

CEDAR LAKE RECREATION ASSOCIATION SPRING MEETING JUNE 8, 2019

President Jane Harvey called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. at Porter Township Hall. About 58 people were present. She welcomed members and introduced the area reps and new board members: Chris Onderlinde, treasurer, Barb Walters, secretary and Joe Weist, vice president. Jane introduced the two guest speakers for the day, Joe Parman, Van Buren Drain Commissioner, and Eleanor Serocki, Invasive Species Coordinator for the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA).

After lengthy discussion, Members defeat motion to establish official lake level to address high water issue

Drain Commissioner Parman said he has worked to clear and check the drain on a weekly basis this year to try to keep it flowing in response to complaints about high water levels. (The culvert under M-40 is not under his jurisdiction but that of the Michigan Department of Transportation, which has also done clearing). Nevertheless, debris has been blocking the drain repeatedly and record amounts of rain have saturated groundwater and raised lake levels from Lake Michigan eastward, Parman said. A number of residents said action needed to be taken.

Parman explained that the Cedar Lake level is “not an official lake level.” The existing drain, built in 1994 as a result of a lawsuit brought by lake residents during another high-water period, created a level decided on by residents and signed off on by the circuit court. The creation of that level, however, did not follow state code Part 307 (Inland Lake Levels), which mandates a thorough study on the effects of a proposed drain on surrounding land and waters, he said. Therefore, the existing Cedar Lake level of 893.4 (feet above sea level) is “not a legal lake level,” he repeated. Currently the Cedar Lake level is 893.8, or about 5 inches over the level set in 1994, Parman said. The average since 1994 until recently, has been 8 to 12 inches below the set level.

Because of Part 307 (Inland Lake Levels) the Inter County Drain Board “can’t do ANYTHING to the water control structure without a court order,” wrote in a document he’d prepared for the residents and emphasized in his remarks.

What options were open to them then, residents wanted to know. “The drain is not flowing fast enough,” said Dick Vlasac. Cordell Jones asked, “What could we do to inexpensively increase the flow?”

The options, according to Parman, are to approach the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners asking them to set the process in motion to establish an official lake level. Or, 2/3 of the water front property owners can themselves go to the board asking them for a resolution. This approach was used by Three Mile Lake last year.

Parman cautioned that establishing an official lake level would be “no guarantee it would lower it.” The action would require petitioning the court and cost approximately \$63,000, he said. The cost includes: A lake level study, with engineering (\$22,900), the structure (\$15,000), and the legal cost of circuit court process (\$10,000 to \$15,000). “You may have to put the money up front,” Parman said. An assessment district is established, with back riparian lots charged half. A special assessment district can be spread over six years and would include Little Cedar Lake.

The state Department of Environmental Quality is “100 percent” against short term solutions, he said. “You can’t just put a 4-inch pump in it (the drain) and flood everybody else out,” he said. “You can ask, but they don’t have to go ahead with it.

A motion to have lake area representatives poll residents whether they want to establish a legal lake level failed, 29 no, 15 yes. (By this time, more than an hour into the meeting, some residents had left).

Controlling invasive species with new boat cleaning law was the topic of Eleanor Serocki of CISMA. Her job, she said, is to help lake property land owners in dealing with invasive species that spoil their water quality and property value. The new state law aimed at stopping the spread and introduction of both plant and animal invasive species which overwhelm native species is aimed at boats. The state is working on new signs to place at public landings stating the law, which mandates (as quoted from www.michigan.gov.invasive-species)

DO NOT launch or transport watercraft or carriers unless they are free of aquatic organisms; DO NOT transport a watercraft without removing all drain plugs and draining all water from bilges, ballast tanks and live wells; DO NOT release unused bait into the water.

DO CLEAN Boats, trailers and equipment; DO DRAIN live wells, bilges and all water by pulling drain plugs; DO DRY boats and equipment; DISPOSE of unwanted bait in trash.

Fish diseases and microscopic life stages of invasive species can be hiding in seemingly clean water, she said. Michigan invasives include a non-native form of Phragmites, a tall reed that reduces native fish population, European Frog-bit, which at ½ to 2¼ inches look like small water lilies, and yellow floating heart with five-petal flowers and a leaf with scalloped edges. Photos and explanations of these and other invasive species can be viewed at **Michigan.gov/invasives**.

Treasurer's report approved

Chris Onderlinde, treasurer, summarized the 2018 financial statement for the association. There is \$4,341 in the checking account and \$6,127.27 in the savings account. The major expenses were \$4,000 for a lake analysis survey and \$1,830 for water testing and weed control. The major source of income was dues at \$2905 and a garage sale at \$500.

Minutes approved

Minutes from the Aug. 25, 2018 meeting were read by secretary Barb Walters and approved.

New residents welcomed

President Jane Harvey welcomed new residents Dennis and Debbie Foster of Shorelane Drive and the Thompsons.

New volunteer for Secchi Disc reading

Dane Terrill will be responsible for doing the periodic test that indicates water clarity. There was no report for this meeting.

Fourth of July Schedule

Saturday, July 6th will be the two decorated boat parades; At 11 a.m., followed by a traditional but unsanctioned water battle, and at 9 p.m. with lit decorations. The decoration theme this year is patriotism or Game of Thrones. Sunday, July 7 will be the rain date with an evening parade only.

Poker Run is Aug. 3

Don Dewey announced that the poker run will be held Aug. 3, with a rain date Aug. 4. There will be a pot luck picnic after this biennial popular event.

President's report on weed control

President Jane reported that PLM has been doing a "great job lately" and that there is now less Eurasian milfoil according to survey photos. This year they are spraying for curly leaf pond weed, then milfoil.

The DASH treatment last summer in Graham's Cove "did not go as well as planned," she said. The treatment (Diver Assisted Harvester boat) appears effective in removing invasive milfoil. The problem was the timing, she said, which was unannounced and on the weekend when the noise and activity were disruptive to neighbors. The association currently has a permit needed for another area treatment; permits to treat the full lake are not available. (Milfoil is a long feathery thick weed that grows up to the surface and creates a blanket of vegetation). She is investigating the possibility of outfitting a jet ski or small boat with a DASH harvester and hiring a certified diver. At about \$1500, this would be less costly than the \$4,000 cost of the commercial DASH treatment. Unlike chemical, DASH treatment is selective in targeting the problem plant and removing it rather than allow it to fall to the bottom of the lake and build up vegetative material that reduces photosynthesis and reduces desirable fish and plant populations.

Wake boats, high water, weeds and other issues: A Report from the spring Michigan Lakes and Streams spring conference:

Barb Walters summarized the main issues discussed at the conference attended by representatives from lakes across the state.

Wake Boats: The high-energy wakes tear up the shoreline and threaten fisheries. The Nothing legally can now be done but education of boat owners is key. Even the industry is working on this. Key points of this education:

Wake boats should stay **at least 200 feet and preferably 300 feet from shore** because the waves dissipate considerably with distance.

A living shoreline of native plants can absorb the high energy waves of boats better than a sea wall or even rocks. If you do use rocks, leaving woody debris such as fallen branches can encourage live growth.

Living shorelines protect the lake from erosion, **discourage geese**, improve water quality, and provide habitat and protection for birds, frogs, fish and other wildlife.

Seawalls create an “aquatic desert.”

For more information and resources to help, visit www.shoreline.msu and www.mishorelinepartnership.org.

Submitted by Barb Walters, secretary

