

LAKE WARAMAUG ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP MEETING
NINTH ANNUAL JOINT MEETING WITH LAKE WARAMAUG TASK FORCE
SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

Peter Bonachea called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

Peter introduced Mark Lyon and Craig Nelson, First Selectmen of Washington and Warren, in attendance and the directors and officers of the Association, as well as Molly Hart, Chairman of the Task Force.

Report of the Nominating Committee. Betty Sutter reported the nomination and election of the following, to serve as officers of the Association: Peter Bonachea, President; Anne Block, Vice President, John Santoleri, Treasurer; Christine Adams Beckett, Recording Secretary; Betty Sutter, Corresponding Secretary.

Peter asked for a moment of Silence in memory of Henry Pennell a member who passed on this year.

Motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the membership meeting of June 7, 2015.
Seconded and passed.

Report of the Lake Waramaug Authority from Ed Berner, Chairman, and Trooper Steve Sordi: It has been a good summer, and very little to report. The "Slow No Wake" program has been a successful start to many years of safer paddling and swimming near the State Park. Ed Berner noted that Steve Sordi has been a great asset to the community. Steve stated that the low water level in the lake has caused some challenges. He has worked closely with the DEEP to get actual location of the buoys defining the Slow No Wake area in accordance with the regulation). The Police boat will leave the lake in the next couple of weeks and the ice rescue airboat will be prepared for the winter season.

In response to questions, Sordi noted that state law required motorboats to limit speed to "Slow No Wake" (6 MPH) within 100 feet of the shore, and that the Authority and the town zoning regulators worked together on questions of appropriate dock specifications (usually a 50 foot maximum length). Hazards on the lake (sandbars and rocks) as a result of the drought and low water levels were discussed. As to the noise of jet ski boats, Sordi responded that the complaints on this subject had been less frequent than in the past, but he encouraged residents to call him to report problems.

Traffic Report. Trooper Sordi reported that the Washington Police had conducted 14 special road patrols on weekends this summer pursuant to the Association-sponsored road safety program. Radar and laser equipment was used. He stated that speeding on the lake roads was reduced, indicating the Association's program was effective. In response to a question about improper parking on Route 45, he noted that parking was legal in some areas, but asked that he be notified if there are additional problems.

Washington Boat Launch. Peter Bonachea reported that the boat launch had functioned well this year. The town's important program for pre-launch inspection of boats and trailers for invasive aquatic weeds continued without user complaints.

Fireworks, Rudy Montgelas, Fireworks Chairman, reported on the July 4 fireworks display. The weather was beautiful, flare sales were great at County Wine and Spirits, Nine Main and the Hopkins Inn. Zambelli Fireworks did a fabulous job, and has two years left on a three year contact. Many thanks to the Shapiros for hosting the display at their property and for feeding the crew, as well as the police and Warren fire department. Many thanks to Officer Sordi for purchasing the buoys required to mark the restricted water safety area, and the Vances for storing them.

Treasurer's Report, John Santoleri, Treasurer, reported on the fiscal year that ended in April. Year-to-date donations are a bit ahead. He noted receipt of a generous bequest from the Estate of George Lidback, resident of Warren who passed away in 2014.

Road Report. Peter Bonachea thanked Betty Sutter for her work in getting the State to repaint the yellow lane divider lines on the lake roads. The structural condition of the roads has been a concern to all residents, particularly on West Shore between the Washington Town Beach and Cheeree point. The Association is working with the State and the town, recognizing the need to find an aesthetically and environmentally sensitive plan for repair.

Lake Waramaug Task Force. Peter introduced Molly Hart, the recently elected Chairman of the Task Force: She noted that the Task Force and the Association work together, but operate separately. Water quality and other ecological concerns of the lake and its watershed are the principal concerns of the Task Force.

Peter Bonochea noted that there was a major problem on which the Association and the Task Force would work closely together; a combination of drought and the condition of the dam and its associated release mechanism at the foot of the lake had resulted in an unusually low water level. These are hard problems which will require a lot of attention.

Mark Lyon, First Selectman of Washington, which owns and controls the dam, gave details of the dam operation. He stated that the town had retained an engineer who would be examining the dam shortly and would make recommendations as to necessary action. He noted that Tom McGowan, Executive Director of the Task Force, had been working with Tony Bedini of the Washington Building and Property Commission to identify the problem and find a long term solution. Residents requested Lyon to take all necessary action to solve the problem as quickly as possible.

Report on "The State of the Lake". Tom McGowan, Executive Director of the Lake Waramaug Task Force, offered his report.

Commenting on the dam problem, Tom noted that the solution will not be achieved quickly, and may involve a multi-year effort. There may be short term steps to be taken by the town, such as the replacement of flash barrier boards on top of the dam, which would adjust the outflow next Spring when the thaw of ice and snow will hopefully contribute to restoring the water level. A minimum outflow must be maintained for aquatic life and fire protection use in the East Aspetuck River, which begins at the dam.

The latest water clarity reading, 7.5 feet, was good, not the best or worst, but unusual considering the heat we experienced this summer. Low water conditions have provided opportunity to control erosion problems, but have exacerbated weed growth. Clear water and low water levels enable more light to reach the weeds, contributing to their growth. Water clarity is desirable, but is thus a “double edged sword”.

Tom described the two new LayerAir systems now installed and operational since early Summer at the tip of Arrow Point. There are now four such systems in the lake, the first two having been installed in 1982 (and subsequently updated) along the Route 45 arm of the lake. The Arrow Point installations replaced the Frost basin-based system, which was less effective. The new installation, handling much more water, cost \$150,000—a big investment, but the environmental payoffs will be large.

There is a significant lake delta problem at the mouth of Sucker Brook, off North Shore Road in Warren. Low water has worsened the problem. Rain storms erode soil from the banks of Sucker Brook filling the delta with sediment. Eroded soil from 20 major erosion sites on Sucker Brook need to be stabilized. We need to re-grade the upper bank and stream bank, place heavy plastic liner on the stream bank and stabilize it with layers of large rocks. The existing angled slope of boulders on the upper bank has been re-graded, seeded and stabilized thanks to the drought. Yet, 20 more sites need attention.

Curly leaf pondweed sites have increased this year. There are not as many plants, but the spread continues. Divers have laid down tarps under water to prevent growth, but they often aren't completely successful. A suction harvesting machine has been utilized, which has been more effective. The fight is manageable but difficult. Invasive plants are hard to get rid of. Lake conditions have led to an increased proliferation of weeds this summer. Divers say that Robbins Pondweed (a native plant, not invasive) has been prolific. Underwater surveys of plant life will begin earlier next year. Weed growth is a “moving picture” we have to keep up with.

Returning to the discussion of the dam problem, Tom noted that reconstituting flash boards will be good short term solution. Water levels that are so changeable are damaging to the health and ecology of the lake. The Task Force's Limnologist (lake scientist), Dr. Robert Kortmann, points out other benefits from reconstruction of the dam relating to more efficient management of the lake level and outflow for more natural spillage from the lake surface and improved shoreline management and maintenance..

In response to questions, Tom said that Dr. Kortmann is recommending that the Task Force use the Frost site basins to raise *Daphnia* (also known as water fleas), small crustaceans which eat algae, and introducing them to the lake. This would be an attempt to restore the eco-balance of life in the lake which was harmed by the State's introduction of alewives into the lake in the 1960s. While it is hard to recreate the balance of nature, this modest investment would have a great possible payoff. The Task Force also stocks the lake with Brown Trout, another attempt at balance as trout eat alewives.

Asked about Zebra Mussels, a problem at other lakes, Tom noted that they are still not a concern for Waramaug, since the pH level in our lake is unfavorable to the survival of Zebra Mussels.

President's Statement.

Peter Bonachea confirmed that the Association and the Task Force will work with the Town of Washington to solve the dam problem.

Canada Geese are also a continuing problem. This Summer the swimming beach at the State Park had to be closed on several occasions because of the bacteria level caused by geese guano.

There have been reports of bears in the area. Be aware.

At her request, Irma Ernhout read an open letter dealing principally with environmental concerns of adverse effects on the lake of fertilizing grounds and water withdrawals by the Lake Waramaug Country Club. She also noted that the condition of the lake roads is also a concern. Peter acknowledged her concerns and remarked that the Board of Governors of the Country Club should be also addressed by Ms Ernhout.

Concerns were also expressed about the increase in construction projects at the lake, and the need for appropriate enforcement of the zoning and wetlands regulations by the towns. There was further discussion concerning the need for prompt action to address the dam problem. The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Adams Beckett, Recording Secretary