

Seymour Lake Association Board Meeting 2/15/13

Present: Lyman McWain, Ron Kolar (via Skype), Jan Selby, Jean McKenny, Tim Buzzell, Peggy Barter, Ted Jewett, Bruce Barter, Steve Massicotte, Erik Lessing (via Skype), Frank Antonelli, and Allan Wooley (ex-officio)

Unable to be Present: Susan Davis, Linda Broadwater,

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 am by President Lyman.

The **Secretary's Reports** from 7/13/12 and 7/28/12 were approved.

The **Treasurers Report** was given by Jan. She distributed a handout for the fiscal year 2012. The total income for the year was \$23,362.35. The expenses were \$15,880.11. The income amount includes donations from members. These donations allow the SLA to add to its "contingency" fund. This fund has been developed over the past few years as money to be available if the lake were to become infested with an invasive species such as milfoil. The end of year totals in this fund was \$63,231.82. Jan also gave the check book balance as of 2/15/13 to be \$3,289.80. Jan also noted that the Ice Out Contest needs to be done soon if it is going to be done this year. The board decided to send out an e-mail notice which would include the form for submitting ice out entries to the 70% of the membership that we have e-mail addresses for. Using this electronic format will save the postage costs of sending out a mail notification to the membership. The ice out forms will also be available at public places for those not having internet access. A motion to try the contest this way for this year was approved.

Old Business:

A report on the **Dam Actions & Water Levels Strategy with DEC** was given by Ron and Tim. Ron is stepping out of the lead with the committee and Tim will become the chairman. Ron reported that since Aug 20, 2012 the current plan is "the plan" that we proposed to the state on Aug 20, 2012. The SLA proposed lowering the lake in the late fall of each year. The reason for this is to try to comply with state law requiring that the lake level be maintained between the two pins. By lowering the lake in the late fall the lake would have more "capacity" to accept spring runoff without damage to the shoreline. It is not believed that this lowering in the late fall would have an effect on the lake level in the summer. Other states and possibly other Vermont lakes do this. This proposal was made to the DEC. The DEC was provided with other facts about the lake as well, but the SLA feels that the best solution to its problems is lowering the lake late each fall. Ron has not been able to get any response from the state about our request to allow GBH (Great Bay Hydro) to perform this "lowering." Brian Fitzgerald sent Ron two e-mails when Ron tried to get a response from him. The first said that they are busy and the second that they are moving. These reasons were given as a response to being asked why the state has not answered the SLA request. Again, we find ourselves waiting for a response from the state which seems to be a pattern over the past few years. A suggestion was made that we should ask them for an answer before this fall so that we can try the lowering this late fall. Jeff Cueto from the state did research and calculations showing that the lake elevation is higher both spring and summer with the new dam. The SLA committee feels that at this time we should leave the summer level as it is naturally occurring (even if it is higher than it used to be) but wants the fall draw-down to prevent the lake from "staging" too high in the spring. The committee has worked hard on these issues and the state is not responding to the organization. Tim mentioned that we have also voiced our concern with the danger of dam breach and asked the state to hire an independent engineer to either confirm or dispel

that concern. Various options of what our next steps might be to try to resolve this situation were suggested. The SLA has been trying to resolve this lake level situation with the state for several years. It was decided that Lyman will write a letter to FOVLAP asking which other lakes and ponds manipulate levels. Lyman will also put together a “check list” for Ron and Tim to use as the committee attempts to get an answer from the state prior to this fall.

A **Committee & Staff Changes** report was given by Lyman and Ron. Jan will not run again for treasurer at the annual meeting in July. Jan is willing to continue to work with the grant process but would like to be replaced as treasurer. Jean has agreed to be nominated for treasurer so there will be an opening for a secretary. Lyman has again stated that he would like to step down as president. Ron also would like to be replaced as vice-president. Both Lyman and Ron have expressed that they would stay involved in the work of the organization but would like to step out of the offices. A nominating committee head will also be needed as Ron has been filling that role. The bylaws read that “the President with the consent of the Executive Committee shall appoint a nominating committee of three (3) members each year.” The board agreed to “think about names” and talk with each other about possible nominations. This dialog will take place **within the next 3 weeks. Board members should ultimately send thoughts about possible nominations to Lyman and he will coordinate the nomination process.** Concern was expressed about Lyman leaving office at the same time as Ron that this might leave too big a hole in the organization if both left office simultaneously. Lyman stated that the things that he wanted to accomplish when he accepted the office have been done. He expressed that he feels organizations need new people with new ideas from time to time to continue to make progress.

A report of **Membership Update & 2013 Plans** was given by Ted and Bruce. Bruce sent out the update electronically to the board. Bruce reported new highs of 365 membership units and 215 of those made donations. The percentage of “lake front” members is also at an all time high with 71.9 % joining. The response to the renewal letter sent in March was very good at 75.5% (249 memberships out of 330 letters sent). In response to the May newsletter, 31 new members were added. The November “forgetful” letter (people who were members in 2011 but not 2012) produced a good response (16 of 33 responded). The “never” letter also sent in November contained a survey asking people various questions in an attempt to ascertain how the SLA might better serve these Morgan property owners and why they have chosen not to join SLA in the past. This letter only produced 3 new memberships but the answers to the survey questions and the comments added are valuable to the membership committee. Bruce also noted that 70% of members provided e-mail addresses, there were 41 “new donations” people, and that 40 donors gave more than in the previous year. The number of Morgan property owners not on the lake joining in 2012 were 54 (up from 31 previously). Ted expressed that he is pleased with the trends in numbers. He feels that the recognition of donors list and membership list being inserted into the newsletter is good for membership in general. In reporting plans for future he reiterated that it is membership (not the money from it) that is the goal. Through membership we are able to meet educational and other goals. The committee will send the 2013 renewal letter in March and the “forgetful” letter in November. They anticipate spending \$650 for the year. They need more bookmarks. They plan to support continuing to send both newsletters to everyone in Morgan with the lists of donors and members being enclosed in one newsletter. They are discussing an enclosure in the second newsletter that might be a listing of SLA members who have businesses in the area and ask for people to support them. They plan to continue to increase the 71.9 % membership for lake front properties. They plan to also try to continue to attract non-lake front (watershed) persons into membership. Ted reminded the board that an activities committee is needed. The board agreed to add activity committee member suggestions when communicating to Lyman suggestions for officers in the next three weeks. The outing was briefly discussed as it would fall under the planning responsibilities of an activities committee. Various names of people who might be

interested in serving on such a committee were offered.

New Business:

A VT Act 138 Update & FOVLAP Positions report was given by Bruce. He stated that in May 2012 ANR was asked to prepare a report to the legislature about water quality issues in the state. This request resulted in Act 138 which was released on January 14th by ANR. Part 1 of this report (108 pages) deals with general water issues (not lakes). Part 2 (33 pages) is concerned with lakes, shore lands and restoration, etc. The ANR website has all of the pages but persons interested in lake issues only need to look at the 33 pages in part 2. Lyman added that some of the language in part 1 may affect lakes. As this report is a recommendation to the legislature that was requested by them we need to pay attention to it. Bruce reported that on February 8th the House Committee Chair on Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources introduced H.223 concerning the conservation of shore lands. This bill is currently in the the house in a very preliminary form (16 pages long). The thrust of it is that it would give authority to ANR to put together rules with guidelines from Act 138. Towns can enact legislation also but must monitor enforcement of regulations. Act 138 made three recommendations. All three call for statewide regulations and standards. The first variation would be that all control would be held by the state. The second variation is that the state would set minimum standards which locals would enforce. The third variation provided for a middle ground in approach. The basic differences is that it is the proposed enforcement that varies. Bruce reported that FOVLAP has prepared a resolution supporting state regulations. He distributed a copy of that memorandum sent from FOVLAP to Vermont Legislators. It states that FOVLAP supports the Act 138 conclusion that “statewide regulations and enforcement are needed to protect and restore lakeshore buffers, in addition to existing educational outreach.” It also asks the legislators to “consider how neighboring states protect their lakes, note their mistakes (as chronicled in the Act 138 Lake Shoreland report), and develop enforceable statewide regulations to protect and restore Vermont's lakeshore buffers.” Bruce also made available a Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation document summarizing when mandatory shoreline zoning laws were passed in various states including Vermont (1970 passed, 1975 passively repealed). This document also contained information about Maine's law (passed in 1971 and modeled after Vermont's 1970 law) indication that the law is “working” in Maine. FOVLAP is encouraging citizens to be active with respect to monitoring and perhaps influencing H.223 as it is modified in the legislature in Vermont.

The **MWA Actions & Positions** report was given by Peggy. She distributed a letter written by the Memphremagog Watershed Association to our five local representatives serving in the Vermont Legislature. The letter asks for action in the 2013 session and supports the recommendations of the VT-DEC and urges passage of H.223. It also emphasizes that “Vermont is the only northeastern state without state standards.” Other lake associations have voiced support for the MWA letter. Feeling that there is more clout when unity is present the SLA also supports the efforts of the MWA. Lyman will write a letter to Don Hendrich, President of MWA expressing our support. Others may also be copied with the letter at the discretion of the SLA Water Quality committee. Lyman feels that the SLA should develop a list of the items that we would like to see specific to Seymour with respect to regulations. He will begin to develop a list and circulate it to board members to see if we can agree on the most important items regarding Seymour Lake. He feels that the state is not using the lake associations as much as they might to help them with water quality efforts.

Water Quality 2013 Projects:

The **Boat Ramp Status** report was given by Lyman. It is his understanding that a new ramp may be in place by this fall. He feels that the state should solicit suggestions from us as we are aware of the

problems upstream from the ramp.

The **Water Quality Committee Update** report was given by Peggy. She distributed a document outlining proposed water quality projects planned for 2013. There are five. One is to continue to monitor spring phosphorus and lay monitoring data. A second is to work within the MWA with a series of workshops. A third is to offer new programs to Seymour road groups. The fourth is to work with Morgan for town Better Back Roads Grants. And, the fifth is to continue to work with the SLA membership committee to provide new lakeshore owners with membership and water quality materials. Discussion about these efforts ensued. She also showed the board water quality charts recently developed by Erik from data provided by the state that show some reason for optimism. She agreed to distribute those charts to all board members electronically.

The **Milfoil** report was given by Jan. Allan has reported that the town is no longer willing to pick up the cost of unemployment insurance for the two greeters. An extensive discussion followed about the possible solution to this problem. It was felt that more information is needed before we can make firm decisions regarding this matter. Steve will talk with our insurance company to see what the rules are regarding independent contractors. In the meantime it was felt that we should propose to split the costs with the town. Jan agreed to go to the next select board meeting with Allan on February 25th to make this proposal.

A **SLA Swim Program** report was given by Jan. She stated that the planned start date would be the Monday after July 4th (July 8th) if IROC is an option for us. As there are financial problems at IROC we do not know the availability of that option at this time. She did tell Lyman that someone else would be needed to run the program if it goes forward for this summer. A discussion about possible options took place.

The **Outing Committee & Potential Date & Feasibility** report was given with input from all board members. Various options were explored for this year including possibly skipping a year. If an Activities committee can become a reality the Outing would fall under its purview.

A **Newsletter Subjects, Formats & Authors/Timing** report was given by Erik. There was discussion about using a local supplier and the costs associated with it. Erik had sent all board members information about local options prior to the meeting. Lyman feels that the newsletter committee should make the ultimate decision about what printer to use. Erik will again contact all three possible printers for more information and then the committee will make the decision. Erik had also sent newsletter content suggestions to the board prior to the meeting. He verbally added five more suggestions for topics to the written list distributed previously based on ideas that came to him as he listened to board discussions at this meeting.

Other topics that were discussed and comments that were made included suggesting that Lyman had set the date for the **next meeting** as May 17th, 2013.

The meeting adjourned at 12:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean McKenny, Secretary