

Minutes of the Lake Hopatcong Commission August 21, 2017

A meeting of the Lake Hopatcong Commission was held on August 21, 2017 at the Jefferson Board of Education Administrative Office located at 31 State Hwy 181 in Jefferson, New Jersey. At approximately 7:00 p.m., Chairman Smith called the Meeting to order. He stated the meeting was being held in accordance with “Open Public Meetings Act.”

Salute to the Flag: Chairman Smith and all those in attendance joined in a flag salute.

Roll Call:

Present: Mark Crowley, Daniel McCarthy, Mark Fisch, Joshua Osowski, Fred Steinbaum, Joel Servoss, Robert Tessier, Anne Seibert-Pravs, Ron Morris, David Jarvis

Absent: Richard Zoschak

Alternates Present: Eric Wilsusen

With eleven members present, Chairman Smith declared a quorum.

Commissioner Steinbaum makes a motion to vote on resolution 1704 regarding securing the services of a part-time administrator. Commissioner Pravs seconds the motion.

Smith	Yes	Servoss	Yes
Osowski	Abstain	Fisch	Yes
Tessier	Abstain	Crowley	Yes
Jarvis	Yes	Pravs	Yes
McCarthy	Yes	Steinbaum	Yes

The motion carries 8-0-2 (two abstentions).

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Steinbaum makes a motion to pass the meeting minutes from July 17, 2017. Commissioner Pravs seconded the motion.

The motion passes unanimously.

Commissioner Pravs asks whether items from last meeting will be included in the agenda tonight including creating an ad hoc committee to discuss MOU’s with state senators, and representation of the townships at the CAC meetings. There is a general discussion of representation and scheduling of the next CAC meeting. Commissioner Osowski states that the meeting will probably be scheduled for some time in September 2017 and he will send out an email to the Commission.

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Commissioner Steinbaum asks Commissioner Osowski about having space at the state park. Colleen Conover will contact the Superintendent to set up a possible office space.

Treasurer's Report/Payment of Bills

Commissioner McCarthy suggests that the bank statements be sent to the updated state park address. Commissioner Steinbaum will go to the bank to have the address updated. Chairman Smith asks for an updated treasurers report. The report will be given next meeting.

Correspondence

Chair Smith asks if anyone received correspondence. Commissioner McCarthy states that he is not aware of any new correspondence and adds that the Commission has changed its address to the state park. He states that a couple of letters remain outstanding that were written while he was Acting Chairman. He states that he wrote one letter to the boat regulation commission (BRC). The letter requested that a meeting be held in Lake Hopatcong and that they appoint a representative to the BRC from Lake Hopatcong. Commissioner McCarthy states that he has not received anything from the BRC, the commissioners agree that there has been no correspondence sent to Jefferson or the State Park regarding the BRC. Commissioner McCarthy states that a second letter was written regarding the MOU with the NJDEP. Commissioner Osowski states that in response to the MOU letter the state is going to draft a new MOU rather than amend the old MOU.

Lake Hopatcong Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Steinbaum comments that the Lake Hopatcong Foundation (LHF) had their second symposium at the Jefferson House and it was attended by 40-45 people. Attendees included business owners, lakefront residents, Musconetcong watershed etc. They provided a summary report from the symposium on their website. (<https://lakehopatcongfoundation.org/2017-symposium-summary/>)

There were four themes for the symposium including 1) What would it take to have a breakthrough in the water level lake outflow debate 2) What do you consider to be the top causes of the weed problem on the lake and how it can be best addressed 3) When if ever do you feel the most at risk on the water and what could be done to make you feel safer on Lake Hopatcong 4) Dredging area issue updates. There is a general discussion of the symposium, dredging and weed disposal.

Commissioner Osowski states that earlier in the year he asked the Commission to provide a recommendation on the five-year/60" drawdown. He hopes that the Commission will be prepared to offer some input at the next meeting so that people can prepare. Commissioner Pravs states that she would like to see the public comments from updates to the WLMP.

Commissioner Steinbaum states that the Commission may have a consensus for the 60-inch drawdown if they vote on his Lake Level Proposals. He states that they will table

the first part of his proposal and vote on the second and third parts. He reiterates that Part one (which will be tabled) proposes that the yearly drawdown be reduced from 22 inches to 16 inches to protect docks and that the drawdown be started later and be completed by December 16th saving an additional 6 inches of water. Part two proposes that the 60-inch five-year drawdown be continued for major repairs and construction, but be quicker at 2 inches a day instead of 1.5 inches to allow completion by October 15th instead of the current November 1st (Drawdown Sept. 22 to Oct. 15). The refill would begin December 1st instead of December 15th allowing dock work to be done in better weather and allowing TWO EXTRA WEEKS FOR REFILL. There is a general discussion of Commissioner Steinbaum's proposal. Commissioner Jarvis comments that he would like to recommend that there be no 60" drawdown because the current system needs more flexibility. Commissioner Servoss comments that there may be a negative impact on commercial businesses because the lake will be down two weeks earlier.

Commissioner Steinbaum makes a motion that the Commission should make a recommendation to the NJDEP that if the five-year drawdown is completed then it should be completed more quickly at 2" a day rather than 1.5" inches per day as per part two of the lake level proposals (above). Commissioner McCarthy seconds the motion.

Chairman Smith opens the meeting to public comment.

Public Comment

Barbara Loring asks whether a 10-year drawdown instead of a 5-year drawdown can be recommended. She states that the 10-year drawdown could be instituted using Commissioner Steinbaum's Lake Level Proposal (part 2). She states that this could be recommended for future drawdowns after the 2018 drawdown.

Cliff BeeBe, Halsey Island states that the LHC is violating lake owner's property rights. He states that according to state statute, citation 13.12-5 "the lake shall be kept at the high-water mark at all times subject to the elements".

John Kursman Lake Hopatcong – states that he has studied the science of drawdowns and refills, and he and Dave Jarvis made a presentation. Five years ago, during the 60-inch drawdown, the state allowed lake level to increase to the 30" mark with 9" of ice on the lake. In practice, they did allow for lake to rise with ice on. He suggests changing #2 to say the 60-inch/5yr should be continued for major repairs and construction, flushing and ripping of the weeds up by their roots with the rising ice. He states that ripping the weeds up by their roots and flushing of the lake were two major benefits of the five-year drawdown. He suggests that instead of using inches/day, cubic feet/second should be used as a unit of measure because it is more reliable as the lake level drops. He states that the proposal should also state that the lake be allowed to rise to the 30-inch mark regardless of ice. He states that statistically the lake will recover to the 30-inch mark 90% of the time, if the lake is allowed to recover between December 1st to March 1st

regardless of ice on the lake. Commissioner Steinbaum states that he kept the proposal in inches as it was written in the original plan. He states that the NJDEP is willing to receive input about the drawdowns, but is less willing to adjust the lake outflow. Commissioner Osowski states that the NJDEP doesn't implement an annual drawdown on any other state lake, so he agrees with Commissioner Steinbaum that the State is more willing to consider recommendations on drawdowns, however they are responsible for maintaining outflow from the lake and are less open to recommendations on outflow. Commissioner McCarthy states that he believes that the Commission stands a better chance in Trenton if they stand unified. Commissioner Steinbaum suggests that he and John Kursman meet to discuss and amend the Lake Level Proposals (part 2) prior to voting. The motion is tabled.

Old Business

Weed Harvesting Update

Commissioner Osowski reads the 2017 harvesting updates that are posted on the Hopatcong State Park website.

He states that they initially hired seven seasonal employees, five weed harvesting operators, and two dump truck drivers on the lake full time. One weed harvester operator has left, however there are four weed harvesters on the lake, each operating on a full-time basis. He states that the small harvester on loan to the Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board has been loaned to the NJ Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) along with the trailer. Michael Calderio, crew leader of the weed harvesting program met with NJWSA staff last Thursday to assist with the temporary transfer of equipment. Commissioner Osowski states that there was an emergency at the NJWSA and the Commission was asked to loan the small harvester to the NJWSA. This was approved by Chairman Smith. A vote was not held because it was an emergency situation. Commissioner Jarvis states that the stickers on the equipment have been changed to the State logo. He states that he would like the stickers changed to show the Commission and no state sticker. Commissioner McCarthy states that a letter amendment was issued on July 11, 2017 requesting that there be a joint State/LHC sticker on all equipment. There is a discussion of the equipment ownership and weed harvesting program operation. Commissioner Osowski continues his report and states that the small harvester will be returned on the week of August 21st or soon thereafter. He states that all of the equipment has been running properly without any major repairs needed. All harvesting machines have been reliable and responding well. He states that an experienced harvester has been harvesting weeds and clearing floaters in the high dense areas, such as Benedict's Cove, Great Cove and Henderson Cove. They may not be consistently clearing in these areas but have been trying to assist in these areas while trying to reach other areas as well. He states that they are currently focusing on the Nolan's Point, Prospect Point and Woodport areas and moving west as they clear out weeds. They are still in Phase 2 which runs from July 24th through August. There are two harvesters staged at Lee's County Park and there are two harvesters staged at Ashley's Cove. The harvesters at Lee's County Park are covering River Styx, Great Cove, Davis Cove, east

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shoreline south of Brady Bridge, areas around Halsey Island and Prospect Point. The harvesters at Ashely's Cove are focusing on Woodport. On Friday, the harvesters focus on clean-up of floating weeds. There has been a lot of rain on Fridays recently so the clean-up process has been difficult. Harvesters have been trying to clear floating weeds as much as possible when they are on the machines to make up for the days lost due to rain. Phase three will begin early to mid-September and will cover Byram Cove and Henderson Cove. He states that 454 cubic yards of material have been harvested from June 24th through July 11th and an additional 717 cubic yards were harvested from July 12th through August 15th for a total of 1,171 cubic yards. He states that funding for the 2018 fiscal year has been set up. Purchases made so far, this year have been for food-grade hydraulic oil, grease, diesel fuel and hose ends. McCarthy asks about whether the transport barge is currently being used. Commissioner Osowski states that he will find out for next meeting. Commissioner Steinbaum states that Dr. Lubnow stated at the symposium that only 10% of the weeds that were harvested at the height of the program are being harvested today. He states that the state is not doing an adequate job. Chairman Smith states that one of his goals is to fully staff the harvesting program and return all of the harvesters to Lake Hopatcong.

LHC Meeting Dates

Chair Smith indicates the following updated meeting dates and locations. Meetings will be held at 7:00pm at each location listed.

September 11th - Jefferson Board of Education Administrative Office, 31 State Hwy 181, Jefferson NJ

October 23rd – Mt. Arlington Civic Center, Fern Road, Mt. Arlington

November 13th – Mt. Arlington Civic Center, Fern Road, Mt. Arlington

December 11th – Mt. Arlington Civic Center, Fern Road, Mt. Arlington

Public Comment

Chair Smith opens the meeting to public comment.

John Kursman states that the harvesting operation has been doing a great job they have been thorough and there have been no floaters. He states that during the symposium Fred Lubnow commented on the percentage of weeds harvested this year vs prior years. Mr. Kursman believes that the weeds were much denser when the program was at its peak so more was harvested. He inquires about ticketing by the marine police this year, and whether they have implemented a new quota because he has noticed more people with citations.

Commissioner Steinbaum makes a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Pravs seconds the motion.

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Meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.