

**LAKE HELEN PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT
2021 COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Thursday October 14, 2021 via Zoom**

The Lake Helen P&R District Commissioners' meeting was called to order at 3:34pm.

Commissioners Present: Glen Bersie, Keith Hoffman, Tom Gerlikovski, Bill Pingel, Mildred Neville

Commissioners Absent: Tyne Hoffman

Guests: Tracy Arnold (Portage County Planning & Zoning),
Scott Provost (DNR Biologist), Chris Hamerla (Golden Sands)

REGULAR REPORTS:

MINUTES:

The minutes from the July 24th Commissioners' meeting were reviewed. Glen Bersie made a motion to accept the minutes following three small corrections. Seconded by Keith. Motion carried unanimously. Bill will contact Tyne about the edits.

Bill suggested that we publish a draft version of the minutes on the web site as soon as they are ready after the meeting rather than waiting for final approval at the next meeting. It was suggested that the group review them first, provide input, and that they are marked as "Preliminary – Pending final approval at the next Commissioners' meeting". The group agreed that this would be a good idea.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Glen Bersie provided the Treasurer's Report. He included a listing of all financial transactions that took place since the last meeting. The account balances are:

\$ 439.74 in Checking
\$ 3,509.03 in Savings
\$13,096.37 in the Non-Lapsable invasive species fund

\$17,045.14 Total

He also reviewed the expected income and expenses versus the budget for the rest of the year. Tom made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as submitted. Seconded by Keith. Motion carried unanimously.

Glen asked Chris Hamerla to have his staff get us the final CBCW invoice and to work with Tom to submit the reimbursement request from the DNR as soon as possible.

OLD BUSINESS:

BLUE GREEN ALGAE ISSUE:

Letter: Bill noted that the three-page letter and graphics provided by Tracy Arnold was mailed to all property owners at the end of August. The group said that they believed the letter was received well and that the owners appreciated the information and are concerned.

Survey: Bill reviewed the online survey results, noting that 13 of the 112 property owners took the survey. Eleven said they don't fertilize. The other two said they would stop or reduce further fertilization.

Soil Testing: Keith stated that no one asked for a soil testing kit yet.

Shoreline Improvements: Tracy Arnold noted that ten Lake Helen property owners have signed up for the 2022 shoreline planting grant. She noted that she has four spots left. Portage County will also enhance the Lake Helen Park shoreline.

Ordinances: Bill suggested that Portage County needs to enforce the ordinances that impact the lake, notably septic inspection, grey water discharge from old cottages and campers, and building shoreline permits. Tracy noted that there are only two people in the department that deal with enforcement. She suggested that the Land Conservation group may get involved since the shoreline is affected. She noted that Blue-Green Algae is the main topic for the Oct 28th Portage County Lakes meeting.

Water Chemical Testing-DNR-Next Steps: Keith reviewed the weekly lake profile testing that he has been doing since the end of July. He also noted that he sent in water samples from the deep hole and the roadside culvert to UWSP. Scott Provost stated that the results that came back from the deep hole were acceptable, but the culvert sample results were shocking. The chloride was high (21 versus less than 2 as the norm) and the Phosphorus was 100 times higher than it should be. Scott stated that he came and took another sample and is waiting for the results. Scott reviewed some potential causes and issues that may be the source of the problem. He suggested that we work with the DNR and the Town of Alban on a project to collect data and to look at the situation, causes, and options to prevent further algae problems. He stated that this is a project that the DNR could fund.

Keith made a motion that the Lake Helen P&R District work with the DNR on a monitoring project to develop a diagnostic feasibility study to address the nutrient sources and algae issue in the lake. Seconded by Glen. The motion carried unanimously. **Keith agreed to work with Scott and to lead this effort.**

Scott stated that he would like to have a follow-up meeting to review this issue further. He said that he would put together a PowerPoint to explain this further including a review of the watershed and the many issues that could potentially be the source of the algae problem. All of those present at this meeting should be invited along with Ray Oksuita, the Town of Alban Chairman. Keith will work with Scott to organize this meeting in a month or so.

INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL:

CBCW 2022:

Tom reviewed the CBCW grant application, noting that the DNR would cover 75% of the costs, with the District responsible for \$2078.42 including the Golden Sands fee. Glen expressed concern about next year's cash flow. Bill noted that he spoke to the DNR grant administrator and that we can submit two reimbursement requests per grant per year.

Glen made a motion to approve an authorizing resolution noting Lake Helen P&R District will meet the financial obligations of the CBCW program with Tom authorized to act on behalf of the District. Seconded by Keith. Motion carried unanimously.

Bill asked Chris Hamerla if more data is available about the CBCW contacts. Most notably observations about how many boats come to the boat landing with debris attached to the boats, and if there were issues with boaters' cooperation. Chris stated that the primary focus of the program is for the boat launch staff to educate boaters. However, Lake Helen may make up a form for use in gathering more data.

Bill suggested that we take that on for 2022.

EWM CONTROL & GRANT PROGRESS:

Progress/Current Situation: Tom stated that the last chemical treatment was definitely effective. However, some EWM plants continue to grow in the lake. In early June divers worked on two evenings to pull a lot of plants in the northwest corner. The water clarity dropped dramatically at the end of June, preventing further dives. In mid-August and early September, he manually pulled more plants that had been located in some shallow areas by those who did volunteer EWM searching.

Chris Hamerla stated that he conducted a Point-Intercept Survey in mid-August. He observed EWM in the deep areas, but none came up on the PI point rakes.

Scott stated that he would work with Golden Sands to fund a PI study next year.

EWM Grant Volunteer Reimbursement: Bill stated that he spoke to the DNR grant administrator. Since we did not have any invoices to submit for reimbursement, we should hold all volunteer and equipment donation forms and submit them next year with any invoices.

Everyone who had volunteer hours and equipment donation use should submit their 2021 activity forms to Bill by the end of October. Bill will hang on to them for submission next year.

In light of the blue-green algae bloom, we weren't able to hire divers to remove EWM from the deeper areas. Consequently, we didn't have any direct invoices to submit to the DNR for this year's Grant reimbursement. Scott Provost suggested that we contact the grant administrator to see if we can extend the grant for an extra year. He noted that he would support the extension.

Bill to contact the DNR to request extending the EWM grant for an extra year.

Grant Progress Report: Bill asked Scott if we need to submit a Progress Report even though we haven't had any reimbursements to submit. Scott said that he would still like a report to be submitted.

Bill stated that he would ask everyone for input and that he'd write the report.

2022 EWM Control Plans: Scott noted that the EWM plants should be up by the end of May and suggested that we plan on hitting the deeper spots in May or early June while there is still the best water clarity.

Glen commented on budget concerns and the cash flow timing.

Chris Hamerla noted that starting in 2022 Golden Sands will no longer have grant funds to cover EWM point-intercept survey and mapping. He said that we would need to contract for services with Golden Sands at approximately \$700 for EWM mapping and \$4-5k for a full PI survey.

Scott noted that he'd check to see if any DNR funding may be available.

Zebra Mussels: Tom and Glen both noted that they found very few zebra mussels on their docks and boats when they pulled them out this year.

Japanese Knotweed: Glen stated that he treated the JKW plants before Labor Day, with only a few plants found in each location.

FISHING COMMITTEE:

Fish Sticks: Keith stated that the current focus of the fishing committee is on getting everything in order for the fish sticks that will be installed this winter. He is working with Tim Parks of the DNR on the permits. Tracy Arnold stated that the Portage County grant was amended to award six grants to Lake Helen property owners for installation this winter. Up to \$1000 will be awarded for each grant on a 75%/25% basis. Volunteer hours can be used to cover the 25% portion.

Fishing: Keith noted that trolling for walleye is a concern that the committee may take up.

Fisheree: Keith noted that the DNR has issued permits for the annual fisheree.

Glen brought up the concern about trolling for walleyes.

Keith stated that he would review the concern with the Fishing Committee.

ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOWUP:

Swim Buoys: Bill stated that he spoke to Ryan Rose of the Parks Department about having them purchase the swim area buoys next summer and billing us for them. That way, the beach area would have proper sized markers and that the County may have access to better pricing.

Tracy suggested that we check with Tree Lake to see what they have at their beach. **Bill to follow-up.**

NEW BUSINESS:

2022 Wisconsin Lakes & Rivers Convention:

Bill stated that the conference is planned to be held in person this year on April 6-8 in Stevens Point. Bill and Keith will participate in a regional session about our dealing with past summer's blue-green algae. Everyone was asked to save the date and to make arrangements to attend part of it, if possible.

Lake Management Plan:

Tracy Arnold stated that she will be working with the three Portage County lake districts over the winter to update their Lake Management Plans. Bill noted that our plan is definitely in need of update, with the last revision in 2011.

Other:

Keith stated that he'd like to find out what needs to be done to get an ordinance passed stating that all boat traffic needs to travel **counterclockwise**. Bill stated that we may have to work with Portage County Parks, because they have the ordinance that controls our Slow-No Wake hours. The other possibilities are to work with the Town of Alban or to find out if we have the authority to create an ordinance or regulation ourselves.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING:

The group decided that the next meeting be scheduled after the Fisheree. We agreed on Monday January 17 at 3:30pm via Zoom.

ADJOURNEMENT:

Glen made a motion to end the meeting at 5:50pm. Seconded by Keith. Motion carried unanimously.