

2023 Annual Meeting of the Cloverleaf Lakes Protective Association membership

Saturday, May 27, 2023 at Round Lake Shelter

DRAFT MINUTES

- 1) Call to order** – Board of Directors President Gary Schumacher called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., with approximately 55 people total in attendance
- 2) Introduction of CLPA Board of Directors** -- Gary Schumacher, president; Kevin Goodman, vice president; Jessica Meier, treasurer; Jeff Casperson, secretary (excused); and board members Andy Hines, Pete Jensema and Chris Sampson
- 3) Approval of minutes** from previous year (2022) CLPA membership meeting – Chris Sampson moved, Penny Johnson seconded for approval. All ayes
- 4) Financial report and membership update** – Treasurer Jessica Meier had positive numbers to share on both fronts. Memberships as of mid-May 2023 stood at 234, which is comparable to recent history and remaining strong. The \$20,000 in annual dues and donations revenue, to date, is also consistent, with more expected, and hopes to nudge the final total closer to \$26,000. The CLPA has more than \$120,000 in assets (CDs, money markets, checking account), which is also regarded as a solid financial position based on our annual average spending, and anticipated expenses and possible future projects. Esther Letvin moved, and it was seconded, to accept the financial report. All ayes
- 5) Board member election** – With one CLPA board member’s term expiring, an election for a new three-year term was put forward in nomination. Andy Hines nominated current board officer Kevin Goodman to serve another term, and Billi Rice seconded. The voice vote was unanimous. Kevin’s new term will last through the 2026 annual meeting.
- 6) Update on boat-monitor program** – Andy Hines, who volunteers to coordinate summer boat monitor staffing at the County Y landing, was happy to report that two of the previous year’s young workers were returning for another summer in ’23. He also shared their observation that after all these years of spot checks and encouraging boaters to observe state law to keep trailers and boats free of invasive hitchhikers, most people putting in or taking out are respectful of why the program is necessary. (The workers could recall “only one mean guy all last summer.”)
- 7) Update on milfoil control** – Pete Karlson, the CLPA’s contracted DASH vendor, gave a summary of the previous year’s diver harvest of invasive milfoil from the Cloverleaves. He reported 120 hours of work – 55 underwater – and removed an impressive total of more than 27,000 pounds of milfoil. He thanked volunteers Peggy McMahon and Alan Johnson for the times they served

as topside helpers on his specially outfitted pontoon boat. He also asked the CLPA to make a point of getting the word out again, and especially to renters and visitors who might be unaware, that they need to follow the boating laws and give the diver and floating dive flags a wide berth.

- 8) Update on WAMSCO** – Chris Sampson, the CLPA’s representative to the regional consortium Waterways Association of Menominee and Shawano Counties, said the organization has received several state grants to focus on environmental education. WAMSCO is outfitting an enclosed trailer as a mobile classroom to visit schools, festivals and public events with materials about effective stewardship of land and water. The CLPA is a charter member of WAMSCO.
- 9) Update on fisheries** – Chris Sampson spoke in place of the local DNR fisheries specialist, who was unable to attend. Chris offered a rough summary of the fish surveys that were relayed to him: Bluegills and crappie populations are good, with some evidence of increasing sizes; largemouth bass remain relatively abundant with a decent size structure; muskies are down in numbers just a little, but still a fishable population with at least some larger specimens; walleyes, for the first time in probably several decades, showed up with a number of adult walleyes recaptured during boomshocking and netting (not many, but still a positive sign after several years in which significant stocking wasn’t yielding much return); finally, the overall northern pike numbers and average sizes continued a gradual slide.
- 10) Plans for Independence Day at the Cloverleaves** – Attendees were reminded that Saturday, July 1, was the date set, that the annual Kiddie Parade organized by the CLPA would again take place that morning on the usual route (the “triangle” off of County Y south of Grass Lake); that the Boat Parade theme would be TV commercials; and that the Fireworks group had experienced great success in attracting generous support but was still accepting donations.
- 11) Water level discussion and success in spring 2023 beaver dam removal** – President Schumacher and many others at the meeting gave great credit to the more than two dozen citizen volunteers who devoted a day in early May 2023 to the hard physical work of removing beaver dams in the swampy area of Matteson Creek (the Pine Lake outlet), downstream from the Cloverleaves. It is believed that the dams – four or five in number -- coupled with a wet spring, caused the persistent and record (or near-record) high water. The levels overtopped shorelines and docks in low-lying areas following ice-out and throughout April and early May. Following the work day and removal of branches via boats and jetski-pulled barges, the Cloverleaf Lake levels quickly dropped (roughly a foot) and alleviated the high-water complaints. Along with applauding the volunteer crew and Mike Nelson’s work team, participants at the Annual Meeting discussed the likelihood of having to repeat the effort should the beavers and/or heavy precipitation return. Suggestions were also made to aggressively trap and shoot beavers, although it was also noted that the abundant species has a history of recolonizing prime territories, so any harvest/removal efforts are likely to be ongoing. A signup sheet (email

list) will be a resource for concerned lake residents to mobilize the dam-and-debris removal crew if they feel the need.

12) Misc. Issues

-- Black bears – Several residents described their properties being visited by wandering black bears this spring, post-hibernation. The DNR’s recommendations for best practices, it was repeated, involve removing bird feeders, securing trash, NEVER leaving food out for bears, and giving the animals a wide berth if you encounter one while you’re outside. Attacks involving black bears in Wisconsin are very rare, but caution is always advised.

-- Airbnb and related property rentals – A question was raised about the potential for greater noise, boat traffic and pressure on the lakes as the market continues to grow for short-term rentals of lakefront properties. Former CLPA president and Belle Plaine town board member Dennis Thornton said the issue has been, and will continue to be, one for the Town Board to take the lead on. It was generally agreed that the CLPA should continue to monitor the situation on our lakes, and might also double down on longstanding efforts to encourage rental owners to post or distribute lake rules (no-wake hours, counter-clockwise tubing, etc.) to all renters.

-- Loon nesting – A pair of loons successfully nested on Grass Lake again this past spring, but concern was expressed about the thinning bulrush island along the south shore and whether that would discourage future attempts. It was suggested that more signage to keep boaters/kayakers away and installation of a nesting platform might be considered. Board members said they could possibly investigate these steps in future years, but to be honest the DNR isn’t sold on either approach. Warning signs have sometimes been found to attract more curiosity seekers to nesting sites, and on lakes where bald eagles are present, the platforms can actually make it easier for the larger birds to prey on baby loons.

-- Boat wakes – Joy Krubsack asked whether, in light of this past spring’s experience with the highest water levels in years, and increasing concern by at least some property owners about the potential for increased shoreline erosion, the CLPA might at some point recommend that Belle Plaine adopt a mandatory no-wake benchmark. (Residents of nearby Long Lake, which had experience with even greater fluctuations, asked for and got approval for a no-wake level there, years ago.) Board members responded that they have examined the Cloverleaf Lakes water level issue at length this year, as well as in the past. To this point, the CLPA officially remains neutral on the high-low debate that has popped up regularly over many decades. However, with the apparent success of the recent Matteson Creek work in bringing relief from the highest levels in years, if those levels return the association will point concerned property owners who want to pursue it in the direction of the unofficial, grassroots, neighbor-led team that took it upon itself to clear the outlet stream this year.

13) Adjournment – Esther Letvin moved and several others seconded, with all “ayes” to adjourn the 2023 CLPA Annual Meeting at about 11 a.m., the shortest meeting in recent memory.

Respectively submitted,

Christopher Sampson, recording secretary for the meeting