

HLA monthly BOG meeting held on Monday, June 3, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:36 PM by President Jay Cassella.

Attendance by ZOOM: no Zoom connection available at this meeting.

Attendance in person: Alan Stokke; Karin Bullock; Sharon Howell; Alan Howell

Board members attending in person: Jay Cassella; Sheri Berger; Frank Nunes; Brian Polak, Bob Kiehm, Heather Edelson, Laurel Hoynoski

Absent Board members: Lloyd Pearson, Cindy Porriello

-The floor was open to general discussion, Alan Howell advised the board that the Japanese Knotweed is flourishing and indicated that any intervention the board can make to alleviate the problem would be greatly appreciated as it is abutting his property. Karin Bullock indicated that one option may be to rent a goat, she has used such a service in the past and had good results. President Cassella indicated that he does not think that goats would eat Japanese Knotweed, it was mentioned that we could possibly seek some guidance on this from the University of Connecticut agricultural station.

-Approval of last month's minutes, A motion was made by Frank Nunes to waive the reading of last month's minutes, the motion was seconded by Heather Edelson and passed unanimously. There are no corrections necessary to the minutes as submitted.

-Treasurer's report, Bob Keihm read the report for the month of May. He went over the income and expenditures as well as balances of the various accounts and submitted a copy for the record. He has received notice from our banking institution advising that our certificate of deposit is due to renew on June 23 and would be eligible to earn 3.9% APR. He indicated that the administrative supplies line item will be over budget and needs to be rectified, there are two other line items that are also over budget. He reports that overall, the budget is in really good shape and we are under budget on the whole. Income for May 2024 was \$4,594.90. Expenditures were \$2,039.25. Bank Balances are: Checking \$2,620.28, Savings \$37,915.88, Money Market \$29,728.25, 1 Yr CD \$77,721.80 for a total of \$147,986.21. A motion was made to accept the treasurer report by Laurel Hoynoski and was seconded by Brian Polak, it passed unanimously.

-Tax collector's report, the report was read by Sheri Berger, she indicated that tax liens have been placed on five association member properties. The 2023 current tax

roll is \$61,127.81, Total tax collected is \$59,301.68 with an additional \$5,972.19 collected in back taxes, interest and fees for a grand total of \$65,274.87 collected.

-Septic report, there was no septic report at this meeting

-Road report, report given by Jay Cassella, he noted that one project has been canceled due to a disagreement with the property owner/member over the existing culvert passing through said member's property. President Cassella is not willing to engage further with this member and has indicated that if the member wishes to continue to pursue their request, they will need to make a request directly to the board of governors. The project on West Shore is moving forward, volunteers are needed and requested for next weekend as that is the target date for that work to be undertaken. East Shore has some culvert issues resulting from the most recent heavy rain. We are also hoping to make some repairs to that at the same time as the work being done on West Shore.

-Lake and Dam committee, Jay provided an update as submitted by the outgoing committee chair. The outgoing chair has provided said summary with the intent that ongoing projects be continued by any new members taking over the position. It was also requested that said summary be posted on the association website. I asked Sheri and Jay to please forward a copy of this letter to me so that I may summarize it in the minutes as well.

-Aquatic and wildlife committee, there was no report today

-Bylaw committee. There was no report today

-Audit committee, report provided by Alan Howell, he indicated they met twice in May and are continuing with the audit process. The interim report has been submitted and they are looking to complete the final report as soon as possible once they have the closing entries for the end of the fiscal year. He suggested that thought be given to the possibility of changing our bylaws section 16 – C so that it may extend the period of review to allow for extensions. The Bylaw committee will review the current audit language and explore options.

-Web and Facebook committee, there was no report, Jay Cassella indicated he is not aware of any issues needing addressing.

-Beautification and Fundraising committee, no report today

-Old business: Update on the association's liability insurance, Jay indicated that he spoke with the insurance provider for Amston Lake (at they have workman's comp insurance) and that agent explained that the reason why we cannot have workers compensation insurance is because in order to qualify for such insurance, we must have employees on the payroll and we do not have any. We do, however, currently have liability insurance on our most recently renewed policy. Heather Edelson summarized the language from the policy. Bob Kiehm pointed out that all of us as association members are "stakeholders" of the association rather than "volunteers" and as such, work that we do on our association property is work that we are doing on "our" property, this was confirmed by our insurance carrier as well as our attorney. President Cassella indicated that he wishes to put this matter to rest once and for all after today's meeting as it is now clear and documented that Hidden Lake Association does have liability coverage in place.

-New business, the outcome of the vote on the recent amendment proposals from the May annual meeting were reviewed and some discussion was had on how to proceed from here. As it pertains to bylaw number 51 & 51-A, Camping, Brian Polak thinks that at this point we should stop pursuing it, multiple attempts have been made to pass it and failed. Board members presented their positions on the matter and the decision was unanimous that we would no longer pursue changes to that by law.

-Bylaws, 16 and 22, tweaking of some of the language as it pertains to nominations and appointments. Brian Polak thinks that it may still be worth taking another try at clarifying the language and attempting to put it to a vote again. Jay wonders if our membership really needs further clarification or if they intended the language to remain as it is. The question was raised as to whether or not the language should be reviewed by our attorney. Bob Keihm sees it as a step towards the BOG's goal of Home Rule. Heather Edelson doesn't think it deserves much more effort. I, Frank Nunes said that it seems to have been laid out very clearly by Brian Polak's write up and as such, it seems that the membership made a well informed decision. Jay thinks that maybe a survey of the members would help the BOG decide on which direction the board should take. Ultimately, the decision was made to make some further tweaks to the language and try again.

-Jay indicated that the Knickerbocker family called him and that he advised them that the bylaw revision regarding camping failed and that he told them that if they failed to comply with the prohibition on camping as it stands, they would be fined as per the existing bylaw.

-Bob Kiehm spoke in regards to section 5, and the definition of vote as well as absentee ballots. The definition of what a constitutes a vote is still not corrected from last year. This may need to be revisited. Bob indicated that he has already prepared a write up with a proposal for the corrected language.

-A motion was made to add to today's agenda discussion regarding renewing our existing certificate of deposit, the motion was made by Laurel Hoynosky and was seconded by Brian Polak. Bob Kiehm would like to renew the existing certificate of deposit and also add an additional \$25,000 to be taken from our savings account. This would be combined into a new one year CD at the current 3.9% APR. He will check and see if Citizens Bank in Middletown can provide a better return. I, Frank Nunes, suggested that we may want to consider multiple smaller CDs in case that for some unexpected reason, we need to access some of those funds we could do so without incurring the early withdrawal penalty on the entire \$100,000 amount. Such penalties can be quite significant, often up to three months of interest.

-A motion was made by Laurel Hoynosky and seconded by Frank Nunes to increase the funds in the existing certificate of deposit up to \$100,000 and to renew said certificate of deposit at the institution with the best available terms.

-General discussion, Karin Bullock suggested that maybe the Knickerbockers could be advised of their ability to prepare and submit their own proposed amendment to the camping bylaw themselves.

A motion to adjourn was made by Bob Kiehm and seconded by Heather Edelson, the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 PM