

Lake Ripley Management District
Meeting Minutes
June 17, 2006

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

The Lake Ripley Management District (LRMD) Board met at the Oakland Town Hall at N4450 CTH A in Cambridge on June 17, 2006. Chairman Molinaro called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Derek Hoffman, Mike Burow, Dennis McCarthy, Mike Sabella, John Molinaro, Gene Kapsner and Jane Jacobsen-Brown. Also in attendance were Paul Dearlove (LRMD Project Manager), Cambridge Cable TV 12, and 27 members of the public.

II. Speaker: Mary Knipper, Economics of Lake Restoration

Molinaro introduced Mary Knipper, President of the Delavan Lake Improvement Association and the Walworth County Lakes Association. Knipper spoke about the lessons that were learned from a Delavan Lake economic-impact study and a \$7.1 million lake-rehabilitation effort. She highlighted how improved lake conditions positively affected the community, namely through enhanced property values and economic activity both on and off the lake. The study showed that these economic impacts more than compensated for the cost of the rehabilitation. She said the opposite occurs when lakes are allowed to degrade, thus stressing the importance of investing in an aggressive and sustained lake-management program. Knipper said that while the rehabilitation project was initially a great success, too little was done to maintain these improvements in the years that followed. She noted that lake quality is once again on the decline, threatening the local tax base and economic vitality of the entire region.

III. Open Public Discussion on Strategic Planning Initiative

Molinaro provided a brief historical overview of the grants and activities associated with the Lake Ripley Priority Lake Project. Since its beginning, he said the LRMD has made a systematic attempt to address Lake Ripley's unique set of problems and challenges. He said the question now is whether we are willing to pay the price now that the DNR is no longer footing much of the bill. Next, Molinaro briefly reviewed the LRMD's statutory taxing authority, past mill rates, prior grant awards and existing cash-flow situation. This was followed by brief descriptions of the different lake-management programs that are currently being conducted. He said the Board was now looking for public feedback regarding future management needs and budget priorities.

Considerable public discussion ensued. Questions and subsequent discussion centered on weed harvesting, factors affecting changes in water quality, motor boating impacts, the recent fishkill, and other issues pertaining to the lake and its management. Responding to a question about grants, Molinaro pointed out that the Priority Lake Project grant has helped pay for a full-time project manager, the LRMD office, quarterly newsletters, and many of the LRMD's most successful lake-protection projects. He commended Dearlove and previous project managers for their expertise, grant-writing skills and project-management contributions over the years. He also questioned how such progress could continue in the absence of a full-time, qualified employee. An audience member asked if raising taxes was being proposed as part of the solution. Molinaro responded in the affirmative, but was not able to offer any specific numbers prior to budget preparations. He hoped it would not have to exceed 0.5 mills (\$50 for every \$100,000 in assessed valuation), which the LRMD has never had to exceed. He then provided an overview of the budget preparation and approval process. Public attendees were emphatic that the Board should take whatever action was necessary to ensure that current efforts continue after the grant ends.

IV. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Board reviewed the minutes of the 5/20/06 meeting and had no additions or corrections. *Sabella moved to approve the minutes as written. Motion was seconded by McCarthy with no subsequent discussion. Motion carried 7-0.*

V. Treasurer's Report

Sabella presented his treasurer's report for the one-month period ending May 31, 2006, for the LRMD and Lake Ripley Priority Lake Project (LRPLP).

LRMD: Total receipts for the period consisted of \$35.50 in interest income. Total disbursements of \$430.57 were mostly related to conference expenses, and were detailed on an attached transaction listing. As of May 31st, there were cash balances of \$64,841.59 in checking and \$95,000.00 in investments. Sabella noted that about \$85,000 in the investment account were restricted as capital reserve and land acquisition funds. He also reported that a bank certificate of deposit was due to mature on June 19th with \$2,066 in interest, and that the money will be reinvested.

LRPLP: Total receipts for the period consisted of \$15.41 in interest income. Total disbursements of \$14,116.95 consisted mostly of landowner cost-sharing expenses, as well as staff wages and office expenses. Individual disbursements were detailed on an attached transaction listing. As of May 31st, there were cash balances of \$200.00 in petty cash, \$25,142.58 in general checking, and \$17,606.37 in the Nonpoint Source (cost-sharing) account.

Hoffman moved to accept the treasurer's report. Motion was seconded by Burow with no subsequent discussion. Motion carried 7-0.

VI. Project Manager's Report

Dearlove presented the project manager's report, reviewing his activities since the last meeting. A copy of the report is provided below.

Cost-Share Projects

- The Baker shoreline restoration (soil wraps/buffer plantings/treefall) was completed.
- Phase II of the Ehrenberg shoreline restoration (buffer plantings) was completed.
- Phase II of the Lorden shoreline restoration (buffer plantings) was completed.
- Phase II of the Anderson shoreline restoration (buffer plantings) was completed.
- Phase II of the Gaulke/Reay shoreline restoration (buffer plantings) is now underway.
- Preparations continue for the Barbeau and Golf Side Association shoreline projects.

Lake District Preserve Observation Deck

- Two contractor bids were obtained in accordance with construction specifications prepared by Kapsner.
- A building permit was filed with the Jefferson County Zoning & Planning Department.
- Information on potential cost-share grants was obtained.

Aquatic Plant Survey & Weed Harvesting

- An aquatic plant inventory was conducted in cooperation with the DNR. Results should be available later this summer.
- Ted Teske has confirmed his availability to run the harvester again this summer. He is currently recovering from a shoulder injury and may need some assistance. Tim Lorden will not be returning due to a work conflict.
- Plans are being made to move the equipment back to the lake before the end of the month. Milfoil growth does not currently appear to be at a height and density to warrant immediate cutting.

Outreach

- The "Clean Boats, Clean Waters" workshop was conducted on May 13th in Lake Mills. Twenty-one participants were trained on how to inspect watercraft for zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species.
- Two articles were published in the Cambridge News. One addressed the recent fishkill while the other invited the public to participate in our strategic planning initiative.
- A literature review was prepared on how lake quality affects regional property values.
- Work has started on the next Ripples newsletter. The newsletter will be disseminated in July, and will contain the proposed budget and Annual Meeting agenda.
- Plans are underway to compile an e-mail contact list for LRMD residents. It is intended to serve as a quick and inexpensive means of distributing electronic newsletters, press releases, and other announcements.
- Plans are underway to host educational tours of Lake Ripley and the Lake District Preserve. The tours may be videotaped and aired on Cambridge Cable TV 12.

Other Announcements

- 200' slow-no-wake reference buoys (5) were installed around the lake. The Town Police hired a new lake patrol officer who started a couple weeks ago.
- The Jefferson County LWCC recently voted to pursue a ban on the sale and use of phosphorus lawn fertilizers.

McCarthy was asked to report on his water quality and zebra mussel monitoring. McCarthy compared last year's exceptional Secchi depth and phosphorus readings with the poor conditions he was observing so far this year. Weather-pattern variability and associated runoff volumes were discussed as possible culprits. He indicated that June samples were just sent to the lab for water chemistry analysis. As for zebra mussels, he noted that a trap on his pier had not produced any mussels, and that two additional traps will soon be redeployed. McCarthy indicated that DNR officials were coming out later in the week to conduct more intensive sampling.

Jacobsen-Brown was then asked if she wanted to provide a Lake Watch update. Jacobsen-Brown said she was concerned about the lack of any police presence over the busy Memorial Day weekend. She said she personally observed a number of no-wake violations. She indicated that her willingness to continue with the program depended on the level of cooperation from the Town Police. In particular, she wanted to see more follow-up from the police when violations are well documented. Molinaro asked Dearlove to meet with Bruce Gondert to see if a form letter could be sent to suspected violators.

VII. Old Business

A. Contractor Bids for Observation Deck at Lake District Preserve

Bids to build a 100-sq. ft. deck with side railings and an attached bench were received from Jared Hoffmann (\$1,750.00) and Matt Dolan (\$2,499.74). Copies of the bids, rough sketches, and Kapsner's construction specifications were reviewed. Dearlove informed the Board that cost-share grants could be pursued to help defray some of the costs. There was general agreement from the Board that the size of the project did not warrant the time and expense to pursue cost sharing. As an alternative, Sabella offered that business sponsorships could be solicited. He also favored going with the lower of the two bids. He added that the project should be inspected at completion to verify that all specifications are met.

Hoffman moved to approve the bid for \$1,750.00 (and not to exceed \$2,000) submitted by Jared Hoffmann of Capstone Building & Construction, LLC. Jacobsen-Brown seconded with no subsequent discussion. Motion carried 7-0.

B. DNR Permit Status for Inlet Dredging

Molinaro noted that Mike Halsted at DNR confirmed that turbidity screens would be used to keep suspended particulates out of the lake. These and other planned containment measures were intended to prevent impacts to the lake and neighboring shorelines. As to the question of whether dredging would benefit the lake, he paraphrased an e-mail response from Halsted. The e-mail stated that any permit approval was based solely on a determination that the proposed project will not have significant negative impacts to the environment. The e-mail also stated that there was no reason or aspect that would encourage DNR to lead or pay for the dredging. Molinaro said he had been informed that dredging operations carry many risks, and that the riparian owner's right to reasonably access the water must be considered along with greater public-interest rights. Kent Brown asked what kind of precedent this type of dredging project would set. Molinaro said it was important for people to understand that this is not a LRMD project, and that any requests are handled by the DNR on a case-by-case basis through its permitting process.

Molinaro noted that DNR was requiring the landowners to provide us with a copy of the permit application before any approval was granted. He then reviewed some of the details of the project that were known to him. Kapsner questioned why a holding pond was not going to be dredged within the channel, hypothesizing that it might keep sediment out of the lake. Dearlove offered to pose that question to DNR and report back.

C. Carp Control

Molinaro announced that dozens of spawning carp were recently taken from the outlet of Lake Ripley by spear fishers. He said the incident has led to renewed speculation about whether a carp barrier or other control method was needed. Dearlove then summarized his recent conversation with Don Bush, DNR Fisheries Manager. It was reported that carp numbers in the lake are remaining stable, and that there was little evidence of mass migrations occurring from Koshkonong Creek. Bush had advised against the idea of installing a permanent carp barrier. These devices were considered largely ineffective during high water, and demanded constant monitoring and maintenance attention due to their ability to trap debris. He had indicated that a permit could be obtained for a temporary barrier, but did not feel it should be one of the LRMD's priorities.

There was then considerable discussion regarding the feasibility of hosting a "carp-a-thon" next year, and how to dispose of the dead fish. McCarthy agreed to check with a local rendering plant. Molinaro said he would call the City of Jefferson, and asked Dearlove to contact Onyx (waste hauler).

VIII. New Business

There was no New Business.

IX. Correspondence

- An e-mail dated June 13, 2006, was received from Rachel Veltman with an attached amendment to the Kaashagen restoration plan. Dearlove explained that the amendment incorporated several changes that the LRMD and DNR had previously requested. These included a re-defined scope of work and strengthened oversight responsibilities. Jacobsen-Brown inquired about the fine. Dearlove responded that the DNR was going to require forfeiture in the ballpark of \$2,000.

X. Adjournment

*Kapsner moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 a.m. Motion was seconded by Sabella without further discussion.
Motion carried 7-0. Next meeting: July 15, 2006*

Respectfully Submitted,

Derek Hoffman, Secretary

Date

Recorder: PDD