

MINUTES
April 28, 2011
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LAKE ONOTA PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED (LOPA)

The Board of Directors meeting was officially called to order at 7:16pm.

Directors Present: Bob Race, Gail Light, Dorothy Mara, Joe Cancilla, Marshall Raser, Walt Pickwell, Mark Selkowitz, Lew Cuyler and Bob Quattrochi.

Also present: Jim McGrath, Pittsfield's Park, Open Space and Natural Resource Program Manager.

Voted: The Minutes of the January 13, 2011 Board of Directors' meeting were unanimously approved.

Gail Light distributed the Treasurer's Report for the period ending April 27, 2011. Gail reported that LOPA had a Net Income of \$2,065, mainly due to the increased Membership, and that the Balance of Accounts is \$43,628. Gail also noted that the CD is again due to be rolled over.

Voted: The Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

Voted: A motion to allow Gail to rollover the LOPA CD at her discretion for the best term and rate was unanimously approved. (See CD Rollover)

Old Business And Committee Reports.

Water Quality and Weed Control:

Bob Race reported that 10 years of LOPA'S water quality data was sent to Ken Wagner. He will be recommending which tests at a minimum, are necessary to ensure the stability of the water quality, while providing an early warning to possible changing conditions. The goal of this exercise is to minimize LOPA'S annual water testing budget. Bob will meet with Ken on May 24th and will report on the findings at our next meeting.

Bob noted that with Dick Laureyns departure, LOPA has a need for someone to coordinate the annual macrophyte study and also the water chestnut removal around Dan Casey causeway. Anyone interested should contact Bob directly.

Bob commented that an RFP had gone out for this year's weed control application. A survey of the lake for milfoil will be conducted in late May and based upon that information, a spot treatment plan will be finalized. Also, based on the available budget, there may be additional treatments for European Naiad and curly pond weed, particularly in heavily infected areas.

Lake Recreation and Water Safety:

Bob reported that due to personal obligations, Jack O'Brien has asked to be relieved of his duties. Bob has enlisted Tom Dailey as a volunteer to be responsible for warning buoy emplacement and removal this year. Tom and Jim McGrath will meet to determine if the city should buy new buoys this year, and which design should be purchased. The issue of placement of additional buoys will also be discussed. Bob is looking for a long term replacement for Jack to manage the lake's Recreation and Safety issues.

Anyone interested should contact Bob.

Citizen Education and Public Relations:

Lew Cuyler reported that this year will provide a number of opportunities for LOPA to develop ideas which can help it protect Onota Lake. Lew pointed to the upcoming mayoral elections where he can interview candidates, determine their commitment to Pittsfield's recreational venues, and perhaps add more clarity to the efforts to develop a vision statement for the lake and park. Lew described a meeting with the mayor last fall, where he and Jim McGrath were asked to develop a vision statement. Lew expressed the Mayor's concerns of budget constraints and the perception that there is no public consensus on the use and purpose of Burbank Park. Lew also cautioned LOPA that its vision should be viewed as more inclusive to avoid any notion of homeowners influence on the use of the lake.

Over the winter months, Lew developed a first working draft which he and Jim McGrath have been reviewing. Lew is confident that when all the components of a Burbank Park and Onota Lake Vision Statement are complete, it can be used as the basis for additional brochures and public relation articles.

Fish and Wildlife:

Bob Race reported for Tom Dailey, who was unable to attend this meeting, that this last ice fishing season was hampered by the heavy snow, and as a result, there was less fishing and fewer record size catches recorded. Bob thanked Gail Light for her editorial in the Eagle about the remains of the ice house left on the lake at the end of the season. The house was removed but the 8'x12' base ultimately washed up on the shore of the south west end of the lake. A home owner was forced to dispose of the remains. Jim McGrath said that he would research responsibilities for structures left on the lake under environmental law enforcement.

Burbank Park Master Planning:

Jim McGrath discussed Master Plan Development as being either an expensive, consultant lead and lengthy process or an abbreviated exercise with the development of a vision statement. Jim outlined his strategy to be open and transparent, to develop input gathering techniques such as surveying park users, vacationers, and second home owners, to present the results for public comment, and present the finished vision statement to the Parks Commission. Jim described this abbreviated plan as having bullet point structure to include topics as: Park Access, Safety and Security, Maintenance, Capital Expenditure Requirements, and Environmental Concerns. Jim and Lew will refine Lew's first draft and with oversight from Dianna Ruffer, will begin to shape the vision statement as the beginning of Jim's strategy. A June 15th meeting is scheduled with the Mayor to review the initial draft and next steps. The ultimate goal is a vision statement where all constituents can be on board. Bob Race volunteered LOPA's Board of Directors to review and comment as the vision statement develops

S.319 Grant Update (Burbank Park Shoreline):

Jim McGrath reported that with the early rise in the lake level, the Burbank Park shoreline stabilization had to be postponed till the fall of 2011 and the next drawdown. Jim said that the extension for the project was approved and included both permitting and grant funding. The contract has been awarded to Sumco Eco of Salem Massachusetts, whose specialty is bank stabilization. Bob Race suggested that he and Jim look for additional funding to complete the original scope of the project which was cut back due to cost overruns at the dam site.

Canada Geese Update:

Jim McGrath reported that as in prior years, the city will continue goose harassment at the park with the boarder collie program as provided by the Chatham NY company, Wild Goose Chase. Jim commented that his efforts to enlist the federal fish and wildlife specialists had failed. Jim was hoping that they could bring a more aggressive program to displacing the goose population than the harassment techniques that we use today. Several attending LOPA members suggested that a more proactive approach be pursued by LOPA. Bob Race commented that Ron Smith was researching what can be done to encourage hunters to take geese during the special hunting season for non migratory geese. Proposals will be presented to the LOPA Board before any action is taken. Jim McGrath agreed to look at the possibility of a couple of "DO NOT FEED WILDLIFE" signs at Burbank Park.

LOPA Website Update:

Jerry Krupka agreed to work with Jim McGrath on the e-mail broadcast process to reduce its cost. Also Jerry agreed to improve the response process for any questions sent to the website, such that appropriate answers are provided in a timely fashion. Several suggestions were offered to improve the usability and desirability of the website including use of "Hot Topics" to quickly link to important issues such as zebra mussels. Bob thanked Jerry and Jim for their efforts.

Membership:

Mark Selkowitz reviewed the results of this year's membership drive with the solicitation of out of town home owners and boat owners that rented slips at Onota Boat Livery. Although exact numbers were not available, it was estimated that more than 30 new members were added.

A number of new ideas were discussed for this year, which included:

- Reissue the membership drive letter to those who did not respond, and include LOPA's new brochure,
- Improve LOPA's Onotalake.com website for ease of use in becoming a member,
- Solicit potential members at the boat ramp using the volunteer monitors,
- Install a dispenser for LOPA brochures at the boat ramp near the self certification forms,
- Solicit members of BRASS (Berkshire Rowing and Sculling Society),
- Install a dispenser at the park entrance for park and bicycle path users,
- Display LOPA brochures at local water sport shops such as the Arcadia, and
- Solicit Williams Collage Crew Team to become an institutional member.

Mark Selkowitz, Bob Race and Jim McGrath agreed to coordinate and implement these ideas.

Visioning Committee:

Bob Race reported that he received almost no response to his visioning letter in the last issue of the Onota Lake Guardian. Bob had hoped for a confirmation of LOPA's existing mission, some suggestions for change, or volunteers to help review our current direction. Bob requested that any member with thoughts and ideas on the subject, contact him via phone, e-mail or in person, and the feedback would be much appreciated.

New Business.

CD Rollover:

Gail Light reported that the current CD was due by the 15th of May, and that current rates and terms were unchanged, and still low. A motion to allow Gail to Rollover the CD at her discretion for the best rate and term combination was unanimously approved.

2011 Zebra Mussel Ramp Monitor Plan:

Jim McGrath reported that this year's ramp monitor program would be administered by him and funded by the City of Pittsfield and the state DCR. Last year the state DCR supplied two people. This year they agreed to fund the city \$12,000 in place of the personnel. In the new program, the city will control the message, hire and train personnel, control data collection and schedule the work hours. The schedule covers 7 days each week from 6am to 6pm beginning Memorial Day through Labor Day and for some time beyond that. Personnel selections should be completed by mid-May. Jim has asked for volunteers to supplement the paid staff for pre-Memorial Day and post-Labor Day periods and also for cases of sickness or emergency leave situations. Volunteer training is scheduled for May 14th at 10am at the boat ramp. Anyone interested should contact Jim at City Hall.

600 Churchill Street:

Bob Race introduced Jeff Lynch, a member of Gladys Allen Brigham Community Center's Board of Directors. Jeff presented an update to GABCC's efforts to sell a portion of its property at the Stevenson and Witawentin camp site. Jeff emphasized GABCC's desire to keep the development to a minimal impact on the existing environment. Jeff described the agreement with DABCO LLC, operated by Don Bernard, to purchase 33 acres of land between Parker Brook and Camp Winadu. The parcel will be developed into five separate single family residential houses. Each lot will extend from the lake frontage to Churchill St. and be accessed via a common driveway. Plans for the development can be reviewed at the Community Development office in City Hall. The rights for sewage connection have been negotiated with the Blythewood Association. Jeff stated that GABCC intends to continue operations of their existing camps, and is selling the property only to support and strengthen its East St. programs. Jeff suggested that anyone with questions could contact him through Kelly at the Brigham Center. Bob thanked him for the update.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe Cancilla
Recording Secretary

NEXT MEETING.

The next open meeting of LOPA's Board of Directors will be our summer meeting Thursday, JULY 28th 2011 at 6:30pm at the Controy Pavilion on Onota Lake. Refreshments will be available at the conclusion of the formal meeting. All members and guests are encouraged to attend. Please mark your calendars.