

Minutes—10/26/15 Lake Josephine Improvement Association Homeowners' Meeting Recorded by: Pam Newcome, Secretary

The Lake Josephine Improvement Association held its annual homeowners' meeting from 7-8 p.m. Monday night in the Rose Room at the Oval. The purpose of the meeting was to update neighbors on the condition of the lake and to discuss future treatment and funding needs. Approximately 40 homeowners attended.

Welcome/Intro—R.J. Newcome, Lake Josephine Improvement Association President

- We were all pleased to see so many new faces in the audience!
- R.J. welcomed attendees and provided a brief overview of the Association, which was formed in 1996 to protect and preserve the lake. Significant work went on for years behind the scenes to monitor and keep our lake pristine.
- When Lake Josephine was diagnosed with a Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) infestation in Fall 2012, it necessitated both an expansion of the Board and a multi-faceted approach to address the issue.
- Starting in 2013, the Lake Josephine Improvement Association began annual homeowners' meetings to keep neighbors apprised, discuss treatment plans, and to solicit voluntary contributions for treatment. This was our third such meeting.
- As a backdrop to R.J.'s talk, we showcased our brand new website, which just went live following the meeting. It contains a breadth of information, to include history of the lake, information about the lake association, aquatic plant management (i.e., status of lake, our treatment history, maps and future treatment plans), fundraising goals, and more.
- R.J. recognized Catherine Robinson, who led the effort to develop the website. It is state-of-the-art and should serve as a valuable resource to homeowners, local entities we work with, and the community.
- He also acknowledge the generosity of Catherine, Therace Risch, and Brett & Jamie Schreiber, who donated the upfront development costs for the website. Thank you all!

Aquatic Invasive Species Update—R.J. Newcome

The Problem

- R.J. explained that there are three categories of aquatic invasive species we need to be concerned about:
 - **Invasive weeds & algae such as Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM), Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) and Filamentous Algae**—Unfortunately, our lake was infested with all three in 2015.
 - EWM is our top priority. It cannot be eradicated, it can only be controlled. Left unchecked it can overtake a lake, leaving it unnavigable by boats and unsafe for swimming and water sports. It can also severely impact property values.
 - CLP naturally dies down by mid- to late-June, but it's problematic for those who engage in water sports early in the season.
 - Likewise, algae tends to dissipate over time with waves and boat traffic. However, when present, it can be pungent, unsightly and generally unpleasant.
 - **Zebra Mussels**—Based on a Sept. lake study, we are fortunate NOT to have these, but they are a growing problem in many lakes.
 - Early detection and rapid response is critical with Zebra Mussels.

- R.J. shared DNR's tips to minimize the likelihood of Zebra Mussel/other contaminants:
 - Always empty water from your boats when moving between different bodies of water
 - Inspect your boat for invasive species
 - If you purchase a used dock or lift, allow it to dry for 21 days before putting it in the lake—this will kill Zebra Mussels
 - If you spot Zebra Mussels in the lake, on your dock, boat, etc. PLEASE contact a member of your lake association—or the DNR—immediately!
- **Carp**—When carp reach a concentration of > than 100 lbs /acre, they negatively impact water quality and clarity by stirring up lake sediment and releasing phosphorous into the water. Fortunately, Lake Josephine does not have a carp problem.

The Solution—Historically

- We have been working with DNR to chemically treat EWM for the past three years. Results have generally been successful.
- In 2015, we also had significant infestations of CLP and Filamentous Algae, largely because spring conditions were highly conducive to their growth.
- We chose NOT to treat for CLP or algae in 2015, primarily due to lack of funding.
- Given the prevalence of EWM in Lake Josephine, DNR granted us a variance to treat 24.1 acres in 2015, which is more than our normal allowable limit.
- 2015 treatment cost was \$8,194 (\$340/acre). Those costs were covered by homeowner contributions, plus a DNR grant of \$2,300. Any remaining funds carried forward to support 2016 treatment.

The Solution—Going Forward

- Our 2016 goal is to try to get ahead of the weed problem via early treatment of EWM and CLP. (We would only consider 2016 Filamentous Algae treatment IF it proved to be a significant problem like last year.)
- Rationale for early EWM and CLP treatment: *IF* we can knock down the weeds before they begin to grow and seed, there will be a double-benefit: 1) the weeds won't get as dense and bothersome early in the season and 2) there will be less decaying weeds in the lake later in the season. R.J. noted that one of the reasons the lake seemed so murky this Fall was that we had a significant amount of decaying plant matter in the water—either those that were killed by our purposeful treatments or those that died naturally on their own. They release phosphorous as they decay, which negatively impacts water clarity.
- R.J. explained that, as a stipulation of being allowed treatment variances the past few years, DNR is now requiring that we enter into a 5-year Lake Vegetation Management Plan (LVMP), which monitors the impact of treatment on the overall lake ecosystem. It also streamlines the entire permitting and treatment process.
- Some associations pay up to \$5,000 for these plans. They often amortize them over a 5-year period so that they have a more manageable average annual cost in the \$1,000 range.
- A requirement of the LVMP is that we hire a third party vendor to conduct annual Plant Survey(s), which provide weed coordinates to DNR. Each plan can cost up to \$3,000.
- We have been working closely with DNR and RCWD to solicit their help with both the LVMP and the Plant Survey. We have been encouraged by their responsiveness and support.
- R.J. informed us that, unfortunately, funding for DNR grants will be significantly lower in 2016 and beyond, and we should not build future subsidies into our plans.
- Our ability to treat primarily depends on having funds available at the time treatment is needed, and we rely on the generosity of our homeowners to make that possible.

2016 Contribution Targets for Offshore Treatment—Jamie Schreiber, Fundraising Chair

- Jamie provided a brief 2014 and YTD 2015 financial. (See PowerPoint document, which is the second attachment in the email accompanying these minutes.)
- She referenced the fluctuation in our checking account balance. We dip the lowest in mid-summer, which means that we could find ourselves unable to respond IF faced with a catastrophic event such as a Zebra Mussel infestation, where a rapid response is critical.
- In reviewing our Contribution History, Jamie noted that our fiscal reporting is based on the calendar year, while our contribution reporting is based on a seasonal contribution cycle. She informed the group that the 2016 contribution cycle was being kicked off at this meeting.
- As indicated in the Contribution History slide, offshore treatment costs grew by >25% in 2015 as our weed problem grew. Thankfully, we saw a marked increase in the number of lakeshore properties contributing towards treatment, growing from 63% in 2014 to nearly 80% in 2015. Similarly, average contributions increased during that same timeframe from \$127/property to \$208/property. THANK YOU to all those who contributed!
- Jamie explained that our Board spent considerable time deliberating over a 2016 contribution target for offshore treatment, and that many different opinions and viewpoints were vetted before we arrived at our final recommendation.
- Jamie reiterated the considerations that went into developing the 2016 target range:
 - Our desire to treat both EWM and CLP in 2016, and to potentially treat Filamentous Algae if it should become as great—or greater—a nuisance as it was last season.
 - Potentially higher costs if our infestations grow and/or herbicides need to be changed up due to weed resistance.
 - Ongoing costs associated with the plant surveys, which are requirements of the LVMP.
 - Shrinking DNR grant subsidies.
 - The need to begin developing a contingency fund so that we have the financial wherewithal to respond if we find ourselves faced with a new invasive issue, especially one in which rapid response is critical.
- Jamie walked through the 2016 Treatment Plan and its associated cost. The treatment plan was presented in a two-tier manner:
 - **2016 Base Case Scenario—Focused on 2016 Treatment Only**
 - Allowed for early CLP and EWM treatment, with a second spot treatment of any resilient EWM patches.
 - Assumed no cost for the LVMP or the Plant Survey.
 - Assumed no DNR grant.
 - Resulting 2016 overall minimum cost = **\$15,600**
 - **2016 AND Future Preparedness Scenario—Additional considerations be added to Base Case**
 - Spot treatment of Filamentous Algae, if deemed necessary
 - Need to build a contingency/preparedness fund so that we are able to treat new and different infestations in a timely manner as they arise
 - Resulting 2016 cost of \$7,440, which would be ADDED to the Base Case = **\$23,040.**
- Our Board used the \$15,600 and the \$23,040 as the low and high end, respectively, of our treatment cost range. Our goal was to present a realistic view of potential treatment scenarios, and we felt this range represented that.
- We then broke that range into a per property recommendation, assuming ~70% homeowner participation. **The resulting 2016 recommended contribution was \$350-\$500 per property.**

- Jamie acknowledged that not all of us might be in a position to give at that level, and that *any* amount would be greatly appreciated.
- She also acknowledged that some of us may be in a position to give more and, if so, we'd be extremely thankful for that generosity.
- She also noted that since our contribution cycle does not correspond to a calendar year, it's sometimes been difficult for neighbors to keep track of whether or not they donated during a particular season. To solve that problem—and to recognize homeowners for their generosity—contributors will be formally thanked on the website. Contributors names will be listed under the corresponding contribution cycle in the “Supporters” tab on our website.
- Jamie ended by reminding attendees that we are all in this together as neighbors.

Homeowner Engagement—Pam Newcome, Lake Josephine Improvement Association Secretary

- Pam noted that—in addition to the benefits of protecting the lake and our property values—bonding together as a lake association also enables a more closely-knit community.
- She explained that one of the Board's missions is to foster homeowner engagement, specifically creating opportunities for neighbors to meet and get to know each other.
- To that end, we initiated two social events which we hope will become annual favorites:
 - Annual Flotilla (held first in July 2014 and again in July 2015)
 - Timing corresponds with Taste of Shoreview
 - Neighbors tie boats together on the lake to enjoy the evening fireworks
 - Everyone brings a appetizer to share, and people mingle between boats
 - We were happy to have 10-11 boats in 2014, and thrilled to have 18 in 2015!
 - Winter Blast (held in Feb. 2015)
 - Progressive gathering on the frozen lake
 - Participating homes set up shoreline tables
 - Warm beverages and treats helped to offset the frigid temps
 - Ended with a large bonfire at north end of the lake
 - ~20 hearty individuals braved frigid temps and gale force winds to attend
 - We're open to additional events, and welcome ideas!
- Pam asked neighbors to do a few things before they left the meeting:
 - Help us maintain accurate contact info by reviewing/updating their data. If you didn't get a chance to do so and have updates, please contact Pam directly at info@lakejosephineimprovementassociation.com All data will be held as confidential and only used to share pertinent info.
 - Complete a volunteer survey located on each table. The intent was to match areas of homeowner interest/expertise with the Association's areas of need. For those who wished to but did not complete one, it is included as the third attachment in the accompanying email. Again, please return it to Pam.
 - Sign a DNR multi-party application signature sheet, IF they agreed with the Board's recommendation to be prepared to treat algae, if necessary, in 2016. Offshore algae treatment requires approval by 51% of lakeshore homeowners. If you are interested in signing but did not, please contact Pam.
- Pam also asked that, following the meeting, attendees share the recap with neighbors who weren't able to attend.
- She also encouraged all to visit our amazing new website: <http://lakejosephineimprovementassociation.com/>

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO ATTENDED THE MEETING.
WE HOPE YOU FOUND IT INFORMATIVE AND PRODUCTIVE!**