

Three Lakes Council
Annual Meeting Minutes
August 12, 2023

The Annual Meeting of the Three Lakes Council was held on August 12, 2023 at the Waccabuc Country Club Carriage House. About 100 people dodged intermittent downpours to attend.

Welcome and thanks: President Jan Andersen welcomed all to the Annual Meeting of the Three Lakes Council (3LC) in the Council's 53rd year and thanked all the members and volunteers who make the work of the 3LC possible. "Although everyone enjoys gathering for our shared meal with neighbors, that is how we entice you to attend the Annual Meeting, which is our opportunity to tell you about the state of the lakes, what the Council has been doing over the past year, and about what we are planning to do for the rest of 2023."

Before getting into her report, Jan thanked all the volunteers who made this event possible:

- The Waccabuc Country Club which provided their facility for this event and is so helpful.
- The Potluck Coordinators and helpers: Kelley Housman couldn't attend tonight, but thanks to Kathy Rothfeld, who once again stepped in to lead the coordination and set up, and to other helpers - Jean Lewis and Ellen Bailey at our check in table, Renee Goldstein, Jill Kowal, Jordi Serra, Jane Balanoff, Susan Wick, Marianne Pei, Liz Lemke, and others who helped with set up and clean up.
- Peter Gross for the sound system and music, as well as his weekly music on Lake Oscaleta.
- The cooking and carving crew: Ron Tetelman, Robby Rothfeld, Gene Tedaldi, Paul Lewis, Jean Emond, and Lou Feeney.
- And, of course, all of the members for bringing your delicious contributions to our shared meal.

As president, Jan acknowledged and thanked the other members of the 3LC Board for their continuing efforts: Peter Gross, vice president; Ellen Bailey, treasurer; and Jean Lewis, long time secretary.

She explained that Board members are appointed by each association around the lakes and are the voice of each association to the Three Lakes Council. Association representatives to the Board are:

- Lake Oscaleta Association – T Rajwer
- Lake Waccabuc Association – Doug Housman and John Lemke
- Lakeside Association – Ron Tetelman
- Perch Bay Association – Bonnie Robins
- South Shore Association – Jonathan Peter
- Two Lake Club – Paul Lewis
- Waccabuc Landowners Council – Errol Antzis and Linda Broudy
- Waccabuc Country Club - Peter Hall

In addition to Board members appointed by the associations, 3LC members can also elect at-large directors. This year the nominees are Kevin Karl and Jean Lewis. The nominees were approved by show of hands.

Jan thanked the Board for their ongoing efforts and continued by reporting on Three Lakes Council activities by season, focusing on some of our bigger initiatives.

"As you know, the Three Lake Council's goal is to protect and preserve the waters of our three lakes. We focus on research and actions that affect the watershed, because the waters in our lakes truly reflect what happens in the watershed."

FALL & WINTER

- A notable event of the fall and winter was the completion of the Town's grant application for replacement of the **Oscaleta Road culvert**. This is not strictly a 3LC matter but it is important to our community, and many of our lake associations wrote letters of support. In July we learned that the Town got the grant. The project will take a couple of years to complete. The good news is that because of the grant, the culvert will be replaced without impacting the highway budget and without any additional burden on town taxpayers.
- A huge new burst of activity was the **Clarity Committee's** work that was kicked off at last year's Annual Meeting. Nan Dale and Renee Goldstein led the initiative to get people to pump their septic. We gathered pump-out information from Westchester County and provided it to association presidents; they could decide to proceed as appropriate for their groups. Leaders included T Rajwer with Lake Oscaleta Association and Alan Sternfeld with Lake Waccabuc Association.

In addition, you may have seen the "get pumped" signs around, another part of that initiative. I can look up and provide residents with their last pump date as recorded by Westchester County – although we know it isn't always correct.

T and Jonathan Peter started working on the large sewer project which I'll talk about shortly. But that is a long-term project, so we all need to keep maintaining our septic systems for now.

- The board continued meeting throughout the year to keep the organization running and in compliance. We refreshed our **website** (threelakescouncil.org) and added new reports. It is a good first place to look for information or answers to questions you might have about the lakes.
- **Communications** - You can like us on Facebook, and you can get on our Google group (threelakes@googlegroup.com) for emails. This is how we communicate important information about issues affecting the lakes, including lake health.
- **Partnership**. Many lake residents around town have joined the informal **Lewisboro Lake Coalition** led by Sue Enos of Truesdale. It is working on issues common to Town lakes. Tara Owen has joined in the communications effort and has helped the Town update the lakes page on their website.

SPRING – We started moving our activities outside.

- **GEESE POPULATION STABILIZATION**. In April, the Beardsleys and J Durst carried out their 17th season of geese population stabilization by oiling 24 eggs in 5 nests. And Rick Ferrarone oiled a nest on Rippowam. Thanks to these intrepid volunteers for their close encounters with the geese kind.
- **LEWISBORO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**. Many lake residents participated in the comprehensive plan public input sessions, with a resounding theme of protecting natural resources. Of note, no one mentioned AirBnB, but we are now getting complaints. If you feel regulations are needed, send an email to the town board and tell them.
- **IMPARED WATER BODY LIST**. Our lakes remain on the draft 2022 NYS DEC impaired water body list for pollutants that keep our lakes from achieving their best uses. I expected the final list to be approved long before now. Being on the list should help us with grants - we highlighted it in our sewer grant application.
- **LONG POND STREAM REMEDIATION**. We continue to work with the East of Hudson Corporation on Long Pond Preserve remediation of stream runoff into Lake Waccabuc. After a series of meetings with lawyers representing some of the residents on Tarry-a-bit Drive, EOHWC decided to reduce the scope and work on only the stream closest to Mead Street. I hope construction on this limited project will begin this fall or next spring. This project has been

on our list for a long time and has been recommended by management plans. We are delighted to see it finally move forward and to make a dent in that huge source of pollution.

SUMMER

- **LONG POND PRESERVE.** Summer brings more activity to Long Pond Preserve. We have now owned the Preserve for just over 7 years. Kevin Karl has continued to do an amazing job of keeping the trails on the preserve walkable, and he built bog bridges to cross wet areas. He's also been diligently whacking back the invasive phragmites in the wetlands. We again released mile-a-minute weevils to deal with that invasive plant, and we felled some dead ash trees. We have budgeted to hire police to help manage the entrance to the preserve again this year if we see an issue with boats, trash, and behavior. John Lemke is our police liaison.
- **LEGACY TREE.** The legacy tree that anchored one corner of Long Pond Preserve by Mead Street was ailing, and NYSEG and the Town decided to take down the limbs. People have asked about the large standing trunk. I'm happy to say that Waccabuc Landowner's Council will propose a wooden sculpture to the Town Board, and the 3LC board will be asked to approve it with appropriate preserve safeguards. Stay tuned.
- **NEWSLETTER.** Our annual 3LC Newsletter provides a wealth of information about the state of the lakes and much more. We mailed it out in July and left some for distribution to Waccabuc Country Club members. With more new people enjoying the lakes, it is especially important to introduce how to be a good lake steward and lake neighbor. One correction – the reservoirs won't be lowered this year; DEP tunnel replacement is going to be delayed to 2024. That's been planned for more than two decades, and I know they are eager to get that done!
- **LAKE OSCALETA CONSTRUCTION.** People have asked about activity on the hill on the south shore of Lake Oscaleta. I've confirmed that the Town Building Inspector is working closely with the landowners, and the work is being done in accordance with a Town permit.
- **PLANT SURVEY.** This year our annual plant survey took place on August 10 on Lake Waccabuc. It provides a systematic way of tracking changes in plant growth over time. Global warming continues to give a longer growing season and warmer lake waters. As a result, we are seeing more and denser stands of plants. Soon we will receive a survey report to help summarize the changes. The major purpose of our survey is to find new invasive species early, while we can still take actions. I'm happy to report that no new invasive species were found this year. A reminder: if you see a strange plant, please take a photo and send it to me.
- **WATER QUALITY SAMPLING.** We continue water quality sampling and testing on Lakes Waccabuc, Oscaleta and Rippowam as part of a NYS DEC program, CSLAP. We started our pre-season sampling in April. As in past years, I've sent a report after every formal monitoring session, focused on the clarity of the lakes. Of course, we test more than clarity. We also measure temperature, color, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, nitrogen, chlorophyll, pH, conductivity, chloride, and calcium in our lakes. This long list combines to give a picture of lake conditions. In 2022 we sampled 13 times between April and December. Reports for each of our lakes in 2022 are on our website. Our research is helping us understand the normal variability for our lakes, how they compare to other lakes in our region, and should alert us quickly if we go off track. That's how we know that the 12" of rain in July washed a lot of nutrients into our lakes, making them all a lot less clear.
- **HAB SAMPLING DISCONTINUED.** Unfortunately, we are no longer sampling harmful algal blooms for species or toxins. The DEC has moved to visual observations only, which is one reason our Newsletter has photos of harmful algal blooms. We participated in a pilot last year to teach artificial intelligence how to identify the algal types, but we didn't think that identification

of the type of algae was helpful compared to visual alerts. We also get help from Kevin Karl on microscopic identification of algal species.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- **SEWERS.** The Truesdale – Waccabuc Wastewater Solution Project is a huge ongoing project. It is an outgrowth of Clarity Committee work started last year. Again, this is not just a 3LC project; it spans a larger area, but it's important for residents of our lakes community to understand the work that is underway.
We initially sized a sewer plant that would serve the east end of Waccabuc, and most of the homes around Rippowam and Oscaleta, together with large portions of Truesdale, and that cost was \$100M. We identified grants and funding sources that might yield \$40M and reduced the sewer area accordingly.
At the end of July, the Town submitted grant applications to build a sewage treatment plant where the Town recycling center currently exists. If we get all the grants we requested, about 300 homes will be connected to the sewer system. The current plan includes some of the homes on Cove Road, South Shore, Twin Lakes Road, and North Lake Circle, together with some homes around Truesdale Lake.
The Town submitted the grant applications in late July and hopes to hear the status by year end. But nothing more will happen until the homes that will be served by sewers vote to approve a tax district. While we hope for grants to cover the capital costs, the homes in the sewer district will pay for operations and maintenance. Current estimates are that it would cost about \$1500/year, or about \$125/month. It's a sizable amount, but you never have to worry about septic systems again. Full disclosure, I'm not in the currently proposed sewer district, but I believe it's important for our lakes.
- **ENHANCED SEPTIC TREATMENT SYSTEMS.** For homes that are unlikely to be served by a sewer, we are also starting some work with the DOH to try to make it easier to repair septic systems and to install enhanced treatment units. We are emphasizing the importance of having easier approvals for upgrading septic systems. We had a meeting yesterday.

FINANCIAL REPORT. The Three Lakes Council is in good financial shape. We had a couple of years of spending more than we took in, but last year was different. In 2022 we had an exceptional donation bringing our revenue to \$59,525. That means although we spent more than typical for the year, and more than we typically bring in as revenue (\$38,623), we could increase our cash reserves by \$20,902.

Last year we had 220 members. So far this year our 192 members have contributed \$33,381, and we have spent about \$21,068. What will we do with any unspent funds? As you may recall, the 2019 management plan suggested that we consider nutrient reduction approaches for our lakes. I'd love to do this when DEC allows it. They have done pilot projects on Peach and Mahopac lakes, so it could be soon. While we have some funds on hand, we will need to raise more money to implement that recommendation. I expect we may need to spend some funds on the sewer initiative, and perhaps on communications.

As always, thank you to all our members. We are especially grateful to those who very generously provide additional donations. Again, thank you all, we can't do it without you!"

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Lewis, Secretary