

**Lake Hopatcong Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Agenda – November 13rd, 2017**

**Jefferson Board of Education Administrative Office, 31 State Hwy 181, Jefferson NJ**

**I. Opening of Meeting/Open Public Meeting Statement**

- a. In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, The Lake Hopatcong Commission has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof delivered or mailed or electronically mailed to the following:

*DAILY RECORD* and posted on the Lake Hopatcong Commission website  
(lakehopatcong.org)

**II. Salute to the Flag and Moment of Silence**

**III. Roll Call**

Present: Mark Crowley, Daniel McCarthy, Fred Steinbaum, Robert Tessier,  
Anne Seibert-Pravs, Mark Fisch, Joel Servoss, Ronald Smith

Absent: Richard Zoschak, David Jarvis, Joshua Osowski

Alternates Present: Eric Wilsusen

With nine members present, Chairman Smith declared a quorum.

**IV. Comments from the Audience** (*on agenda action items only, if applicable*)

No Comments

**V. LHC Commissioners' Comments**

Commissioner McCarthy comments on ice safety. Commissioner Tessier comments that there is a new governor elect, and there will be a transition committee, and a new Commissioner for Department of Community Affairs; Sheila Oliver. He suggests contacting the transition committee and new Commissioner and send letters to the new governor. Chair Smith announces that the Commission received the first portion of their funding.

**VI. Minutes of Meetings**

Commissioner Steinbaum moves to approve the minutes. Alternate Commissioner Wilsusen seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

**VII. Treasurer's Report**

Commissioner Fisch gives the Treasurer's Report. He states that the most recent bank statement was issued prior to the issuance of funds. He states that the general account has \$513.90 and in the 319-grant account there is \$457.25. Commissioner Steinbaum adds that the Commission now has \$65K in the general account.

**VIII. Correspondence**

Commissioner McCarthy states that he still has not received any response from the Boat Regulation Committee (BRC) and asks if another letter should be sent. Marty Kane of the Lake Hopatcong Foundation (LHF) states the July 2018 BRC meeting will be at Lake Hopatcong.

**IX. Chairman's Report**

Chair Smith reports that he met with the Lake Hopatcong Foundation (LHF) and the Highlands Council. The Highlands Council is going to allocate 200K in their

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budget to the Commission. The Commission needs to determine how to use the money because it is restricted. He plans to attend the next Highlands Commission meeting in Chester.

**X. Old Business**

**STATE PARK**

In Commissioner Osowski's absence Melissa Castellon gives the NJDEP update.

Weed Harvesting Update

Melissa Castellon gives the weed harvesting update. She states that there are currently three seasonal weed harvesting operators, two permanent operators and two seasonal dump truck drivers on staff. The seasonal employees will assist permanent employees during the winter and spring months with prepping the machines for next season. All equipment is staged at the Franklin Building for the winter. The disassembling process has begun to determine repairs for all equipment. The focus is now on assessing maintenance and major repairs to prepare for next season. Between June 24<sup>th</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup>, a total of 3,872 cubic yards of weeds were harvested. Melissa states that FY 2018 is broken down into salaries and operations. Permanent, overtime and seasonal salaries account for \$239,500 and operations including fuel, repairs, welding, parts and maintenance of the Franklin Building account for \$115,500. The total FY 2018 budget is \$355,000.

This Year's Fiscal Budget – Arrival of Funds & Implementation

Melissa Castellon states that originally the state park had 155K in FY2016-2017 they received an additional 200K. They have received their funding for FY2017-2018 in June 2017. There is some confusion about the MOU between the NJDEP and Townships. Commissioner Pravs states that the Townships recently signed the agreement and believes that the \$200K disbursements should have started in June 2017 not June 2016. Melissa will look into the MOU and disbursement of funds for next meeting.

Water Level Review / Update

Melissa states that there was a meeting of the CAC on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017 and the NJDEP is awaiting an official recommendation from the committee.

Lake Wide Permit for Catch Basins

Melissa states that she received a call from Land Use, and she is working on it. The process takes 60-90 days. Commissioner McCarthy states that this is for cleaning out the catch basins and outfalls during the five-year drawdown. He is specifically concerned with the areas where the outfalls create a delta into the lake. Melissa asks if all of the townships have agreed to do the work if the state park facilitates the process. She requests a support letter from each town. She will send an email letter to each township to request these.

Recalibration of Gauges

No updates

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**NJDEP UPDATES**

Committee Alternates and Appointments

No updates, but they will find out.

NJDEP & LHC Equipment MOU

No updates, she will check with Josh. Commissioner McCarthy states that a letter was sent to the Lake Hopatcong address and was forwarded in August. He states that there is a section missing from the updated MOU that states that the equipment will be used exclusively on Lake Hopatcong. Commissioner Tessier states that there should be a provision for emergencies for when the machines need to be taken off of the lake. Commissioner Crowley states that the Commission should let the NJDEP have the weed harvesting, and take the position of monitoring the water quality and push productivity. He states that the Commission should take a managerial role, and let the NJDEP have the weed harvesting program. There is a general discussion of the weed harvesting program, and the mission of the Commission going forward. Melissa states she would be interested in developing a plan for weed management that is not dependent on weed harvesting, because she believes there are other options. Commissioner Pravs makes a motion to move this discussion to Committee to investigate the weed harvesting program and local management of the lake. She states that most of the community around the lake would like to see local control of the lake. The motion is tabled.

NJDEP Water Level Management – Fish and Wildlife Pilot Report

The pilot program is moving forward, last year was not typical. The NJDEP is hoping to get better data this year. Commissioner Pravs asks when the State Park will begin the drawdown and Commissioner Steinbaum states that it was supposed to begin on November 12<sup>th</sup> but with the pilot program, they are not dropping the lake as far. This gives about five days' leeway. Melissa agrees and states that it should begin within the next week but she will refer to the chart in the plan before lowering the lake.

**FY 2018 Budget**

Reallocation of Funds

No Updates

Special Improvement Districts – RFP to Townships

No updates

LHC Initiatives – Brochures & Education Opportunities

No updates

**XI. New Business**

Princeton Hydro Water Quality Review – Dr. Fred Lubnow

Dr. Fred Lubnow gives an overview of the Princeton Hydro 2017 Water Quality Monitoring Report. He states that the main body of the lake is in compliance for phosphorus. However, there are problems areas where phosphorus is higher than 0.4mg/L. These areas include River Styx/Crescent Cove, and the northern end of

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Woodport and the canals. Over the last 20 years the canals also have elevated nitrogen levels due to the near shore septic leach fields. He states that in the middle of the lake there are overall good conditions. Princeton Hydro uses temperature and dissolved oxygen to assess brown trout habitat because it is critical to assess that the lake has good habitat for stocking trout. There were optimal conditions between May - June and September and there was good carry over in July and August. Carry over habitat is important show that there is good habitat throughout the season.

Dr. Lubnow shares an update and revision to the weed harvesting data. He shows a chart of the weed harvesting program totals. He states that in 2011, the NJDEP stopped reporting total weeds harvested in tons and started reporting the volume in cubic yards. To account for the change, he used a coefficient he developed from another lake to convert cubic yards of weeds into tons. When Commissioner Osowski sent him a photo of the dry erase board showing both tons and cy, he realized that the coefficient he used was incorrect. He stated that he used the numbers from the dry erase board, and recalculated the coefficient. The correction shows that on average the number of weeds harvested since the NJDEP took over the harvesting program is similar to the amount harvested when the Commission was overseeing harvesting. On average since the harvesting program was started in 2002, 6% of the phosphorus is removed through harvesting. He states that he will be issuing an addendum to the Water Quality Report that includes the adjusted coefficient.

Dr. Lubnow states that in August PH and the LHF went to the NJDEP to discuss funding a new water implementation plan (WIP) for Lake Hopatcong. He states that the NJDEP is open to funding the project. A joint budget/application will be submitted from the LHF LHC and PH. His hope is that if the Lake Musconetcong watershed becomes a priority watershed in 2020, then Lake Hopatcong will be prepared to go after new funding as it becomes available. Commissioner McCarthy asks how the State Park is able to harvest the same amount of weeds with less equipment, money, and personnel. Commissioner Steinbaum states that he believes there are more weeds and therefore more weeds harvested per hour spent in each location. Dr. Lubnow agrees that the past few years have been very bad in terms of weed growth. He adds that when the LHC ran the weed harvesting program, he believes that they were keeping up with the weeds, and less were being harvested as a result. Commissioner McCarthy expresses concern for how the data is being presented and suggests that there should be more importance placed on the details. There is a general discussion of how to best quantify the number of weeds being harvested.

CAC Meeting and Recommendations

Commissioner McCarthy states that there was a meeting of the CAC. During the meeting, there was a discussion of the NJDEP pilot program and keeping it in effect for an additional year. He states that there was also discussion of the five-year drawdown. Melissa states that the NJDEP has not made a statement, but are leaning toward having the drawdown. He states that the purpose of the meeting was to

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solicit advise from the members of the CAC about what they felt would be beneficial for future meetings of the committee. Commissioner Steinbaum states that the NJDEP requested that the CAC take over the planning and meeting of the committee. He states that the CAC made recommendations for the lake drawdown and allowing refill decisions to be made at the local level.

List of Bills

Chairman Smith introduces the list of bills for the month which include \$150 for internet and phone, \$135 for website hosting and email, and \$3,200 for consulting services. Total list of bills is for \$3,485. Commissioner Steinbaum makes a motion for the bills to be paid. Commissioner McCarthy seconds the motion.

Roll Call:

Steinbaum	Yes	Pravs	Yes
Wilsusen	Yes	Servoss	Yes
Crowley	Yes	Fisch	Yes
Smith	Yes	Tessier	Yes
McCarthy	Yes		

The motion passes unanimously.

FY 2019 Budget

Commissioner Steinbaum gives a budget committee update and states that the current budget for FY 2018 (2017-2018) is for \$105K. They were able to reallocate some funds toward water quality through savings on rent, thanks to the NJDEP and State Park. They have received proposals from Princeton Hydro and are in favor of completing the studies they proposed. They are increasing the budget by 2% for next year (FY 2019) to 107K. The budget will again emphasize water quality and supporting the towns. Commissioner Tessier asks when will they act on the Princeton Hydro proposals. Commissioner Steinbaum states that they don't have to act on them tonight.

Letters to Newly Elected Officials

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

**XI. Public Comments** *(please refer to Section V “Public participation shall be governed by the following rules:”)*

Marty Kane speaks on behalf of the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, states that the Foundation has been researching the use of grass eating carpe (GEC) for weed control in Lake Hopatcong. They traveled to Candlewood Lake where they introduced GEC three years ago and had positive results. He states that the LHF has proposed the idea to the NJDEP, but it is not a currently approved method. He states that it is procedurally not accepted but there is no regulation against it. Dr. Lubnow states that it is not allowed in lakes over 10 acres, however PA and NY allow it. Marty states that there are only three native stocked fish on Lake Hopatcong but 14-15 species of sport fish, so there are other non-native fish on the lake already. Commissioner McCarthy states that the plant study proposed by PH

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is a foundational study for the use of GEC on Lake Hopatcong. Dr. Lubnow states that they prefer certain types of weeds, are sterile, and are vegetarians. They won't bite on fishing lures. He adds that most people on Candlewood Lake have not seen them. Marty states that updating the restoration plan will put Lake Hopatcong in a good position for future grants or other funding opportunities. He states that this was a good year in terms of water level, but another study the LHF has talked about is a hydrology study for the watershed. Commissioner McCarthy states that the Commission needs to prioritize their original statutes to help determine which studies should be funded by the LHC. Dr. Lubnow states that NJDEP should be releasing their RFP for 319h grant between November 13-20. Dr. Lubnow states that if that is the case, he plans to attend the December meeting. Marty states that he will make the information on Candlewood Lake available to the Commissioners. Marty states that he will send some information on the carpe, or if anyone would like to reach out to Mayor Francis he has a lot of information as well. There is a general discussion of the pros and cons of GEC.

Cliff BeeBee Lake Hopatcong states that during the 5-foot drawdown they should control it to the shoreline so that there is still 24" of water along the shoreline for the island residents to get to and from their homes.

Ron Sawronsons marina owner and member of CAC representing Jefferson. He states that he does not support the 5-year drawdown. He states that the majority of people in Jefferson are not in favor of the drawdown. He recommends not sending the letter to the State because he does not believe it represents the opinion of the community and thinks there will be pushback.

Steve Halprin Lakeview Marina, states that it is a large risk to businesses on the lake if the water level is dropped five feet, and does not come back up.

Peter Rathjens fisherman on the lake asks about total dissolved oxygen effect on brown trout and whether the data apply to rainbow trout. He states that the NJDEP does not stock brown trout. Dr. Lubnow responds that the data is used to show there is carry over habitat to justify stocking rainbow trout.

Phil Lepkin Prospect Point Boat Yard states that there are plenty of ways to fix the sea wall without draining the lake. He asks how he is supposed to recoup lost money if the water doesn't come back up after the five-year drawdown.

**XII. Close of Meeting**

Commissioner McCarthy moves to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Servoss seconds the motion.

**Next Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Monday, December 11, 2017**  
**Mt. Arlington Civic Center, Fern Road, Mt. Arlington**