before entering the lake. Cedar Lake was to install walkways with the funds, but the town now has opportunity to obtain a different grant for that project and move the \$120,000 from the original grant back to Hitchcock Lake projects. Town is awaiting grant funds and bids for the Cedar Lake project before moving forward at Hitchcock Lake. Most likely nothing will be determined until Spring 2020. If money becomes available, the earliest any work would begin at Hitchcock Lake would be Fall 2020 due to working through DEEP permitting and acquiring bids. There is no emergency and the dam is secure. The concern is that due to the age of the dam gate, the valve could become stuck in the open position and drain the North Lake.

Speakers indicated that an initial **estimate** of the work provided by HRP Associates is approximately \$145,600. Tom Battles was clear to note that until a full assessment of the dam is complete, the actual cost will not be known. Early assessment indicates the need for an 18” butterfly valve, materials, labor, excavation, backfill, engineering and permitting. A suggestion was also for a hydraulic analysis during a rain event. Mark Possidento said that, depending on the work-progress at Cedar Lake, this project is on target for Fall 2020.

The Mayor reported that work has been completed on the bridge on College Place. He reported that this was handled by the Town as the bridge had become unsafe for heavy vehicles.

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Mark Possidento reported that the Town will work on updating the DEEP required emergency action plan and complete the DEEP required inspection of the dam. Tom Battles said the top of the dam needs to be clear to conduct an inspection. Rob Browne reported that the area is cleared every two weeks: mowing, weed whacking and brush removal per DEEP guidelines.

Lina Marunas, as a member of the Wolcott Conservation Land Trust, reported that the Land Trust has decided not to lower the lake this year due to the age of dam gate/valve and concern it can become stuck.

Tom Battles inquired about the accessibility of the dam and how easily equipment could access the dam for work. Rob Browne reported that the access is over private property and one owner has not been welcoming to HLIA passing through the property; and the other side is rocky and wooded. Tom Battles recommended having the dam evaluated by an expert to determine if the key mechanism is safe to operate in its current condition. Tom agreed to provide names of company to provide dam inspection. Mark Possidento said evaluation could take place if costs will not exceed the \$10,000 cap necessary for budget approval.

Bill Olmstead asked questions on the cost estimates and the work being planned. Tom Battles reiterated that the estimates provided were just that: “estimates” and it will take more evaluation to determine costs.

Rob Browne reported that the dam gate was last cleared by divers in 2009 by Water’s Edge (now out of business).

Mark Possidento asked if the Lake Association is dealing with contaminants and other programs to keep the water clean. President Mrazik indicated that all the information is on the HLIA website and the HLIA sends letters and reports individuals who have been violating the rules. Mark Possidento indicated that under MS-4 program (Municipal Stormwater) the town is getting stricter with this issue. There is a town ordinance for violators, a number to call for report and a mechanism to fine and imprison violators. The information will be on the Wolcott town website.

Mark Sussman asked about the sediment at the Birch/Lake street area. Lina Marunas reported that thirty-nine percent of the runoff enters the lake at this catch basin. As discussed, this catch basin was upgraded to prevent more sediment from passing into the lake, however, the area is very shallow and filled with sediment. The town has been treating the roads with magnesium chloride which is much less corrosive than what the state uses; and sand is not used (which used to run into the lake).

Kathy Mrazik asked how long it will take to repair the dam once the permits and funds are in place. Tom Battles said he estimates it will take a couple of weeks. The length of time will depend on the type of repairs that are needed.

The town will manage the project and get design and permits for the work. Once that is complete, the job will be put out to bid to select a firm to do the work.

Mayor Dunn reported that he has attended the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Council of Governments meetings to seek funding sources for this type of project.

President Kathy Mrazik thanked the guests for attending and advocating on behalf of Hitchcock Lake.

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V. Treasurers Report – Treasurer Dave Judd presented July & August 2019 report. He informed the Board that a payment of \$2,076.00 will be issued for liability insurance for WLCT. This is in agreement with the WCLT that HLIA pay 80% of the insurance.

### VI. CDC

- a. The August picnic at Grove Beach had attendance of approximately 20 people.
- b. Trivia night is scheduled for October 26<sup>th</sup> at East Street Eatery. Cost is \$20 per person. A motion was made by Kathy Mrazik and seconded by Cheryl Corey to spend up to \$100.00 on the Trivia Party if needed. Lina Marunas seconded the motion, motion passed.
- c. A holiday party will be held on December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Miceli's, 22 Maple Lane.

The Board voted by email to provide funds for the picnic at Grove Beach. A motion was made by Lina Marunas and seconded by Andy Giordino to affirm the action to spend no more than \$200.00 on food and supplies for the August picnic at Grove Beach. The motion passed. Note: \$87.76 was spent on the picnic.

### VII. Environmental & Safety

- a. An email was sent from the WCLT and the HLIA reminding residents of the laws surrounding life vests. This email was sent after a drowning tragedy at Woodtick Reservoir.
- b. As noted earlier in the meeting, there will not be a drawdown of the lake this fall.
- c. Solitude provided a weed treatment on August 8, 2019 and an inspection on September 11, 2019. There is no evidence of blue-green algae in the water. A full report is expected from Solitude.
- d. Kathy Mrazik and Lina Marunas attended the Connecticut Federation of Lakes Conference in September and will report at the next meeting. Kathy Mrazik made a motion to reimburse Lina Marunas \$20.00 for paying she and Kathy's attendance fee. Laurie Greco seconded, motion passed.

### VIII. Correspondence

- a) The extra dam key and a spray backpack are in the safe keeping of the President.
- b) Susan Chase sent an email regarding the blue-green algae. Kathy Mrazik reported that the water is tested weekly at Mattatuck Beach for E.coli bacteria, during the summer, by the Chesprocott Health District. They will provide additional testing for a fee. No action taken. The Board is satisfied with the weekly tests and the monthly testing provided by Solitude for cyanobacteria (blue-green algae). Susan Chase recommended the Solitude Reports be shared with the HLIA community as well as an explanation of blue-green algae.
- c) Wolcott Food Pantry informed HLIA of a fund-raising event on October 16, 2019. President Mrazik will attend at her own expense and invited others to join, all at their own expense. A collection of canned goods and toiletries will be taken at the Trivia and Holiday Parties.
- d) The Cheshire Fire Company had asked to use the lake for training exercises. HLIA agreed, pending proof of insurance and notice of scheduling. Residents to be notified before the training. President Mrazik has not heard back from the Cheshire Fire Company. Michael Ruotolo, a new HLIA member and fire fighter in Cheshire will follow-up with the department.

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**IX. Nominating Committee**

The committee will meet this month to prepare a slate for presentation at the October Meeting.

**X. New Business**

a) Mark Sussman asked if the HLIA is interested in working with a local university to offer the lake for a research project. The information provided could help the HLIA look at the long-term issues of lake health. The Board is in favor of Mark investigating such a relationship.

b) Maturing Certificate of Deposit - Motion was made by Cindy Cayer and seconded by Ed Sullivan that the Webster Bank CD, with an 8/20/2019 balance of \$75,779.75, be renewed for 6 months (182 days). The motion passed. This action had previously been taken by email.

c) The third dues/membership letter will be sent in the first week of October to approximately 88 households who have not paid dues for the 2019-2020 year. To date, 150 total households have paid dues (under 50%), 131 of those are lake front (56% of lake front). Sixty-eight have paid for boat stickers.

d) There is a partially submerged sailboat on the south lake. HLIA will send the property owner a letter requesting removal. The property is occupied by tenants. This boat could create a hazard.

c) A motion was made by Dave Judd and seconded by Judy Miceli to reimburse Lina Marunas \$31.73 for copies of lake documents for the permanent files as part of Board transition this year. The motion passed.

**XI. Announcements**

Bill Olmstead suggested the HLIA maintain control over the re-engineering of the dam. President Mrazik informed the group that the HLIA is working with the town and the project will be subject to grant funding and guidelines.

**XII. Adjournment**

Motion by Rob Browne and seconded by Cheryl Corey to adjourn. This motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Secretary Cindy Cayer. Posted to the website pending approval at the next regular meeting.