

MINUTES
JANUARY 13, 2010
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LAKE ONOTA PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED (LOPA)

The board of directors meeting began at 7:19pm. A quorum was not present therefore no official business was conducted. An abbreviated agenda was reviewed.

Directors Present: Bob Race, Dick Laureyns, Joe Cancilla, Tom Dailey, Bob Quattrochi, and Mark Selkowitz.

Bob Race welcomed our City Councilman for Ward 7 Joe Nichols to the meeting. Joe commented that he was interested in lake issues, and willing to help anyway that he could.

Bob distributed Gail Light's Treasurers report and briefly commented on the \$4,163 deficit for the 2009 fiscal year. Bob stated that the largest expense was for water sample testing from the lake monitoring program. Bob said later this year LOPA Directors would determine the cost effectiveness of this program and whether to continue the program at the same frequency for 2010 and beyond.

Old Business and Committee Reports.

Water Quality and Weed Control:

Bob Race distributed copies of the 2009 LOPA Annual Report on water quality and commented that all of the issues that he normally discusses are adequately covered in the report. Anyone wishing to receive a copy of the report should contact Dick Laureyns at his web address kingboat@aol.com and he will mail them the package.

Lake recreation and Water Safety:

Bob Race expressed concerns about the fishermen driving on the lake. Jim McGrath commented that the ice was thick enough to support vehicles on the main body, although, some open water flows exist near the north end. Jim said that most fishermen were experienced enough to be safe but agreed that an article in the paper would be worthwhile. The main area of concern is around the old road bed and north of the Controy pavilion. Dick Laureyns commented that there is more inconsistency in ice thickness during a year in which there is a deep drawdown, and this is one of those years.

On another issue, Jim McGrath reported that he would like to replace the buoys around the lake with a standard model. Jim said that he would work with Jack O'Brien and would make a proposal on the acquisition and installation of the buoys at the April meeting.

Citizen Education and Public Relations:

Bob Race expressed a special thanks to Lew Cuyler for his efforts in writing and composing the Lake Onota Guardian publication. Bob highlighted how well the zebra mussel issue was documented. Bob said that extra copies have been made available at city hall and at the library.

Fish and Wildlife:

Tom Dailey reported that the ice fishing season began when the ice was just over three inches thick. Tom said that the fishing is very good this year, and that he has already documented a 22 pound 11 ounce northern pike that was over 40 inches long. Several large salmon were also documented. Tom said that some of the fishermen had expressed dissatisfaction with the deep drawdown, and that he encouraged them to join LOPA and make their voices heard. Tom also commented on the ice driving and the uncertainty of the ice thickness. He said that Onota Boat Livery doesn't recommend the use of vehicles on the lake.

Jim McGrath commented that a permit was being sought for an ice race from the Parks Commission. The event, if approved, would take place later in February with safety and environmental concerns receiving top priority.

Burbank Park Master Plan:

Jim McGrath commented that there was nothing to report on the progress of the master plan. Jim did report that he had contacted the Conservation Commission to determine the feasibility of leveling the rock piles along the old road bed north of the Controy Pavilion and hoped to complete the work this winter.

Camp Stevenson/Witawentin Property Update:

Dick Laureyans outlined previously described plans for five residential plots north of the camp. These would have shoreline frontage and access from Churchill St. He said that the effort was progressing slowly, and wasn't sure of the status of the pending sale.

Tributary Monitoring:

Jerry Krupka reported that the 2009 results were contained in LOPA's Annual Report.

Bob Race commented that LOPA now has 12 years of history in its database. He said that the quality of the lake remains good, and there have been no negative trends. With this in mind, the frequency of the tributary monitoring program will also be assessed before the start of the 2010 season.

City Response to our Zebra Mussel Recommendations and Zebra Mussel Task Team:

Jim McGrath reported that he was assigned to a state zebra mussel task team. This team is charged with the development of a policy for control of the zebra mussel issue. Jim said that the team is diverse and comprised of many individuals state wide. Some of the individuals include; the Under Secretary of Environmental Affairs, Ann Carol of the Lakes and Ponds program, Lee Hauge and Jack Hickey of LAPA, Dennis Regan of the Housatonic Valley Association, an environmental police officer, and himself representing the City of Pittsfield. The group is focused on a common approach to zebra mussel prevention and will include strategies for outreach education, ramp monitoring, a washing protocol, the self certification form and process and fishing tournament permitting requirements.

Jim submitted LOPA's recommendations and a copy of the Lake Onota Guardian that clearly outlines our concerns on page 4. Jim said that the city is standing behind the recommendations. He cautioned that with no allocation of state funds, the proposal will not resolve the boat washing stations or other expense items for this year.

A lively discussion about the lack of enforcement powers granted to volunteers and their inability to control access to the lake was determined to be limited by existing state laws. Jim reported that Natural Resource Committee's 'Downing' bill which established rules and enforcement fines is in limbo. He referred to a DCR bill that also didn't pass. Jim said that when a copy of the task team's recommended proposals are released, that LOPA and Berkshire Regional Planning should collaborate and respond with their concerns and comments.

S.319 Grant Update:

Jim McGrath reported that Maxymillian Construction has begun working on the dam to add a new two foot diameter pipe to double the outflow capability to better manage the water level. This project is expected to be completed by the spring raising of the lake.

LOPA Website Update:

Jerry Krupka reported that some final fine points need completion. Bob Race directed Jerry to work with Melissa Provencher of BRPC to set up a completion meeting. Bob Race asked everyone to visit the website at www.onotalake.com. Anyone wishing to comment can direct them to info@onotalake.com. Currently responses are sent to Jim McGrath then forwarded to LOPA's webmaster Jerry Krupka. Bob requested that the final changes include sending the responses directly to Jerry.

Volunteers Needed and Volunteer Hours reporting:

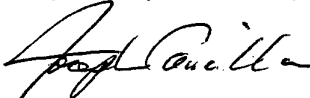
Bob Race emphasized the need for more volunteers for the 2010 programs. Anyone interested should contact him. Bob also restated the need to report all volunteer hours. These volunteer hours result in an equivalent dollar match in the S.319 Grant monies. Bob thanked those who are sending him the information and said that the time reporting is improving.

Membership:

Mark Selkowitz reported that he and Jeff Rose will be meeting in late January to develop a proposal to present at LOPA's April session. A lively discussion followed, which highlighted a strategy to approach all lake front owners that are non-members. Mark agreed to include the idea in their proposal.

The meeting ended at 8:36pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joseph Cancilla

Recording Secretary

NEXT MEETING:

The next open meeting of LOPA's Board of Directors is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28th 2010 at 7:15pm in room 203 at City Hall. These meetings are open to all LOPA members and to the public. All are welcome. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending.