

**Lake Ripley Management District
Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2008**

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

The Lake Ripley Management District (LRMD) Board convened its regular monthly meeting at the Oakland Town Hall on July 19, 2008. Chairman Molinaro called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Secretary Jacobsen-Brown took roll. Board members present: Mike Sabella, John Molinaro, Jane Jacobsen-Brown, Walt Christensen, Dennis McCarthy and Georgia Gomez-Ibanez. Gene Kapsner was absent. Also present were Paul Dearlove (LRMD Lake Manager), MacKenzie Hannon (DNR Deputy Conservation Warden), and Gary Zibell (Cambridge Cable TV 12).

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

III. Guest: MacKenzie Hannon, DNR Deputy Conservation Warden, speaking about aquatic invasive species

Mr. Mac Hannon introduced himself as one of nine DNR wardens recently hired to implement the new Water Guard Program. The program was created to help educate boaters using public landings throughout the state about aquatic invasive species. Hannon said he was responsible for visiting landings and talking to boaters within a four-county area. Starting this year, he said there was going to be more of an emphasis on enforcement to better control the spread of invasives. He warned that one of the next big threats coming from the Great Lakes was the quagga mussel, which has been shown to be even more aggressive than the zebra mussel. While there are no known treatments to control either mussel, he said increasing public awareness was probably the best strategy right now for controlling their spread.

In response to questions from the Board, Hannon agreed to provide his contact information so it could be disseminated to Lake Watch volunteers. His efforts will primarily target boaters leaving the lake, making sure that they are aware of the rules and helping them to inspect their equipment. His goal was to have a presence on each of the busier lakes at least a couple times during the summer, and typically on weekends. Penalties for non-compliance of invasive species rules were discussed. As far as recommended improvements to our existing signage, Hannon agreed to take a look at the public landing and get back to us with any suggestions. Molinaro offered the District's full cooperation and help with sponsoring educational events, passing out literature, communicating with local residents, or any other activities.

IV. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the prior meeting were distributed for the Board's review. *Gomez-Ibanez moved to approve the 6/21/08 minutes without additions or corrections, and was seconded by Sabella. Motion carried 6-0.*

V. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Sabella reviewed the financial statements for the second-quarter period ending June 30, 2008. Handouts included Balance Sheet, Statement of Operations, Actual-to-Budget/Budget Remaining Report, General Ledger and Transaction Listing. The Balance Sheet showed current assets of \$200,268.18, consisting of \$200.00 in petty cash, \$100,409.65 in a bank checking account, and \$99,658.53 in an investment account. The investment account consisted of a 90-day bank certificate of deposit earning 3.5% and due to expire on 9/19/08. Other assets included a Land Acquisition "accumulator" account totaling \$12,920.00 in incurred costs toward a potential land purchase. Total liabilities of \$160.07 were due to accrued federal and state payroll taxes. Equity consisted of \$118,650.00 in restricted funds, a fund balance of \$52,786.27, and \$41,591.84 in net income. Total liabilities and equity amounted to \$213,188.18.

The Statement of Operations provided a detailed breakdown of revenues and expenses by budget category for the three- and six-month periods ending June 30, 2008. Total revenues for the second quarter were \$12,984.19. Total direct costs for the quarter were \$2,223.28, while total operating expenses were \$21,552.56. This resulted in an operating "loss" of \$10,797.70 for the second quarter. For the six-month period ending June 30th, there was an operating "profit" of \$44,383.83. Sabella noted a negative balance under Weed Harvesting Licenses & Fees was the result of an expenditure being reclassified as Office Expense. Another negative balance under General Mailings & Postage was the result of reclassifying the expense as Postage & Mailings, and subsequently deleting the duplicative billing code. There was \$2,233.66 in total other expenses, and a net loss of \$13,031.36 for the second quarter. For the six months ended June 30th, there was a net "profit" of \$41,591.84. The General Ledger showed the individual revenues and expenses associated with each budget category.

Sabella concluded with an analysis of the Actual-to-Budget report. He indicated that details of individual disbursements were found in the Transaction Listing, which contained the journal entries that impact the financial statements. *Jacobsen-Brown moved to accept the treasurer's report, and was seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried 6-0.*

VI. Lake Manager's Report

Dearlove distributed and reviewed a summary report and office phone logs highlighting his activities since the last meeting. The following activities were discussed:

Rain garden program: The second of two rain garden workshops and a native plant sale were conducted. Plans are underway to repeat the event in late summer or early fall. A work schedule was distributed detailing related internship activities anticipated for the rest of the year.

Cost-share projects: Cost-share contracts, implementation plans and bidding documents were completed for the Degidio and Sylvan Mounds 1st Addition projects. The Strey/Carlson, Dovgin, Gunnelson and Sloniger shoreline projects are in various stages of design, permitting and implementation.

Land acquisition: DNR will be awarding the Lake District the full \$200,000 Lake Protection Grant. To date, we have received \$4,250 in individual donations, and \$37,000 in pledged donations from various organizations. A special donor-appeal letter was sent out this week to all Lake District property owners. A second property appraisal has been commissioned and is currently underway. The appraisal is to be completed by August 1st.

Floodplain study: The requisite amount of money was raised and the study is now underway. Due to high water conditions, related survey work has been delayed until next week. The study should be completed sometime in August.

Weed harvesting: The weed harvester was launched in late June and our harvesting crew has been busy cutting the last few weeks. Our new operations plan is being followed, and the Oversight Committee will be touring the lake after this meeting to assess weed growth and program performance.

Ripples newsletter: An abbreviated version of Ripples is in production. It will contain a copy of the proposed 2009 budget and the Annual Meeting agenda. The feature article will be an historical account of Lake Ripley management initiatives.

Resource inventories: The annual boat/pier count and videotaping of the shoreline were completed. Starting Monday, we will be assisting DNR in conducting a critical habitat area assessment for the lake. The inventory will provide important baseline data on the location and condition of key ecological features, such as high-quality aquatic plant beds and fish-spawning sites.

He said that efforts were underway to purchase a new copy machine, as well as a government-discounted cell phone plan and bulk mail permit. McCarthy was then asked to update the Board on water quality monitoring activities. McCarthy reported relatively poor water quality conditions due to all the flooding and runoff. Chemistry results and additional testing supplies from the lab were delayed because of a backlog of orders. Secchi disk readings in June ranged from 3.5-5 feet deep, which is below average for this time of year. He said he hoped to have the lake-level gauge reattached as soon as water levels go back down. Dearlove added that he had not received any reports of high bacteria counts from the county health department. While some dead fish have been observed, he said state fish biologists believe it is due to a common bacterial infection that does not threaten human health.

VII. Old Business

- **Policy proposal to provide 50% cost sharing up to \$250 for newly installed rain gardens that meet LRMD design standards**

Molinaro and Dearlove explained the background behind the policy proposal which was developed by the Cost-Share Review Committee. The idea was to offer rebates equal to 50% of eligible costs up to \$250 for any rain garden. Rebates would be based on funding availability, and would require a pre-installation site inspection and consultation, as well as verification that minimum design standards are met. The proposal was intended to allow for the allocation of financial incentives for rain gardens, but through a less costly and time-intensive process. It was also meant to allow for greater landowner participation to achieve a larger cumulative impact on runoff control.

Board discussion ensued as to whether and how to differentiate among projects of varying scale and impact. Jacobsen-Brown expressed concern about treating all rain garden projects equally, suggesting that some may be deserving of more than a \$250 rebate. She said she did not want to see the rebate policy become a disincentive for larger-scale projects that

would have otherwise received more funding. She said that she would support the policy if it strictly applied to those projects that cannot satisfy normal scoring criteria. Christensen added that such projects still offered many of the desired benefits we were seeking, including groundwater recharge and runoff mitigation. Sabella cautioned that funding projects that don't have a clear and direct impact on the lake could contradict our mission statement. In addition, if enough rain gardens come into play, he warned that the demand could quickly deplete the \$10,000 budget. He pointed out that the landowner would end up getting much more than \$250 in value in terms of staff consultation and assistance. Molinaro replied that considering indirect or less obvious impacts, especially when viewed on a cumulative basis, could make a big difference in furthering our mission. He said he did not anticipate a level of participation and cost that would put a strain on the budget. Molinaro asked Dearlove to develop new language—accounting for differences in project scale and impact—that could be considered at the next meeting.

VIII. New Business

• Distribute proposed 2009 budget

Molinaro informed the Board that he, Sabella and Dearlove met on 7/7/08 to develop a proposed operating budget for the 2009 fiscal year. He then reviewed the process of estimating expenses and anticipated carry over for the purpose of preparing the budget. Copies were then distributed and briefly summarized. A total budget of \$112,089 was proposed, which called for a \$110,517 tax levy. Molinaro said it included a salary adjustment for Dearlove as per a two-year contract agreement that was negotiated last year. If approved, the 2009 budget and tax levy would reflect a 0.7% and 0.3% decrease over last year's numbers, respectively. The budget presentation also included non-lapsable fund balances and estimated activity. Molinaro said he preferred to postpone a thorough review and discussion of the budget until the August 16th budget hearing. Meanwhile, Board members were asked to review the numbers and call with questions.

Sabella asked for reconsideration of the decision to combine the budget hearing with the Annual Meeting next year. He said it would allow more time to make any necessary changes before a final vote on the budget is taken. He also thought more time was needed for the Board to review and understand the budget before it gets presented to the public. Sabella felt that questions from the Board are best discussed and addressed prior to the hearing/Annual Meeting date. Jacobsen-Brown agreed that more Board review and discussion time would be helpful. In addition, Sabella said he had concerns about the non-lapsable fund reporting. While he favored complete transparency in the budget, he felt publishing some of the particulars about the proposed land acquisition would compromise the District's negotiating position. Molinaro concurred that the issue presented a real concern for which legal advice was solicited prior to preparing the budget disclosures.

Jacobsen-Brown questioned how the 2008 Jan-Dec Estimated and 2009 Proposed Budget numbers for Capital Reserve, Land & Equipment Acquisition were derived. The necessary documentation was not immediately available to ascertain the basis for the two numbers. The budget prepares promised to provide the Board with a complete explanation once they were able to consult their notes and look into the questions raised.

• Notice of 8/16/08 budget hearing and Annual Meeting

Molinaro announced that notices of the proposed 2009 budget and Annual Meeting agenda were to be published in Ripples and the Cambridge News, and also posted in the notice boxes and on our website. He said the Lake District is mandated by state statute to meet certain minimum noticing requirements. Jacobsen-Brown, citing the minutes of the 2007 Annual Meeting, asked if copies of our By-Laws could be distributed to the Board in advance of the August meeting. Dearlove said he would get additional copies out to the Board, and would also post a digital copy on the Lake District website.

IX. Correspondence

Molinaro received a copy of a letter sent from our attorney to Attorney Mary Behling. The letter was in response to one received from Attorney Behling on behalf of her clients, Greg and Mary Shafter. Behling's original letter pertained to the Shafer's interest in negotiating a private real estate deal with the District as part of the proposed public land acquisition. The response letter stated: 1) the District does not currently own the property and can't negotiate the sale of property it does not own, and 2) that multiple partners are involved in the acquisition that would have to sign-off on any such deal.

X. Adjournment

Jacobsen-Brown moved for adjournment at 11:00 a.m., and was seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried 6-0. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting: Budget hearing and Annual Meeting on August 16, 2008.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Jacobsen-Brown, Secretary
Recorder: PDD

Date