

Citizens for the Preservation of Waterman Lake
Spring meeting May 25, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm.

Officers present:

Jeff D'Antuono, President, Ken Robertson, Vice President, Phil Viall, Treasurer and Liz Viall, Secretary.

Members present:

John and Leslie Tucker, Stephanie Corsetti, Kevin Moran, Mike Stewart, Andrea Robertson, Claudette Viall, Brian Reall, Pat and Pam Mitchell, Michael Furia, Tom Viall, Karyn and Dennis Rhieu, Scott D'Allesandro, Jean Eaton, Robert Federico, Kyle Regnault, Mike Robinson, Joe and Carol Battaglia, Nancy and Burt Batty, Michael St. Angelo, Carol Macari, Jerry Haynes, Barbara and David Postler, Nick Lusignan, Sarah Viall, Stephen Fava

Minutes were accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report:

We collected \$24,214.26 in dues in 2021. \$500 came from a previous year's unpaid dues, and of the total, between \$6,000 and \$7,000 came in after the June 3 "doomsday" letter calling for fund to pay for dam repairs. Ken Martins death brought in \$1700 in donations.

2021 Expenses:

Beyond the expected expenses for mowing and maintenance, we had to engage Pare Corporation to conduct a dam study on what is now considered to be out unsafe dam, which cost \$20,000.

The Emergency Account is what used to be called the Fireworks Account. We had planned to transfer a surplus into it, but were unable to do so because the funds had to go to studying how to repair the dam.

Two other expenses, for our Post Office Box in Harmony and for annual Secretary of State filings, were not completed in 2020. The 2021 records shows paying both the amount in arrears, and our filings and box rental for the 2021 year.

The reverse side of the Treasurer's Report shows a list of dues paying members. Phil asked that people let him know if this list needs any corrections. Waterman Lake Shores has paid dues, even though they are not on the list. These names are also on our website.

So far in 2022 we have received \$6,026 in dues, with more checks coming in tonight before the meeting.

Expenses are negligible except for Pare Corporation. Pare has been paid and the contract for the engineering study on the dam is now closed.

We do show an administration fee from the bank; at one point our account balance fell below \$5,000.

The three instances of \$500 was Camp Russell paying for three years' worth of dues. The checks had been sent in, but we never received them, possibly because of COVID delivery issues in 2020 and 2021. So far this year, Gloucester Country Club, The Lakes and Camp Russell have paid.

The Treasurer's report was approved.

Dam Maintenance Committee:

The violations we are trying to repair is main topic. We did not get a report until April from Pare. From this, it would appear that trees being cut by the dam was the first item, then pulling the stumps from those trees and filling in was second, with rip rap added as a third step in the process. We applied for a permit to cut trees, which was finally approved on March 31. Mark Krawiecz was willing to cut the trees, but wet ground around the site deferred the work until this coming winter, when the ground will be frozen and able to hold his equipment.

Mike Furia has the contract for cutting the dam three times per year. We will proceed with that. Jeff was going to suggest extra work, but we do not have the funds at this point. We will need to evaluate how to do work in fall. Mike Stewart noted that the team worked well doing plates this year. The level is a little low now, but one rain should bring it back up. Once tree cutting was clearly not happening, the plates went in. We will adhere to Pare's recommendations on time for work; we need to address it within two years. It will depend on fund raising. Any thoughts on a capital campaign needs to begin with a discussion with DEM outlining what we can do, what needs engineering plans, and what needs PE involvement. Depending on answers to these questions, the cost could range from \$20,000 to \$80,000. DEM does allow maintenance w/o permit, but changing the dam's slope requires permit. The permit is free but the engineering plan costs money. DEM did approve the report and requirements, but as long as we are making progress, we're good. If we're not making progress, they will send violation letters. They can force a lower level. Tree removal has to happen in winter for frozen ground and lower level. The dam is not in trouble, but seepage shouldn't be allowed to get worse. Any grading would be on the dam's backside, to reinforce the dam and fill holes where stumps and roots had been. Pare recommended compacting and setting a specific slope. The dam will still leech, but DEM will be happy. In terms of adding dirt, it adds more soil to fill soft areas and places that have sunk as roots have been removed. Toe drains been there since 1800s and are a part of any dam construction; you can see them on West Greenville Rd. This seepage has been going on for years, but it's now carrying sediment, which is the problem. Pare did not recommend mats, as the source was not a site in the lake side of the dam.

The Committee report was approved.

President's report:

A bill in the General Assembly has been introduced by George Nardone, who serves the Johnson's Pond area. It is Bill #H8205, and reads (in part) as follows:

CHAPTER 19.1 DAM PERMITS

46-19.1-1. Permits required for certain dams.

Any person who owns or operates a dam that has the capacity to store greater than one thousand four hundred (1,400) normal storage acre feet of water shall apply to the director of the department of environmental management for a permit to raise or lower the water level behind the dam. The owner or operator shall apply for a permit, and until such time as a permit is issued by the director, the owner or operator shall operate the dam in a manner that is consistent with historic use as determined by the director. The director may enforce this section in accordance with chapters 17.1 and 17.6 of title 42. This section shall not apply to dams that impound water for a public water supply system as defined in § 46-13-2. The department may promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this chapter.

Jeff was concerned we would need to get a permit every time we raise and lower the water. Nardone assured Jeff it would not affect us because of our historic work with lake levels. Nonetheless, Jeff wanted to bring this to everyone's attention. Our own area representative was part of the sponsoring group of representatives on this bill. Tom Viall noted that there are two Senate bills addressing unsafe dams, including one that might provide funding. He spoke with a legislative aide at DEM, who said there was no house companion bill, and was therefore unlikely to pass. However, we should probably keep a better eye on Smith Hill for bills relating to dams. While having a lobbyist would be very expensive, there are low-cost and free services that will search for key words in proposed legislation. Jeff said he would call Judy Callenda at Save the Lakes, as they might have heard of pending bills as well.

There was a question of whether a weed study was or could be underway. Save the Lakes does this, trying to ease permitting requirements on weed removal. We're seeing more weeds here but haven't done anything yet. Herbicides tend to be used in small ponds and coves and can cost a lot. On draw down – 8-10 weeks of frost generally kills weeds. We have not gotten that much cold weather recently.

There is no Water Quality Report (Nancy is not at the meeting). But if you see weeds and especially new weeds, let Jeff know. Keep an eye out for cyanobacteria as well. Testing will go on this summer. Coming off winter, the water is great – it's as summer progresses that we see changes. URI only does two tributaries now. The ongoing studies are paid for by the Town of Smithfield.

Jeff solicited the Gloucester Budget Board for money to maintain and repair the dam. He was turned down, because they would have to do it for every lake if they did it for us.

President's report approved.

Old Business:

Mike Stewart presented a fundraising idea to sell boat stickers as an additional way to add revenue for lake maintenance. He wants to charge \$100 each year for non resident or non-member boats. It will cost \$400 to print the stickers, and proposes that we ask everyone using the lake but not living here to pay for a sticker. Members would receive one sticker per boat at no cost. Stickers have numbers. In terms of enforcement, he found that Waterman Lake Shores went from 40 to 85 percent paying through educating residents and asking them directly to pay dues. Mike wants to see Steere's Marina and Gloucester Country Club make it mandatory. We could hire a police officer on a boat to patrol, and ask non-payees to buy a sticker. He also has other fundraising ideas, and will talk with Jeff. Stickers are the most immediate, and could give us \$20,000 a year. He would also include jet skis. Having the stickers drives home the point that we are a private lake. He already knows some people at the Marina who are willing to buy one. Jeff recommended starting with flyers. Jeff spoke with Elaine's son about stickers and flyers, and reiterated that everyone paying dues gets a sticker. The motion to begin the sticker program, approving \$400 for cost of printing was made and seconded. In discussion the additional point of non-dues paying residents paying for a sticker was raised. There was concern that corporate members will not pay dues if the stickers are enforced on their customers. Power of enforcement is an issue, but Jeff felt we need to educate and begin the process. Boaters don't know what we do and what it costs, until the water gets drawn down. Then they know. He recommended flyers and then stickers, but educate first. There was an unresolved question about who owned the land under water if we don't own water, and if we don't own the water, do we have right to control it, with attendant water rights. The Motion for \$400 to for stickers, powered boats only was adopted. Phil started a brochure on the lake, for Jeff and Mike to continue on.

New Business:

Scott noted that companies will sometimes match on donations, and we should publicize this more. This could double the amounts brought in from at least some members dues.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Viall

Secretary, Citizens for the Preservation of Waterman Lake

