



**Liberty Township Environmental Commission
Minutes of Monthly Meeting**

2021 May 20 (NO Quorum)

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. This meeting was advertised on the Township Website Blog as Zoom Only, with login instructions, and on LTEC's Facebook page.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Larry Supp, Maureen Bonner, Rich Larsen (LACK OF A QUORUM)

Absent: Doug Wright

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Martine Kieffer, Sarah Longo, Doug Hankin

Approval of minutes: The Minutes from February 18, 2021 and April 15, 2021 could not be approved due to lack of a quorum on Zoom.

Communications: Maureen received an informal communication from Shannon. Now that she is no longer part of the Environmental Commission, there is no longer a liaison between the EC and the Mountain Lake Association. Perhaps we could solicit one of our members to serve on both the EC and Lake Association. That member would convey information and participate in the Lake Association. Doug Wright is member by reason of Statute. Topic to be added to the June agenda.

Old Business

- Purchase of additional sandwich boards – Voting on additional sandwich posters will need to be deferred to the June meeting due to lack of a quorum. Last batch of posters cost \$22 each. The vendor confirmed that the more you purchase at one time, the cheaper each one is. If we bought 10, they would be \$18 each. Rich is looking into the idea of having them printed on both sides at a cost of \$20 each, which could be a good alternative in terms of cost saving.
- Use of sandwich boards by other Liberty Twp. Groups – Discussions and voting to be deferred to the June meeting due to lack of quorum.

New Business

- Roadway catch basin discharge area near boat launch and pavilion – Princeton Hydro checked on the roadway catch basin. They thought the area looked okay. It has a

detention area where silt can accumulate instead of going into the lake. Looks like there is no longer an issue. Rich questioned the other catch basins/ditch in front of the apartment building and by the dock. That seems like something Princeton Hyrdo should also handle. Larry suggested it is something we look into before the next meeting and add to the agenda for June as "Roadway Catch Basin discharges."

- Marueen inquired about a previous request for pricing on a permeable parking lot when talking about the Highlands monies. There should be a blueprint that Rutgers was involved in designing. Not sure if it was priced out, but maybe put out an inquiry about other areas in which this has been done and what the cost was for those other projects, so we have an idea. This is an area that will need to be addressed in the near future, as the potholes keep getting bigger and the patching will only last so long. There was hope that with the Highland commission membership we may be able to take advantage of the monies that are available through that. This would be one big project that we were hoping we could push with the township. Larry advised that if it was contingent upon Highlands conformance, that is a big step. It was investigated with Shannon. Dave Rogers on the town committee had the people from the Highlands attend one of the town committee meetings, but it seemed like the committee was not interested in doing anything with the Highlands at that time. They dealt with them when they first started with the Highlands Act and the impression is that they expect the town to put out the money and then get the money back. The town put out the money for something and never received reimbursement. Maureen's understanding was that with that project was 90% complete, but there were still things that did not meet all the requirements. A small percent went unfulfilled because we dropped the ball. She never heard anything about the amount of money that is available if we are fully compliant. Rich agreed that is the full story, but the committee still gives the impression that they are not interested in it. It is a shame because there is a lot of money available for environmental work. As far as the parking lot goes, they had someone put in for a grant and it did not work out. The grant was separate from the Highlands proposal. Maureen suggests we do not lose sight of this issue, as it would certainly be beneficial for the lake, parking, visual, etc. Apparently, the grants are not easy to get but it's worthwhile pursuing if the issues with Highlands are not favorable. There are pros and cons to entering a conformance, so the reluctance is understandable. Highlands is just one example of where we thought we could access those funds. This could be another thing we could team up with the Mountain Lake Association on.
- Lake monitoring training – The 15th was a great day out on the lake. All the equipment worked. The readings Bob Ballou took with the borrowed meter were all very low at a reading of 6-8. The NJ DEP would want to test the water if the readings were at a 12 or higher. Bob went again Wednesday to collect samples in bottles that the DEP picked up and will be tested. Results will be on the DEP website. They are letting us collect the samples, they will come and pick them up as part of the program of them loaning the equipment out to the Lake Association or Lake Subcommittee. There are three entities involved in the lake monitoring program, our Environmental Commission; the Mountain Lake Community Association; and the Subcommittee. There is a lake Subcommittee that's an informal subcommittee of the township committee with

members who were appointment by mayor. They are charged with obtaining information and bringing it back to the town committee with regards to the condition of the lake. They meet regularly but not on a set schedule. Rich is a member of the subcommittee. There is a lake monitoring schedule now and the final arrangements for who is going to do what is going to be worked out this week, even though samples were already taken. Last Saturday we collected two samples that will be analyzed by a lab in Hillsborough and the others were field measurements of temperature every three feet down to the bottom at three different locations including the deepest part of the lake. We got a temperature curve. The temperature at the bottom of the lake is about 42 degrees Fahrenheit and it stays that cold because it does not circulate. We got measurements of dissolved oxygen at the bottom of the lake that were quite low at less than one part per million whereas at the top of the lake the oxygen level was 10 to 12 parts per million, which is decent. We will keep monitoring these measurements at a couple of points both shallow and deep. We will also be sending those samples to be analyzed at a lab monthly from the middle of the lake at about 30 feet down. That lab will check for phosphorous which is the element to look for in the event you are concerned about a blue green algae boom. The algae need several nutrients but that one is normally in shortest supply for the blue green algae. When that nutrient increases it affects the rate at which the blue green algae will proliferate. Whereas the other elements are enough for what the algae needs. Where is the funding coming from? The Lake Community Association funded the lab and contract with Princeton Hydro. The Lake Association oversees this operation, and they are working with the subcommittee to decide on what should be done, how many samples should be sent, and what we should check for. They arrived at a conclusion on what procedures are best for monitoring. What we did on Saturday worked very well so we will repeat that. Each time it gets done it will go faster. This last round was a training session that was run by a scientist from Princeton Hydro and person started from scratch to explain what we needed to do for monitoring of blue green algae and other lake attributes. It took a couple of hours before getting out on boats/canoes. We set up at 3 different locations. South, middle, and North end of the lake. Took the depth, checked for water clarity, and dissolved oxygen was measured with a meter that has a long cord. You drop the probe down and see what the meter reads every three feet. We used a submersible to collect samples of surface water and from 30 feet down. Those samples will be analyzed for phosphorus to keep tabs on those levels.

- Procedure for placing news and new postings on LTEC FB and LTEC Township website – This should be discussed when we have more members. The concern was that one person should oversee doing this. That way we maintain control over what gets posted and how it gets posted. That person would take direction from the commission on what we want during the meetings. To clarify, it does not mean that unexpected posts would have to wait for the monthly meeting to get posted. Not everything will need to be voted on. Anything that cannot be anticipated will just need to be handled via email. Perhaps the chairman could convey the EC's wishes to the person handling it. That may be sufficient as long as we are all in agreement or in some cases there may be something that doesn't need agreement such as an event date change. Maureen

agreed on this for things that are official from the EC, but we can all post comments as individuals on the FB page as we would do for any other organization.

- Liberty Rummage Sale – Discussions about the upcoming town rummage sale that has been organized by the Mountain Lake Association. Facebook was primarily used to solicit the event. There will be vendors who have paid for tables at the firehouse, and a map of all participating households will be provided for folks to drive around and shop. 25 households throughout Liberty are expected to participate.
- Maintenance of the Peaceful Garden by the lake – Rich was supposed to meet with Shannon. She sent a list of the seeds of the plants that were put in. It is difficult to go over and do weeding when you don't know what the plants are supposed to look like. It has been difficult to connect with her, but she was supposed to provide the place cards that were made up. Maureen confirmed that there were supposed to be laminated cards on rings that people could use to identify the plants. They are supposed to have pictures with a little explanation about each plant. Rich has been over to the garden and observed that some of the plants are doing well and some are surrounded by weeds. For some of what is there it is hard to determine what are weeds and what are not. The garden and plants were created by the EC and members should be responsible for maintaining it. Maureen proposed that perhaps at the June meeting we could discuss soliciting volunteers to help with the maintenance. So far, the garden is looking pretty good. Shannon wrote something up last year that describes the various species of the flowering plants that are in there. There are a lot of pictures of what was planted on the internet, but no captions to tell anyone what they are. They are great pictures, but they are not educational. Additionally, there has been no follow up with regards to the PVC pipe that was found by the lake/garden near the stairs. The pipe has no cover over the top and looks like it could potentially be dangerous. Perhaps when Rich gets in touch with Shannon, she may have some idea of what it is. If it needs maintenance, we can communicate that with the township. Larry would like to look into seeing if we can put labels on the photos that are on the Facebook page. It may prove difficult depending on who took the photos and if they know what plants are in each photo. Carrie will check the flash drive to see if there is any additional information that may be helpful.
- Township website section on algae bloom - On the township website there is a posting about hazardous algae blooms that has a link to the State of NJ map where you can zoom in on Mountain Lake. Last year there was data, but nothing on there yet for 2021. The hope is that the site will be updated as soon as the sampling Bob collected has been analyzed.

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS: None.

EXPENDITURES: Nothing new

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Martine asked for clarification on whether we know about algae conditions so far this year. Larry advised that we do know currently that the meter showed negligible amount of blue green algae. That meter only measures blue green algae. It doesn't measure green algae so if the lake looks greenish that doesn't mean its blue green algae. It could be harmless but green looking. The blue green algae are bacteria that acts like an algae. It is capable of undergoing photosynthesis or operating with photosynthesis and it uses carbon dioxide and the water, and it produces oxygen. Historically the oxygen in our atmosphere is mainly created by blue green algae. It is not all bad, but not something we want in the water at the lake. Martine confirmed that as far as we know at the present time, the water is safe. When the report comes from the NJDEP it will confirm.

Any possibilities that we can move our monthly meetings at the town hall? John Hankin emailed Larry about having meetings at the pavilion. The meeting has been advertised as Zoom meeting only and there are challenges with broadcasting Zoom outside of a Wi-Fi area. Previous attempts have proven difficult with connection and hearing everyone. We will discuss at the June meeting. When advertising for the next meeting can we list it as it could be either or in-person or via Zoom? The statute requires that you put the location of the meeting and time and date. Agenda is optional. Larry prefers the Zoom meetings and believes it is easier for anyone to join in. Does not see any advantages of having it at town hall. Rich feels that knowing the people you are working with by meeting with them in person feels better. John agreed, and Maureen agreed that she would like to go back to in-person meetings in the near future.

Thank you to Martine and Sarah for joining us for the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

NEXT MEETING June 17, 2021