

**MINUTES OF MEETING
LAKE ST. CATHERINE CONSERVATION FUND, Inc.**

Date & time: July 27, 2019, 10:00 AM, Wells Village School

Format: Annual Members Meeting

Attendance:

Board members: Robin Barley, David Emmons, Tim Makepeace, Michael Marine, Tina Peterson, Bob Short and Dennis Stark

Public: Approximately 33 individuals including Senator Brian Collamore and Representative Robin Chesnut-Tangerman

Welcome

Consideration of the 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes: Michael Marine opened the floor to comments or corrections to these minutes which have been available on the LSCCF website throughout the past year. In the absence of comments, he asked for a show of hands to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Consideration of Changes to Bylaws: After reminding the members that the current by-laws remain on the website and that the board had emailed or mailed the proposed new version to all members in June, Marine reviewed the key proposed changes. These are:

*4.1 **Due Dates:** Dues are payable upon joining the LSCCF. Members renewing annual membership must have made payment by June 30 of each year.*

CHANGE: Previously, dues were due by September 30. The change is designed to align the membership year and the budget year.

*5.3 **Minutes:** The Secretary shall keep written minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors and the Annual Meeting.*

CHANGE: Previously, the by-laws called for the meetings to be written and maintained as recordings. The change more accurately reflects current Board practice. In addition, minutes of regular board meetings are available upon request.

*5.6 **Voting:** At the discretion of the President, voting on any issue may be conducted by a show of hands or in writing. Proxy votes must be made in writing or by email, signed by the voting members, and presented to the Secretary at least five (5) days before the voting for verification of legitimacy.*

CHANGE: Previously, the by-laws called for the appointment of three tellers to count votes. The Board dropped that provision in the interest of simplicity.

*7.3 **Duties of the Vice President:** The Vice President shall, in the absence or incapacity of the President, perform the President's duties and exercise his powers.*

CHANGE: The Board tightened up the language in this section in the interest of simplicity.

*7.5 **Duties of the Treasurer:** Final sentence changed to read: All disbursements in excess of \$1,000 must have the approval of the Board of Directors.*

CHANGE: The Board recommends this change Since Section 8.4 *Special Duties of Committee Chairs* reads in part: *Subsequent adoption of the annual budget by the Board of Directors will constitute authorization for the respective committees to spend up to a limit of \$1,000 on any adopted budgeted item without further approval; ...*

8.3 Other Committees: *Committees shall be named and appointed to take charge of areas of interest or activity that are consistent with the LSCCF's objectives.*

CHANGE: Previously, this section listed a number of committees that are no longer active or never were set up. This change simplifies the language.

9.1 Fiscal Year: *The LSCCF's fiscal year shall be from July 1st to June 30th.*

CHANGE: Previously, the fiscal year ran from January 1st to December 31st. However, with the core of the LSCCF's activities taking place in the summer months, this change provides better financial control.

Marine also explained that in the course of the review of the by-laws, changes were made to correct the numbering of sections and to tighten the language. Prior to sending the new version out to the members, the changes were reviewed and approved by the entire Board. Marine then asked for a show of hands of all those who approve the new version of the by-laws. The revised version was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Tina Peterson summarized the 2018-2019 Budget and Actuals and the 2019-2020 (attached). The LSCCF began the 2018-2019 year with \$26,540 on hand. It had budgeted for \$73,992 in revenue and took in \$70,397. Total anticipated expenses were \$60,360, but only \$43,111 was spent. The LSCCF started the 2019-2020 year with \$27,286 on hand. With anticipated new revenue of \$42,293, total revenue will be \$69,579. Anticipated expenses total \$48,096, leaving an anticipated net balance on June 30, 2020 of \$21,483. By a show of hands, the members approved the 2019-2020 budget unanimously. **Audit Committee Report:** Peterson reported that the 2018 audit showed no irregularities.

Harvesting Committee Report: Bob Short shared a summary of maintenance/repair actions on both the orange and blue harvesters. He laid out the funding assumptions for the harvesting program and noted that the cost of having your lawn mowed throughout the summer runs three to four times the per household cost of the harvesting program. The combination of heavy rainfall this spring and the unwillingness of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to allow the aerators to be turned back on resulted in record milfoil and other plant growth.

Overcoming a somewhat slow start due to maintenance issues, the orange harvester is operating at 90-95%. We have harvested 150 loads thus far, while last year, the program cut a total of 208 loads by season's end. He noted that we had hoped to purchase a new engine for the orange harvester, but were forced to get a used one instead to save money. The bottom line is that the equipment is not new and will need constant maintenance. As a result, the harvesting project remains underfunded.

Asked about the blue harvester and the volunteer program, Short said that the blue machine has serious pontoon leaks, but we still hope to get it on the water this season. The State funding is insufficient to cover this, but if the funds become available through new donations or savings, we will organize a volunteer program. Asked how much is needed, Short explained fixing the blue harvester would cost around \$2,000, but a robust, well-funded harvesting program would require \$42-45,000 per year. To pick up a refurbished

used machine would run about \$60,000. Short closed with a clear appeal for more donations to allow us to expand the program.

Other comments and questions: 1) Are we running the harvester program (a necessary evil) at the expense of not pursuing the dredging option? Answer: While we have a permit for an experimental, limited dredging program, we have not seen any indication that the DEC would approve a full-scale dredging program, even if we could find a way to finance it. (Later, Marine noted that one of the new board members has agreed to focus on the dredging option in the upcoming year.) 2) How much are we paying for the harvesting contract and who has it? We put the contract out to bid, and Green Mountain Building Services came in with the lowest offer of \$32.50/hour. The next closest was \$36/hr. The \$32.50/hr. figure compares very favorably to a similar project on Lake Bomoseen where the contractor is charging \$150/hr. 3) If the blue machine is repaired, where will it be parked? On the east side. 4) Why is harvesting delayed until mid-June? Short explained that the timing of harvesting is tied to the fish spawning cycle.

Aeration Committee: David Emmons ran through timeline of our efforts to persuade the DEC to maintain and expand the aeration program. Using maps, photos and props, he pointed out the numerous misconceptions that color DEC's wrong-headed thinking, including the canard that Little Lake is a wetland and that it only achieved limited body-of-water status after the south end was dammed. He noted the dispute over the efficacy of aeration, with DEC holding that the aerators have no positive impact on the lake depth. He demonstrated the weaknesses in the DEC's rake-toss method for measuring depth to soft bottom as compared to the method he uses of a weighed pole with a disc on the bottom. He explained the errors built in to DEC's methodology for using bio scans (not done at ice-out; no benchmarking at the dam face). Just that morning, he filmed himself measuring the depth at over 9 feet, despite DEC's insistence that the lake is no deeper than 5.5 feet. (He noted the "coincidence" that the figure of 5.5 feet is part of the State's definition of a wetland.) In response to a question about next steps, Marine noted that obtaining a green light for the use of enzymes is a must and to do so, we will need to work closely with our scientific team to define outcome criteria that the State cannot refute. Another huge task is lining up funding. We have a soft quote of \$400,000 for a three-year project, but we need to firm up those numbers. Given the benefits to the commercial firm of a successful project, we hope to arrange a price reduction on the enzymes. Despite the many obstacles still ahead, we are shooting for a spring kickoff. Past LSCCF president Bill Steinmetz and his wife, Judith, generously offered a \$1,000 donation once the aeration petition is approved.

Election of a New Board of Directors: Since no one from the Nominating Committee was able to attend the meeting, Marine introduced the candidates for election. The following current board members chose to stand again for election: Robin Barley, David Emmons, Paul Labas, Tim Makepeace, Michael Marine, Tina Peterson, Bob Short and Dennis Stark. The three first-time candidates were Rick Newell, Susan Ritchie and Rich Young. In addition, Tyler Manning nominated himself from the floor. The only question from the floor was whether there is a cap on the number of directors. Marine explained the by-laws require at least seven directors, but are silent regarding a cap. By a show of hands, the members approved the slate of 12 candidates unanimously.

Election of a New President and Vice President: By a unanimous show of hands, David Emmons was elected President and Michael Marine Vice President. No other candidates put their names forward for consideration.

Membership: Marine mentioned that the Board has been conducting outreach in an attempt to boost membership. Despite this effort, we currently only have 71 member families, down from 87 last year. Some

of that decline may be caused by an increase in the number of homes for sale. In light of the financial issues discussed earlier in the meeting, it is important for everyone to encourage others to join.

Thank You to Former Directors: Emmons thanked four longstanding directors who stepped down since the last Annual Meeting: Bill Steinmetz (President), Lee Evans (Secretary), Fran Gilman and Joel Pliner. He presented an inscribed vase to Steinmetz for his dedication to and leadership of LSCCF over the past nine years.

The Annual Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:15 pm.