

Prairie Lake Improvement Association

Meeting Minutes from September 3, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 pm by new President Joe Beaupre. Joe distributed a meeting agenda and introduced Association officers including Scott Moncur – Vice President, Sandy Fontaine – Treasurer, and Jonette Kreideweis – Secretary. Attendance was about 30.

Minutes from the May 28, 2017 meeting were reviewed. ***A motion was passed, seconded and approved to accept the minutes as written.*** Bob Sanft, former Secretary, was thanked for his 14 years of dedicated service to the Prairie Lake Improvement Association.

Treasurer Sandy Fontaine gave the treasurer's report. Income totaled \$4,615.19. Disbursements for printing, mailings and membership in the MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates and DNR Nongame Wildlife fund equaled \$245.41. Current balance as of September 3, 2017 was \$4,369.78. Sandy reported that there were 74 member units to date in 2017. This compares with 91 units in 2016. ***A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Treasurer's report.***

At previous meetings Sandy Fontaine expressed interest in retiring from her position. ***A motion was made, seconded and passed to nominate and elect Mike Bottila for Prairie Lake Improvement Association Treasurer.*** Sandy was thanked for her 19 years of dedicated service to the Association.

Joe Beaupre made a few announcements and noted new Association members Dave Dobbleman – Woodland Park, Al Nelson – TH 73 and Ed Zeimet – West Forest Lane. He also noted the passing of Kevin Alaspa – Hasty Brook Road and Jim Foster – Forest Lane.

Ken Hallberg gave a report on the status of loons nesting on the lake. He noted that it was a much better year with three nesting pairs. Five chicks were on the lake at the end of July. Three were seen Labor Day weekend. Ken is thinking about building another floating loon nest. Scott Moncur suggested that there may be Scouts interested in helping.

Ken Hallberg reported on water quality levels. Last year levels had phosphorus at 33.3 parts per billion. Phosphorus enrichment can result in excessive plant growth, algae blooms and lowering of oxygen levels. The threshold for designating a lake impaired is 30 parts per billion. Chlorophyll-a, which indicates algae quantities, had levels in 2016 of 16.1 parts per billion with a desired threshold below 10 ppb. Based on the numbers reported last year, Prairie Lake is currently designated as "vulnerable to impairment".

However, Ken noted that total phosphorus and chlorophyll-a have undergone improvements in 2017. Samples taken this year in June, July and August showed phosphorus averages around 24.3 parts per billion. Chlorophyll-a levels were averaging 5.2 parts per billion. Secchi disc results for water clarity show that the lake has improved from 3 feet after the flood to current readings of 4-5 feet. Next samples will be taken in September 2017. Hasty Brook clarity started the season at 100 centimeters and dropped to 59-60 centimeters in mid-summer. Water clarity readings are currently back in the high 90's. In a related note, Hasty Brook E.coli sampling done in 2010 showed two high spikes resulting in a declaration of impairment. Carlton County has responsibility for 90% of Hasty Brook so we will just have to wait and see what they do. Kellie Rae Theiss reported on lake levels. We started the year with high levels, dropped to a low at the end of July and now have come back up due to recent rains. Kellie Rae distributed copies of a laminated contour map and suggested that we may want to obtain additional copies for Association members.

President Joe Beaupre opened the meeting up to audience comments, questions and concerns. The following were noted:

- Scott Moncur thanked those individuals who have volunteered to help with the buoys. He reported that there are a couple of buoys available if there are members interested in helping place them at the beginning of the season and remove them in the fall. Anyone interested may contact Scott.
- Merritt Linzie noted that utility companies are planning to trim trees under powerlines this September. He called the tree service doing the work and they seemed happy to work with property owners on tree trimming and removal. Another member noted that they he contacted the company and the company was also willing to work with property owners on areas to not spray. Scott Moncur volunteered to put the tree trimming company name and phone number on the Lake Association website.
- A member asked if the Prairie Lake Association would be willing to contact the DNR about goose control. Joe Beaupre volunteered to contact the DNR.

President Joe Beaupre introduced several old business topics. They included:

Chinese Mystery Snails – As Scott Moncur stated at the spring meeting, the snails come into shallow water to lay eggs. Owners can pick them out and dispose of them. Or, Scott Moncur noted there are treatments available which can also be used that kill the larvae and minimize snail reproduction.

Beaver Control -- At the last meeting members voted to take a two-year break from paying for the trapping of beavers.

Wayne Thom, nuisance control specialist, shared his experiences in trapping beavers on Hasty Brook and Prairie Lake. He personally took out 30 beavers in 2015-16. Wayne believes we continue to have a serious problem with beavers in part because of the current low prices trappers can get for beaver pelts. Sue Bican shared photographs of the significant damage beavers have done to trees on her property. There were reports on continuing beaver damage on the North end of the lake near Mary Beth Davidson's property.

Several members advocated that the Lake Association should be using membership dollars to help property owners pay for beaver control. They would like to see last spring's decision reversed. Others suggested that Fine Lakes Township and the County should be doing more to help with the problem. The Association sent a letter to the Township Board last year but received no reply. It would help if we could find someone local who would be willing to represent the issue at upcoming Township Board Meetings. Joe Beaupre will look into this. It was also noted that owners can take action to protect their trees by placing wire screening around the trunks.

President Joe Beaupre indicated that it is difficult to take action in the absence of more Prairie Lake Improvement Association members and property owners. He recommended that we defer a decision about whether the Lake Association should finance additional beaver control until next spring. Between now and the next meeting we will work harder to get information out and encourage more member participation. Scott Moncur and Joe Beaupre volunteered to add information to the website. Joe Beaupre will prepare a flyer that can be distributed to property owners to remind people of the date and time of the meeting and the topics to be discussed, including beaver control. Kellie Rae Theiss, Corrine Moncur, Sandy Fontaine, Linda Stemwedel and Jonette Kreideweis agreed to help distribute flyers prior to the meeting.

New business topics included:

- Joe Beaupre reported on the DNR walleye assessment and Tribal netting activities.
- Kellie Rae Theiss volunteered to write an article for the local newspapers on Prairie Lake Improvement Association activities to promote more interest and participation.
- Association meeting schedules and times were discussed. ***A motion was made, seconded and passed to change meeting times to 10:30 AM on Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend Sundays.*** Joe Beaupre will make sure signs reflect changes.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to adjourn the meeting.

Next meeting is scheduled for 10:30 AM, Sunday May 27, 2018

Respectfully submitted:  Jonette Kreideweis, Secretary - 9/17/17