

Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee

Meeting of November 28, 2023

Minutes of Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Laura Henze Russell, Chair, Debbie Tatro, Vice Chair, Ken Hyman, Dan Lewenberg, Colin Barbera, and Eman Lasheen (arrived after the meeting started).

Guests: Josh Philibert, Conservation Administrator, Representative Ted Philips, Brittany Alioto of the Office of Representative Edward Philips, and Margaret O'Brien of TRC.

VOTES

- Motion to approve the minutes from the October 31, 2021 meeting: Ken moved, Laura seconded. Yes votes: Colin, Debbie, Dan, Ken, and Laura.
- Vote to approve Eman Lasheen as Chair of Education Advisory Group: Dan moved, Laura seconded. Yes vote: Colin, Debbie, Ken, Dan, and Laura.
- [Was there a vote on the Lake newsletter and lawn signs, or just unanimous agreement?]

DISCUSSIONS

Lake Newsletter, Love our Lake low fertilizer/no phosphorous campaign update

- Laura shared her screen showing the newsletter designed by Nancy Fyler, which Ken praised. Print copies will accompany the next Water Department bill in winter 2024. Members discussed distribution through the town e-mail system and lake email list; Jana may be able to assist. Ken, Laura, and Nancy will work on updating the landing page, signup sheet, and 2023 data set on the website ahead of distribution. Future planning priorities include promoting the LOL campaign with Sustainable Sharon Coalition, Sharon Friends of Conservation, the Sharon Garden Club, Massapoag Yacht Club, the camps, and other groups.

Preview of Budget Discussion

- Dan provided context on the budgeting process as the Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee met with Fred Turkington to discuss FY25 projections. Requests outside of the anticipated, estimated 2.5% budgetary increases (operating budget), are typically addressed as they arise (e.g. high dose alum treatment, much larger than the operating budget and a one-time-ask). Dan explained the differences in Reserve Fund money and Free Cash as well as other financing sources like CPC grants. Laura differentiated budget category items like "soft costs" (MESA fees, certified mail, consultant fees) which will accompany treatment costs, from other operating costs and proposed part time staffing to assist with grant reporting and follow up. Priorities include formalizing a financial plan to obtain "free cash" for alum treatment. They also

discussed requesting funds for part-time administrative support for FY25 and the need for ongoing weed removal initiatives in the context of historical budget review.

Love our Lake Campaign and Advocacy/Legislative agenda

- Rep. Philips summarized the legislative timeline for introducing bills. He discussed previous aquatic management initiatives as he was a Finance Committee member in 2014 when herbicide was used. When treating invasive weeds like fanwort, the LMAC has had to protect toothcup, an endangered species, from herbicide exposure via lake lowering. Another endangered species is also now present in the lake: resupinate bladderwort, further complicating obtaining authorization for herbicidal treatments.
- Regulations concerning endangered species' presences in proposed aquatic invasive species management areas present challenges in plan implementation because there is no formal waiver process. Members expressed interest in connected with other communities facing this hurdle and potentially engaging in agency outreach as well as legislative advocacy.
- Rep. Philips recommended first asking DFW and DEP for administrative flexibility and approval of proposed plans when it is hard to comply with existing regulations, and use their responses to confirm the need and determine the type of legislative updates that may be needed.
- Legislation enables municipalities on Cape Cod and the Islands to regulate fertilizer use which impacts nutrient inflows into waterways was a topic of interest.
- Action plans include follow-up conversations with sales reps from SePRO, as well as the consultant firm TRC, and Misty Anne Marold from Natural Heritage. Potential plans include: varying herbicide dosage amounts in areas within proximity to both fanwort and bladderwort and conducting lab tests to confirm the sensitivity of resupinate bladderwort to the treatment. Treating Fletcher's Cove with fluridone to minimize the spread of fanwort was also considered.
- Rep. Philips, Laura, Margaret, Josh and Debbie discussed a possible pilot program, expanding CPC language to specifically include funding for lake restoration, clarifying the definition of open space and recreation, updating procurement levels and bidding requirements to account for the impact of inflation, and updating and streamlining administrative requirements for public hearing notices, including ads and certified mail.

Administrative Services

- Attendees discussed making the new part-time grant administration role handling monthly and quarterly reporting a regular budget item for FY25, also processing invoices for reimbursement, helping with future solicitations and bids, updating spreadsheets, and note-taking.

Budget Committee

- Last year's budget committee consisted of: Dan, Stan, and Laura. Dan and Laura will serve this year. The budget is due November 29th. However, the deadline was extended until December 13th, so this will be further reviewed at our next meeting December 12th.

Fanwort at South Cove

- Gary mentioned that Fanwort was creeping outward and required quick action. He mentioned that it was coming back in the month since DASH was completed September 25-29, and seems to be spreading even after hand pulling and DASH. He shared a weed map and video Ken and he prepared on a survey of the South Cove October 26th. Josh mentioned paddling in Foxboro recently and reported that the town used fluridone treatment in 2021 as a solution, which seemed to work in reducing fanwort, but could be problematic for us because of rare plants (i.e. bladderwort, toothcup).

Educational Campaign, Newsletter, & Communications Committee

- The committee discussed increasing our visibility and enhancing communication. Laura noted that MVP grant funds will support the new lake newsletter that will be mailed with town water bills. Nancy proposed an educational campaign that aims to promote behavioral change through increasing visibility and reciprocity among neighbors. She proposed the title 'Love our lake' because it's simple and positive. It conveys the message about lake conservation without being technical (leading with fertilizer use etc.). It could be used on stickers, lawn signs, websites, and pledges, and in the newsletter. The committee also discussed reaching out to different groups and organizations, such as the Sharon Garden Club, SSC and Friends of Conservation, in addition to individuals/homeowners. Nancy advised we consult with Kevin Weber or Eric Cooper about putting signs on municipal buildings. The communications committee will include Laura, Ken, & Eman.

Sharon High School Field/Wetland Pipe Runoff

- The committee discussed the effects of runoff from the new high school fields into the lake. Laura mentioned that this area has high phosphorus readings. The committee suggested that Josh would follow up on engaging Kevin Weber in discussion of fertilizer use to minimize environmental impact.

Community Beach Status

- The committee discussed recommendations to Sharon Recreation about the status of community center beach, which was closed to swimming all season last year due to 8 positive E coli tests in 2022. This year it tested positive 4 times, potentially due to less usage or different weather. The information we have is inconclusive, we don't know if it is from sediment, Sucker Brook, sources feeding the lagoon, etc. Debbie mentioned that Suzy Peck believes it's not caused by septic systems but potentially, animal waste at

wetlands near Sucker Brook. Our efforts at source testing were confounded this year as samples we took to send to Jonah Labs were not high enough on the dates which NepRWA could due initial testing.

DASH & Alum Treatment Update

- The committee discussed various reports, including the alum monitoring report, the botanist report, and DASH report. They talked about the need for revisions, concerns about the toothcup habitat, and effectiveness of DASH, hand pulling, and herbicide application. Debbie shared information about a company called Clean Flo that uses specific technology to clear up problems in lakes by digesting muck. The committee discussed the possibility of piloting this technology in South Cove, which is about 20 acres in size, if we can secure approval for its use in MA by DFW/NHESP/MESA and DEP.

Cyanobacteria

- The committee discussed the need to continue to address the presence of cyanobacteria in the lake. Rain and warm water temperatures may have allowed for prolonged fall bloom. This is the third year of frequent localized blooms late August – late October (2021, 2022 and 2023).

CLOSING

- Next meeting will be Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 12 noon.
- Motion to adjourn: Gary moved, Laura seconded. Yes votes: Dan, Colin, Debbie, Gary, Eman, and Laura.