

**Lake Ripley Management District
Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2003**

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Lake Ripley Management District (LRMD) was called to order by Chairman Molinaro at 9:00 a.m. Secretary Hoffman took roll call. Board members present were Pam Rogers, Derek Hoffman, Dennis McCarthy, Mike Sabella and John Molinaro. Joanne Knilans and Paul Jorstad were absent. Others present included Paul Dearlove (Priority Lake Project Manager), Gary Zibell (Cambridge Cable TV 12), and Roger Rude.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

III. Minutes of Last Meeting

The board reviewed the minutes of the last meeting and had no additions or corrections. Rogers moved to accept the minutes as written. Sabella seconded. Motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Sabella reviewed the financial statements for both the LRMD and Lake Ripley Priority Lake Project (LRPLP) accounts for the one-month period ending May 31, 2003. Highlights are provided below.

LRMD: Receipts for the period were \$387.04, consisting of \$62.04 in interest income, \$275.00 in litter cleanup donations, and \$50.00 in trapping revenues. Disbursements for the period were \$501.91, consisting mainly of Earth Day t-shirts and truck maintenance costs. There was an \$88,138.36 checking account balance as of May 31, 2003.

LRPLP: Receipts for the period were \$9.71, consisting entirely of interest income. Disbursements for the period were \$2,936.16, consisting mainly of payroll, rent and other office expenses. As of May 31, 2003, there were \$200.00 in petty cash, \$1,431.96 in general checking, and \$19,767.47 in the NPS account.

Other items reported included a \$10,000.00 transfer from the LRMD to the LRPLP account on 6/15/03 to cover operating expenses until the state grant arrives. This transfer brought the total balance due from the LRPLP account to \$45,347.00. Sabella noted that our \$46,350.00 grant was promised by early next week, at which time monies could be returned to the LRMD.

Hoffman moved to approve the treasurer's report. McCarthy seconded. Motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

Molinaro noted that work would soon begin in preparing a budget for 2004. He pointed out that the state legislature was talking about capping property taxes, which could affect the District's ability to adjust its mil rate should that become necessary. It was not clear when such a decision by the legislature would be forthcoming, and how exactly it might influence the District's budgeting process for next year. Sabella surmised that any cap would be set at a percentage of assessed valuation, meaning additional tax revenues may still be available if the assessed valuation of the District was to increase. In any case, he felt that a tax cap could penalize fiscally responsible units of government that historically maintained low mil rates. He suggested building up capital reserves in the event that future tax caps are imposed, especially since the annual Priority Lake Project grant was set to end in 2006.

V. Lake Manager's Report

Paul Dearlove presented the Lake Manager's Report, detailing activities of the Priority Lake Project since the last meeting. Highlights from the report are presented below.

- Completed shoreline restoration project for Glendale Homeowner's Association.
- Prepared to move weed-harvesting equipment back to the lake on 6/25 for summer operations. Serviced Dodge pickup, dump truck, weed harvester and shore conveyor.
- Supervised installation of 140-ft. gravel path and 122-ft. boardwalk at Lake District Preserve.
- Continued negotiation of Majestic Pines deed restrictions with Town Board and developer.
- Wrote next edition of Ripples to be distributed in early July. (As a result of the state budget crisis, the UW-Extension may no longer be able to format and print our newsletters free of charge.)

- Assisted Oakland Town Police with buoy installation.
- Continued collecting data for recreational carrying capacity analysis. A survey of moored boats, piers, etc. on Ripley will be performed on 6/24.
- Lake/watershed tour for Oakland Town Board set for 7/29 at 6:30 p.m.
- Paul Garrison, DNR research scientist, will speak about fishery habitat at our 7/19 LRMD meeting.
- All ditch-repair work will be completed at the Long Sod Farms by 8/1.
- A video record of the Lake Ripley shoreline will be taped on 7/15.
- Joanne Knilans and the Lake Watch Crew have started patrolling the lake. Additional T-shirts and hats have been ordered for the volunteers, and new signs were made for the boats.
- Derek Hoffman has started taking water quality measurements as our new DNR Self-Help volunteer.

VI. Old Business

A. Recreational Carrying Capacity Study

Molinaro reviewed the status of the District's recreational carrying capacity analysis. He said a few dedicated volunteers were assisting with the data-collection effort this summer, and that a lot of boat census information has already been gathered. He was especially grateful for the help received so far from Kent and Jane Brown. Molinaro said he plans to take Dearlove and Gerry Kokkenen, our GIS intern, out on his boat next week to conduct a survey of moored watercraft, piers, rafts and boat lifts. The public landing is also being closely monitored to estimate the number of watercraft launched from that location. Rogers asked about the proportion of jet skis versus other types of watercraft observed. Molinaro said he has personally seen very few jet skis operating on the lake so far, but explained that those types of numbers will be available later this summer when all the data are collected and analyzed.

B. Status of Deed Restrictions for Majestic Pines

Molinaro informed that board that he and Dearlove attended the Oakland Town Board meeting last week for the Majestic Pines discussion. Prior to the meeting, Majestic Pines had submitted another revised plat designating the island as a private park. Along with the new plat, the developer was requesting permission to build a picnic shelter on the island, and wanted to cut down some of the existing vegetation for a view corridor. A case was made at the meeting that removing vegetation for a view corridor and then erecting a picnic shelter within that same corridor seemed contradictory. It was also questioned how a picnic shelter could be built when the Town had already designated the island as an "unbuildable" outlot. After some discussion, the Town Board voted against the picnic shelter proposal. At the District's urging, the Board also requested language in the deed restrictions governing the disturbance of native aquatic plants, shrubs and groundcover in the wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas. Molinaro indicated that a final plat would most likely be brought before the Town Board at its next meeting for final approval.

C. Jefferson County Lakes Enhancement Committee

Two public listening sessions were recently hosted by the Jefferson County Lakes Enhancement Committee. The purpose of the hearings was to present a series of recommendations advanced by the Committee, and to solicit input from the public. Molinaro said a lot of positive and constructive feedback was received. He explained that the Committee plans to incorporate these comments into its final position papers before they are presented to the Jefferson County Land & Water Conservation Committee for further consideration. McCarthy complimented Molinaro and the other Committee members for all their hard work. He said it was obvious from the presentations at the public listening sessions that a lot of time and thought had been invested in the effort.

D. Lake District Preserve Trail Improvements

Molinaro announced that a new gravel path and elevated boardwalk were installed at the Lake District Preserve. The trail improvements link up to the existing path system, and are located on the far west side of the property near the preserve entrance. The new trail loop bisects a shallow-water marsh, and will allow the public to safely enjoy the more aquatic elements of the preserve without disturbing fragile plant communities. Dearlove thanked Hoffman and Molinaro for their assistance in coordinating the installation. He also thanked the Oakland Conservation Club for the use of their facilities during the construction process, and Land Resource Company for their handiwork and for donating a portion of the cost.

E. Annual Meeting

Molinaro reviewed the noticing requirements for the Annual Meeting. Sabella commented that hundreds of dollars are spent each year to notice all our public meetings in the newspaper. For the Annual Meeting, he explained we were required to either circulate notices in the local newspaper, or send a special mailer directly to each District property owner. He asked if putting a notice in our newsletter would be adequate to satisfy this requirement. Dearlove responded that, in his opinion, it was worth the added expense to publish a notice in the newspaper since it is read by so many people. He

also felt a lot of people would not expect to find an official meeting notice contained within a newsletter. Molinaro added that it has always been the District's policy to error on the safe side when following noticing requirements.

VII. New Business

A. Lake/Watershed Tour for Oakland Town Board

Letters were sent to the Oakland Town Board members inviting them on a tour of Lake Ripley and its watershed. A formal invitation was also extended at the last Town Board meeting. At the Town's request, the tour was scheduled for Tuesday, July 29th. It will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Lake District Preserve, and will include a pontoon boat ride around the lake. Molinaro explained that the intent of the tour is strictly for educational purposes, and is meant to better familiarize the Town Board with Lake Ripley's various management challenges. He also indicated that the tour would be properly noticed according to open meetings law.

B. Weed-Harvesting Staff Wages

Dearlove requested that the Board approve any adjustments to the wage rate prior to the start of weed-harvesting operations. He said Madison and most other lake groups in the area offer \$8.00/hr. to start, and up to a maximum of \$11.00/hr. for experienced staff. He explained that we currently offer new employees \$10.00/hr, and that our experienced operators are currently making \$12.50/hour. The Board had previously determined that those wage rates were necessary for us to retain qualified staff from year to year. Dearlove felt that although our current rates appeared to be relatively competitive and generous, the Board needed to decide if and when raises were appropriate. After some discussion, it was decided that a riding scale would be developed for returning employees that would currently cap off at \$12.50/hr.

In other New Business, Molinaro suggested that the District acquire an electronic rangefinder. Molinaro explained that a rangefinder would be a very useful tool for measuring and checking buoy distances. He said it would also be helpful in estimating distances on project sites where extremely wet conditions prevent other methods from being used, such as at the preserve. It was estimated that a basic unit could be purchased in time for the lake tour for about \$250.00. Sabella suggested possibly sharing the rangefinder with the Oakland Town Police to better facilitate their enforcement efforts out on the lake.

Sabella also reminded the Board that the Audit Committee needs to convene sometime in July. In the past, this committee has included two Board members and one citizen from the District. Sabella said he would make himself available when the audit committee meets to answer any questions. Rogers indicated that she served on the committee last year and would be willing to serve again. Molinaro agreed to try and find others who might be interested in serving on the committee.

McCarthy asked if a summer litter cleanup was still in the works. He felt we could get more volunteers to participate over the summer since more people would be around to help. Dearlove explained he had originally hoped to organize another cleanup in July, but that other higher-priority projects are currently occupying all his time. He agreed to try to get a smaller-scale cleanup organized before the end of August if time permits.

VIII. Correspondence

The following correspondence was received since the last meeting:

- Letter dated 5/17 from Derek Hoffman indicating his intention to run for re-election for another term on the board.
- Letter dated 5/20 to Oakland Conservation Club thanking them for the use of their facilities during the construction of our trail improvements at the preserve.
- Correspondence from Elm Terrace Association property owners and DNR pertaining to a pier dispute. An on-site meeting was subsequently organized by DNR staff in an attempt to resolve the dispute.
- Correspondence exchanged between LRMD, Town of Oakland and developer's agents concerning the negotiation of environmental deed restrictions for the Majestic Pines Subdivision.
- E-mail dated 6/7 from Jim Jesse complaining about a potential navigational hazard caused by submerged pipes in the southwest corner of East Bay next to shore. The complaint was forwarded to the Oakland Town Police and DNR conservation warden.
- Letter dated 6/11 to Jack Spack responding to a dispute between lakefront neighbors in regards to a cottonwood tree.

Sabella also commented on one of Dearlove's phone logs concerning an illegal boat ramp on the north side of the lake. He felt the DNR should make the owner remove the ramp rather than simply issue a citation and an after-the-fact permit. He suggested that allowing the ramp to remain in place would set a bad precedent. Molinaro provided some background information on the issue, and pointed out that it was up to the DNR to determine a method of enforcement. It was agreed that the District should follow-up on the matter to make sure appropriate action is eventually taken.

IX. Adjournment

Rogers moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 a.m. McCarthy seconded. Motion passed by a 5-0 vote. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting: July 19, 2003 (9:00 a.m. @ Oakland Town Hall).

Respectfully Submitted,

Derek Hoffman, Secretary

Date

Recorder: PDD