

HIDDEN LAKE ASSOCIATION  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

**OPENING:**

President Jay Cassella called the regular monthly Board meeting of the Hidden Lake Association to order at 7:05 p.m. on Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Burr Hill Elementary School.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jay Cassella, President  
Laura Jenner, Past President  
Dale Fiore, Vice President  
Sheri Berger, Board Member (Term Expires 2019)  
Cindy Porriello, Interim Board Member  
Carolyn Chalifoux, Interim Board Member

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Alan Stokke, Treasurer  
Charlene Baulski, Tax Collector  
Carmela Della Mura, Secretary

**ASSOCIATION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

James Nicholson	Neil Pearson
Victoria Nicholson	Phillip Porriello
Barry Hoberman	Scott Sherman
Lori-Ann Hoberman	Jim Kearney
Anthony Grandazzo	Brian Polak
Peter Lombardo	

**A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The minutes of the November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting were reviewed and after corrections, the minutes were approved and will be posted on the HLA website. Motion to Approve the Minutes was made by Cindy Porriello and seconded by Carolyn Chalifoux. Motion passed. So moved.

**B. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Alan Stokke was not present. Jay Cassella had copies of the November and December budgets. Jay went through the reports and asked for a Motion to Approve the Treasurer's Report for November. Jay asked if there were any questions, there were none, and Dale Fiore made a Motion to Accept the Treasurer's November Report and the motion was seconded by Sheri Berger. Motion passed. So moved,

Jay explained further explained that the December expenses were pretty much the same thing and all reviewed the December budgets and the Motion to Accept the December budget was made by Cindy Porriello and Dale Fiore seconded the motion. So moved. Dale Fiore commented that Alan did a nice job.

**C. TAX COLLECTOR REPORT:**

Charlene Baulski was absent. No report. Dale Fiore asked if taxes were the only source of income for the Association and Jay said it was, plus any interest on HLA accounts.

**D. SEPTIC REPORT:**

Anthony Grandazzo reported all tanks have been cleaned. Dale stated that all Cahill Co. bills were paid as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, and asked if any bills would be coming in January. Anthony wasn't sure, as he doesn't get the bills. There was a Motion to Accept the Septic Report made by Carolyn Chalifoux and was seconded by Cindy Porriello. So moved. Motion passed. Dale commented that it was good reporting.

**E. ROAD COMMITTEE:**

Jay reported that we a need road committee chairman. Jay asked for volunteers. Jay explained the road committee chairman's duties, which basically are to supervise any contractor doing work, i.e., chip sealing, plowing, making sure everything is in order before the work is done, etc., and bringing a report to the monthly meetings. Jay received two phone calls recently that would be the responsibility of a Road Committee Chairman. Peter Lombardo volunteered. He was welcomed as the Road Committee Chairman.

Jay read from his road report. Jay says the plowing contractor is doing a good job, just a few glitches.

A resident on the corner of West Shore Drive and Fairview sent an email to Jay explaining the need for Fairview Road to be maintained by the Association because of health issues of this resident and his need for accessibility to his house from Fairview Road because of problems accessing his driveway after bad weather. Jay read the email at the meeting. Basically the email discussed Fairview plowing and maintenance over the years.

Jay's response to this resident was that Jay personally would be working on that to get something resolved there to help him.

Jay further stated that he spoke with Town Officials regarding road standards. He spoke with Liz Glidden who stated that it would be impossible for Hidden Lake roads to adopt the Town regulations, as we don't have the property to do so.

Jay then provided Liz Glidden with a copy of the November HLA minutes addressing the past history of this area. Jim Puska was brought into the conversation and his response was the same as Liz Glidden. After extensive discussion and Town zoning official visiting the area, it was determined, as it is, the road conforms to any regulations the Town would have. His recommendation is to simply maintain the road with chip seal as is all the other roads.

As stated in the November minutes, Alan Stokke explained issues in this area, and how the previous resident used his own money to maintain and fix that area. This follows the rules of our by-laws and should be recognized as improvements needed for the Association to continue to maintain the road. Jay then read the by-laws concerning roads maintained.

Someone brought up the subject written in the by laws regarding certain roads being exempt from maintenance by the Association.

Jay stated number one, when that adoption was put in effect, it meant nothing because we could never meet the Town standards. We don't have the width on any of our roads. What they are in essence saying is we don't have to do anything on the road; we don't have to have it engineered because Mr. Church who lived there and did the work did it at his own expense, putting in the gravel and the drainage.

Laura Jenner then stated that that work was done on Cross Street and the work on Fairview was done by another resident. Laura stated Al Stokke would know more about this situation. A property owner that had land beyond Town property, and also had undeveloped land that could be better accessed through Fairview, leveled and worked on that road to access this property. The people in that area started using the road, but were not helping to take care of it. Cross Avenue was finished to the end where Fairview begins, only about ten feet of road there. Laura stated that Fairview Road is considered a paper road, which is considered unpaved and unfinished, and "could be" a road. Laura also stated that she is all for being able to help this resident, and feels that it should be addressed, but there's a lot involved. Even if the Town is telling you that now, there was a glitch years ago getting that made a road which involved curbing and other factors. As we move forward with the new road chairman, we need more details on this issue. Laura Jenner feels it should be addressed and the need to get more history on this issue with the Town regarding the standards concerning curbs, etc. The Road Committee Chairman needs to look into this.

Jay stated that Jim Puska, came to Fairview, looked at it and stated there was absolutely nothing wrong with the road and stated we don't have to do anything with that road, it does not have to be engineered. Carolyn Chalifoux asked if that could be put in writing. Jay said he would do that. Jay stated that we don't abide by any of their rules from what he was told by the zoning officer

and building official, as our roads is not maintained by the Town, as we are self maintained.

Peter Lombardo suggested some definition of a road be made. Jay said approximately 6 years ago the Board did come up with a definition of acceptable standards, and what they did was adopt the Town's regulations, which you can't do. That's impossible. Peter stated if it's not a town conforming road, then we have to come up with our own idea of what a road is and then see how to maintain it. - plowed, chip sealed or whatever to be added.

Carolyn said that we could be opening a whole can of worms by agreeing to maintain that road. Jay said no. If another resident who owns property on a paper road wants to do the same thing, they are entitled to do that. But Carolyn stated that we have to be more specific as to other paper roads and have some kind of specific procedure that you need to make a road and explain how this road got to be maintained; that it wasn't just for a resident's convenience, and that there's more to it. Jay said he just explained that, that he went to the Town, as President of the Association, he got the information, gathered what he needed and it was determined that the Town wants nothing to do with any part of that road.

Carolyn stated that she's not talking about the Town; she's talking about the Association. Jay stated that the Board accepted an unrealistic adoption of a standard. Carolyn agreed. Jay said the Town officials said we could do whatever we want with that road. That's now the standard for that road from the Town - that's part of the by-laws now. Carolyn said there should be on paper that when the next person comes and says, "I have a paper road and I have these issues", you can say here's what you have to prove to us. Jay said it's written in the by-laws. Laura said maybe not put this down as a precedent for future other residents who would request the same maintenance on their paper roads and that we would have to continue to look at it and see where to go with it. Carolyn agreed and that's what she was trying to say. Carolyn says there are a lot of issues on other paper roads.

Dale said we have a Road Chairman now and this can be looked into. Phil Porriello suggested we go out and measure some of the roads, and put that in the specifications. Jay said we just can't adopt someone else's standards to our roads and we have to have to come up with our own road standards.

There was further discussion about Fairview Road and paper roads. Jay said this is now opened us up to a lot of liability because of that road. He feels for at least for now we move the snow from the area. Carolyn asked if it would cost anymore for that section. Jay said if it's a couple hundred dollars, it should not be an issue. Laura stated that once we plow it, we are also implying ownership and responsibility of that road, and that was a previous issue. What are the other options when it gets to this point, is it just a matter of paving

Fairview, should it be a circle, what should be the traffic flow be up there, should it be one way? Phil said the road is not wide enough for two lanes. Laura suggested exploring other options and considerations, to help support this man and help him with this issue, but look at the larger picture with traffic flow up there.

Jay would like to entertain a motion to accept the matter of plowing that road this year and Jay will send him out a letter to tell the resident that this is still under negotiations and this should be done for next year. Jay stated but right now, I don't care about precedence, I care about liability.

Carolyn said if it's not our road, we have no liability. Jay asked has anybody on the Board said that nobody can use that road? Laura said it was blocked off by the Board of Governors and not the Association's responsibility, as it was the resident who paved that road, not the Association and done maybe in 2008. Jay, asked if the BOG blocked the road and Laura said it was. Laura stated the property owner made it a road to get access to his property and then all residents used the road. It got blocked up at the top and another resident then improved 10 to 15 feet of Cross Road at his own expense. Jay said regardless of who did it, an Association member took the initiative to clear that road, and we allowed other residents to use it since. Carolyn stated that the Association didn't allow it, people just used it.

There was more discussion regarding this area. Brian Polak asked if jersey barriers were ever used because he didn't know what you tried to block it with. James Nicholson said all the people around there use it. The Board has never wanted to impose difficulty on the residents living there. This is a larger issue and pieces of information are needed more than simply paving it.

Dale suggested tabling this issue and offered to look into it with the Road Chairman. Dale stated that maybe the Association would want to embrace this issue and make it a road and maybe make more Association property available there. Jay wants this open to discussion.

#### **F. LAKE REPORT:**

LAKE REPORT: Jay read the Committee Report: On November 30<sup>th</sup>, the valve at the dam was opened and remains opened and monitored. Initially the water was lowered to a level that would expose the roots in the hopes of hard freeze. Around the second week of December we had the first hard freeze. At the time of this freeze the water level was at this lowest which allowed the exposed bottom to freeze but the exposed stumps were also frozen in place. Thanks to Jim Kearney and Barry Hoberman for their constant monitoring, the valve was adjusted for the varied amount and style of precipitation. As we entered yet another hard freeze, the ice became thick and held hard to the exposed stumps. When the cold snapped ended and the rains came, the level of the water rose and lifted a large number of stumps completely out of the water of

the lake, but also some of the muck was contained in the ice as well. As of Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> the level of the water was exceeding the height of the spillway and was slowly draining naturally as well as the valve being opened at its minimum. Despite the overflow of water, the stumps and muck are exposed. Simply put, they are stuck in the ice. There's a recommendation of the lake committee to allocate the monies necessary to purchase the equipment for removing the stumps now that they are uprooted. Attached is a copy of the list of items introduced to the Board at the November meeting. The purchase of this equipment needs to be addressed immediately so that we can take advantage of the present opportunity. It is also the intent of the committee volunteers to mark off any of the stumps not able to be pulled now by tying a small line to them and attaching a bottle that will float to the top which will allow for pulling the trunks with the stump remover used last summer/fall.

Discussion followed.

Phil reported that this was the second time this occurred. Carolyn asked what are we doing with stumps. Jay said they would be pulled up away from the lake and brought to the dump. Dale asked if some could have been loosened along with the ones that are out? Jay said that could be done. Neil Pearson asked for information, stating that we had the deep freeze, the stumps then became loose because of the deep freeze, so when the water rises we will now have the floating stumps. Cindy stated that the water will raise the ice and we need to get the stumps while they are out before the stumps fall down. Cindy stated that the bottles are the other part of the procedure for the ones are not loose. Phil reported that it took time to get them up but they are up now and much simpler to remove. The problem with having those stumps in the way, is that the majority of the people that would remove the muck will not come in to do it. Neal Pearson stated that Mr. Carlson removed some stumps years ago.

There was a discussion of removal of the stumps and the goal of removal of the muck.

Laura asked if the goal of removing the stumps was to remove the muck, which she is in favor of, but it was mentioned in the August meeting that to remove the muck was over \$100,000 dollars or more to do. Jay says it depends on what we can get out of the way. Jay said until we do the mapping we plan on doing with State of Ct in the fall we won't know anything. But Laura stated that the mapping is not the depth of the muck, it's for the growth of the weeds. Carolyn stated that we didn't do the mapping before the freeze so there's nothing to compare. Jean Cassella stated that for the 25 years she's lived there, she used to be able to go in and not touch the bottom, but now you go in and you step in deep muck. Laura stated we know the plan is to remove the muck, but we don't know need another price tag at the end. Jay said that's not the reason we are removing the stumps. Brian stated that doing the stump removal may reduce the cost of the next step. We don't need to worry about the cost of step

two, because you need to take care of step one first. Laura said for budgeting, we need to know. Brian stated that we only need \$900 right now.

Lori-Ann Hoberman said we should take baby steps, and that there are two steps to the final goal. We want results and we need to respect each other and need to discuss this. Laura said that as a part of the Board she needs to look ahead and ask these questions and see where this is going. Brian said we have to do this a step at a time, and that the first step is removal of the stumps. Cindy stated it would make it easier to go out in the lake and rake.

Anthony stated it was hard to sit and listen to this discussion. We need to be unified. Anthony said to question the validity of the removal stumps, which are unsightly, potentially unsafe, and needs to be addressed...how could anyone have an issue with doing that for \$900? Makes no sense.

Jay said as President of the Association and a member of the Board, his job is to do what the people want to be done. He stated that he is listening and everyone here who is saying why not do it and a few saying a few people asking why are we doing it. They are not the majority as far as he's concerned. The people are the majority and that's why he decided to involve everyone in these discussions to see what they want to do with their money. Our by laws do not allow them to vote on these matters, but just like in our legislature, you lobby for things to get done and these people are lobbying right now. All Jay is asking is to look at the recommendation again, the same one looked at in November. Laura stated that she is asking a question right now about the rationale and the end point, and now being identified as adversarial, to be clear, Jay just said "one those people", and as "one of those people" I am not trying to be adversarial, I am trying to look for clarification. So while there are members of the Association that are here expressing their views, I greatly appreciate that they did and I feel there are other views to express and I feel that I should be able to ask questions.

Lori-Ann Hoberman stated exactly, and you did. There are other people expressing their view and I feel I we are giving our point of view. Let's all look at this, let's all talk without condescending tones.

Cindy asked why the stumps were removed in the first place? Why did Carson come in and do the stumps back then...what was the reason if there's no end goal, why did they put out that money back then.

Brian Polak asked what was the total cost to remove the stumps. Jay stated \$1,000 equipment and volunteer labor. So we are talking about what amounts to \$1,000; the end game might be true but the \$100,000 question is separate. People are opposed to holding up a thousand dollar expenditure because it might down the road lead to \$100,000 expenditure. Laura stated that we now have a lake committee, and in the minutes it said we would have a full proposal come March and that there would be steps that we would be taken, so if

there is a global perspective and a large plan which was previously attempted and failed. What is our end point, what's our goal? How are we maintaining the lake for 5, 10, 15, 20 years. That's what my question is. So we are taking this one step for the stump removal...why? Is it that the weed cutter can be used? The other question is that this is dangerous and that has not been played out historically, so I'm looking for all the information. Laura stated that that is her responsibility as a Board member.

Neal said one of the issues here is that the opportunity has arisen because of the ice for us to go ahead and do this and expedite it. Anthony said we do not have a global vision don't have a plan from a to z in terms of how we are going to rectify this. We plan to develop that. What we have an opportunity to make an improvement. Dale stated that he's been hearing about a long term plan... two years I've been hearing that. Lycott, this one, that one, and nothing gets done and we still have weeds. Carolyn asked if we had gotten a proposal yet. Dale Fiore stated he had a proposal from Pond and Lake Connection and they are asking what our plan is.

There's been a lot of discussion can Dale asked if the Board could please move forward. Jay said we are not starting anything new here. Stumps been done by the Board and have been needed by the Board to be removed. We are continuing on what's been done once for \$10,000 and again for a total of \$20,000 spent on stump removal that didn't work. Dale added that now we have volunteers, we'd like to get money appropriated and purchase equipment and Jay agreed, assume responsibility and all other things we heard, the insurance nonsense.

Neal we are talking about a global picture but what about a more localized picture? What area is first? How are we going to attack this, which part done first? Jay said it would be a matter of which ones are loose right now. You can't judge that either. Jay said he and Phil take two logs tie together with a winch in between and which one breaks first comes out. There's no science to it until you get out there. Stumps there since 1917. It's time for the stumps to leave.

Carolyn brought up a discussion regarding chemicals, stating that at one time the Board had talked about doing both, doing what you're doing and as well as getting a quote Jay stated we definitely are. We are dealing with stumps right now. And yes, we do have just a generic proposal from the Pond and Lake Connection, they are offering to come in and assess the lake.

Jay stated that the first step in this process was to drain the lake get a hard freeze and we did, and we are very fortunate that it did and to see how that affects it. I've seen the freeze work in the past.

Jay asked if there is a motion to accept the allocation for what needs to be ordered? Someone asked why it was a different amount. The new one is \$50

more because we didn't order back in November. Dale asked how much the generic weed cutter cost and Jay reported it was \$3,000.

Dale did make a motion for this equipment in an amount not to exceed \$1,000. Dale asked where the equipment would be stored and Jay stated that it has to be stored at someone's house. Jay asked for a second.

Laura asked where the money is coming from but Alan was not at the meeting to answer that question. Dale suggested lake maintenance line item. Carolyn remembered that Alan had issues from where that money was coming from and suggested Alan answer that question being the treasurer. Jay suggested the miscellaneous BOG line item. Carolyn has issues with that, because Alan had discussed this issue at a previous meeting. Dale stated we have \$1,000, but Alan can figure out at his discretion where it comes from. Dale asked Carolyn where she thought the money should come from and Carolyn said Alan is the treasurer and she trusts him.

Neil can you put it in there that he allocate up to \$1,000 and allocate maybe \$500 if that's what he finds more appropriate? Dale and Jay opposed that and there is \$200 extra for incidentals if something comes up.

Neil further asked Is this equipment something that Association members can use at their discretion? Jay replied that it's the lake committee's responsibility for whatever happens with that equipment and feels the lake committee should decide who uses it or doesn't use it. Is there any way Association members could know this machine is available for use but Jay said it's up to the Board.

Cindy Porriello seconded Dale's Motion, but Alan has to figure out where the money is coming from. If he doesn't have the money, he doesn't have it.

Anthony said with all the money the Association has in reserve, he is frustrated as to why the hesitation. Laura explained things come up and we need to know how we are paying for this. This is all figured out at the annual meeting. Laura did ask Alan if we have the money for this, how do we allocate this and tried to remedy this issue, not to be adversarial, but there is a methodology, there is a reason why the structure is there on how we run our meetings.

Carolyn still worried where the money is coming from. Dale says Alan will figure it out. Dale has full confidence in Alan.

Laura opposed, all others passed. So ordered. 5 ayes, 2 nays. Jay said that the ayes have it. Motion passed. So ordered.

DAM REPORT: This is part of the lake report and Jay thanked Jim for his input.

**G. BY-LAW COMMITTEE:**

No report. By-law Committee still needed.

**H. AUDIT COMMITTEE:**

Sheri Berger has to speak with Charlene Baulski. Dale asked what Sheri audits. Sheri stated that she received bank statements last year, not tax information. For his new audit, Charlene gave all tax information.

**I. WEB REPORT:**

WEBSITE: No report. Alan not here.

FACEBOOK: It was reported that there were many pictures of wildlife posted on our Facebook page.

**J. SPECIAL PROJECTS:**

No special projects discussed.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was an email vote taken regarding a Motion for tree removal at the dam in the amount of \$1,100.00 and a tree on West Shore Drive in the amount of \$700.00 and a tree in the water at 63 West Shore Drive in an amount not to exceed \$800.00. On December 3, 2017 all votes were in and the motion as stated was passed. So ordered.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

There was discussion regarding the Secretary position being opened as Carmela Della Mura has resigned that position. Laura Jenner asked if that position should be filled before the yearly HLA minutes. Neal Pearson introduced himself and volunteered to be the secretary. Dale mentioned that Lori-Ann Hoberman also volunteered and discussion continued. By laws read incumbent is to be voted on because they become a voting member of the Board. Lori-Ann stepped aside as volunteering for this position, and this discussion will come up in May. Neal was not prepared to take notes for this meeting, but the existing secretary will take on the January minutes. Laura said the new secretary should be aware that he/she will be a functional member of the Board.

Concerning the removal of a tree at 63 West Shore Drive, Dale said there was a request for access from his driveway, at 51 West Shore. Dale does not want to get ruts on his property from any equipment. The driveway is very

precarious, and it is not feasible to use it. Dale wants it on the record that it is not feasible to use his yard.

Dale stated if our only source of income is tax revenue income, perhaps as time goes on we could think of some creative ways to generate money. Dale says a simple thing like fundraisers could be considered. Discussion continued.

Dale addressed Laura stating that she's done a wonderful job for the few years he's been at lake. He commended her also at the yearly meeting. You chose to volunteer if someone else didn't take over. Dale's wife, Rose Fiore, offered to do a newsletter, but when she asked Charlene Baulski, the tax collector, for a mailing list, she was denied. The newsletter never happened.

Dale explained that last summer, one of his security lights was shining on a house across the lake. The resident notified the Board. The Board decided to send a letter out to Dale to advise him of this. The Board Secretary, knowing Dale's parents, offered to relay the message through them. Dale felt that Carmela "bothered" his elderly parents about the lights and Dale felt a formal letter should have been sent out. Carmela was not at this meeting and she was not able to respond.

Dale said he has put a lot of money into his house and may purchase another house on the lake and wants to make more revenue comes in for the Association. Dale also praised Jay for his dedication to the Association.

Dale went on to explain that he works at one of the biggest cemeteries and crematories in the State and that he maintains super endowments of millions of dollars on his job and he knows the need to generate money. He wants to perhaps have raffles, or some way to make money, maybe a wine tasting party at his house, something to generate money for the Association. He wants to bring the community together.

Carolyn says our Facebook page would be a good place to post fundraisers. Carolyn would like to volunteer to help Mary Shea with the Facebook page. Laura explained the workings of the HLA Facebook page and why it is now closed. Laura said things were sent which should not have been put on the website.

Anthony Grandazzo maintains that the equipment vote should not have been such a contentious vote and liked that the meeting took a nicer turn. He apologized for previous comments. Laura stated that she did not see it as contentious; it was more seeing it as a discussion.

Sheri Berger stated that in the past, emails from residents that want to do various projects on their property, would bring their requests to the Board and asked Jay if the Board is needs to talk about these requests and vote on them.

She remembers someone wanting a retaining wall. Jay took care of the retaining wall, as it had nothing to do with Town rules or association rules. It was not near the lake, it was near the house. Jay stated that anything near the water comes to the Board. Sheri asked about a cement dock repair request. Jay replied that if it has anything to do with the Town or by-laws, yes, he would want it brought to the Board.

**AT 8:35 P.M. A MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE AND SECONDED. THE REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING OF THE HIDDEN LAKE ASSOCIATION HELD ON JANUARY 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2018 WAS ADJOURNED.**

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE HIDDEN LAKE ASSOCIATION WILL BE HELD MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 AT 7:00 BURR HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN HADDAM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Carmela Della Mura  
Recording Secretary,  
Transcribed via recorder supplied  
By Jay Cassella