

# ROCK LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

[www.rocklake.org](http://www.rocklake.org)

Minutes for March 15, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Via ZOOM

**1) Call to Order** – 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Mike Nesemann, Nathan Pyles, John Crump, Stan Smoniewski, John Thode, Jim Colegrove, Susan Trier, Bruce Ward, Ralph DePasquale, Sharron Webster,  
Guests: Patricia Cicero, Marisa Ulman, Cory Nelson

**2) Good News Minute** – Meeting participants shared recent good news.

**3) Motion to accept the agenda** - Made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**4) Secretary's Report** – Motion to approve February 15, 2020 minutes made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**5) Treasure's Report** Jim had emailed Board members re whether, given anaemic rates, it didn't make more sense to switch our CDs from 6 to 12 mos. maturities. A motion to do so was made, seconded, and after discussion, unanimously approved.

**6) Public Comment(s)/Correspondence** –

A. Guests.

B. Mail. Jim said we received a mailing from [Cason Associates](#), a land and water management consultant firm. He forwarded it to Bruce for consideration vis-à-vis fish habitat.

C. Email. Stan received an email requesting records re dates when the lake froze and opened up. Nathan has been keeping track for about 4 years, but the Leader has more extensive records and Stan will refer the writer to them.

D. Facebook. Susan said the Home Grown National Parks initiative is about to go live; she has a series of articles on various environmental issues, all relating to how suburban landowners can make their property more hospitable to native fauna and flora through land use practices, planting native plants, and other topics. The first post will be 4/5 and she will put out 3 per week until 5/28. This is derived from the work of [Doug Tallamy](#). Besides posting on our Web site, she will post on several other FB sites, including the Lake Mills Community page – all with links to our site.

**7) Committee Reports**

A. Water Quality Agriculture. Nathan reported the Jefferson County Soil Builders would be holding a meeting this week to discuss the next steps. They are getting assistance from Michelle Probst (nee Scarpace) as well as Patricia. Patricia reports there is some funding from point source polluters which can be used to reimburse famers for cover plants costs, as well as stipends for mentors from other producer led groups. All agreed this was extremely welcome and congratulated Nathan on his efforts. Other members referred favorably to a Netflix documentary, "[Kiss the Ground.](#)"

B. Water Quality Residential. John T. reported on the progress on the riparian owners' pamphlet with which the RLIA has been assisting the JRLC. Wednesday, they ( plus Patricia and possibly Marissa) have a meeting

with the City Attorney and other City staff to review the pamphlet. Apparently the attorney is in favor of more direct quotes from the ordinances, but all agreed the ordinances are difficult to read and believe that with appropriate disclaimers, the brochure's summarizing of the various rules as well as links to official sources would be more readable, and thus more likely used by owners. It is basically ready to go, they await only input from a few more people.

John also summarized the recent meeting he and Nathan had with City Manager Steve Wilke; their main issue was that people are not following the ordinances and how can RLIA help. Salient points:

- i) The city does not have the capacity to monitor all developments (many of which are only visible from the water) and thus basically can only respond to complaints from neighbors or concerned citizens.
- ii) Although the Town & County have long had ordinances governing riparian development, the City's previously basic guidance was more strictly formalized as ordinances in 2013/14. Thus the "What do you mean there are rules?" mentality of many riparian owners.
- iii) The City's approach to enforcing the ordinances is a function of the City Council and Planning Commission, and with several new members coming on board by this summer, the Council's basic philosophy and approach is unclear.
- iv) Mr. Wilke agreed it would be very useful to meet with landscape developers who work along the lake, however there are many of them. A member suggested we start compiling a list of them when we notice their signs at riparian lots.
- v) They wondered if the City shouldn't require licensure to work on the lake shore, or require them to post bond in order to work. Both of these would require Council approval and involvement and Patricia said the bonding had been raised some years back, but they should check with Glen Zastrow before getting too far into it. He has been active in lake issues for years and was an insurance agent who had pointed out several issues with requiring bonds.
- vi) Mr. Wilke said the City is somewhat constrained in re to enforcement. Levying a fine is a legal maneuver and apparently often ends up with legal challenges, generally with unfavorable results. Their most effective approach is to require City inspections, which can be required as frequently as they wish, e.g., daily. The charge is \$100 per inspection.

C. Water Quality Streets. Jim. Nothing to report.

D. Water Quality Sampling. Patricia introduced new Jefferson County Water Resources Management Specialist, Marisa Ulman and discussed sampling plans, including phosphorous, chlorophyll, and chloride. They will work with Jim in re to setting up an account with the State Lab of Hygiene using money the Board previously authorized.

E. Water Quality Miljala Channel. Susan. Nothing to report.

F. Public Outreach Stan suggested we needed to update our website's dashboard that tracks and rates our progress in re to the Lake Management Plan.

G. Habitat – Fisheries. Bruce and Cory hadn't heard back from the DNR so any fish stick placement will have to be next winter. They looked into some deep water fish habitat improvement, things like "cribs" or other structures placed in deep water as opposed to fish sticks, which are along the shore. The deeper ones are apparently a two edged sword. While they generally are very good at attracting fish, that often leads to the fish concentrating and being more heavily harvested by fisherman who can fish above and adjacent to them. So it's

a wash. Shallow or near shore fish sticks are good habitat for smaller fish, insects, and any above water branches will be used by turtles to warm on.

Bruce is considering doing an unofficial “creel survey” on some summer weekends.

H. Habitat – other. Shar. Mike summarized the turtle subcommittees projects – they will be looking at the DNR land on the North End for possible upgrading of turtle habitat. They will also be putting out signs and again doing road “patrols.”

I. Membership – Jim gave an illustrated slide show of how the USPS program, [Every Door Direct Mail \(EDDM\)](#), would cover zip code 53551. He had previously (Feb. meeting) outlined a program where we would target mail routes both in and out of 53551 – which would cost us about \$4,000 for 6,000 pieces compared to the usual program where we spend roughly \$700 to mail about 515 pieces, bulk mail. By restricting the mailing to the 53551 zip, we would get about 4,000 mailings for a total of roughly \$2,500 – 3,000. A motion was made and seconded to authorize up to \$4,000 for an EDDM mailing of this year’s membership letter to the 53551 zip code. After some discussion it was unanimously approved.

J. Lake Recreation. Ralph. Nothing to report.

## **8) Other Reports.**

A) County. Patricia. Planning is underway for stream monitoring training 4/24. She will also be contacting former Clean Boats/Clean Waters volunteers in case that program resumes this year.

B) JRLC. Stan. Apparently the City Parks and Recreation Board has decided to “monitor” the safety situation at Bartels Beach due to motorized vessels anchoring near the swimming area there. They also sent a letter to the City Council supporting our recommendations on lake carrying capacity. Both write-in candidates for the Town Board attended the last JRLC meeting.

## **9) Old Business.**

A) F/U chloride testing. See 7.D above.

B) (John C) Bylaws. Subcommittee will be meeting tomorrow to review first draft of update.

C) (Mike) Rock River Storm Water Group & Creative Marketing. Nothing to report.

D) (John T) Cedars CUP hearing of 2/23/12. The City Attorney stated that the City ordinances are really written for normal residential lots about 60 feet wide, and the Cedars has 400 feet of frontage. In re to the Compere property, Patricia, John, and Mike brought up several issues and recommendations, but the only one incorporated into the approved plan was for the implementation of Planning Board recommendations, which the Comperes accepted, to be inspected for compliance one year after they finish implementing it and a year after that. We had pointed out that without such inspections, there was no mechanism to ensure the required changes were successfully implemented. Of interest was some back-and-forth between the Council and City engineering and streets sections over the effect the accepted changes would have on the planned redo of Lakeshore Drive.

The Cedars/CUP debate became rather emotional with one Cedars member lamenting the lack of transparency, planning, and adherence to City ordinances. A large group of Cedars members disputed this and said their actions were taken to enhance CUP members access to the lake as well as preserve the scenic “three sisters” boathouses. They also claimed to have requested advice and assistance from the DNR and RLIA without a

response. (There is no record of their having reached out to the RLIA). It was rather confused, worsened by a tenuous audio connection for both those at the meeting and those attending virtually. Part of the confusion was they had apparently never actually presented a detailed plan of their intentions, so that the City couldn't comment on it. Apparently at the end, the decision was that they had to work with City staff to come up with an acceptable plan of remediation. Here too, wording was apparently put in requiring City inspections after the work was completed.

Of note was that several Cedars speakers referred to the value of the property should it be subdivided – which could have been interpreted as a warning to the City if they required what the Cedars people considered excessive remediation. Subdividing and selling those lots would allow a total of 30% of the frontage to be cleared as a viewing access corridor, which would exceed the amount currently cleared.

E) Road Salt 101 workshop f/u. John C thanked the many who attended and felt it was extremely valuable. The City purchased equipment several years ago for using brine/prewetting strategies to reduce and optimize the use of road salt. But due to the lack of training, the City “road crew” had problems using the equipment and had to stop. John facilitated a phone call between Paul Hermanson, City Director of Public Works, and the Director of Salt Wise. This led to getting the “road crew” signed up for training with associated certification through Salt Wise which, along with attendance at the workshop, should resolve the issues. The City plans to proceed with salt reduction/optimization strategies next winter. John lauded Allison Madison of [Wisconsin Salt Wise](#) for pulling the workshop together on very short notice, and getting several representatives from other municipalities who had successfully used brine to attend. The Town leadership was also present for the workshop, including two board members and the Clerk. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Board member was out of town but planned to watch the video upon return. One or two contractors also attended. The Town will be initiating a Request for Proposals this spring for a 3-year winter road maintenance contract, so it was important that the workshop be completed prior to that decision. The Town thus far has been unable to find a contractor willing and able to use best practices of road salt strategies. There were 98 total participants at the workshop, including several Board members and other people from the Lake Mills area, as well as representative of the leadership from dozens of municipalities throughout Wisconsin, which broadened the workshop's impact. A motion was made and seconded to send a letter of commendation to Wisconsin Salt Wise with a contribution of \$500. After discussion, the motion was amended to make a contribution of \$250 and was passed unanimously.

## **10) New Business**

### **A) Lake Street Redo.**

Shar reported that an email from the Lake Street Project Manager stated: “The West Lake Street project will address...by sending most of the watershed that currently flows directly to the lake through a stormwater treatment device in a large manhole at Ferry/W. Lake Street. This device will settle out suspended solids and pollutants. While not required by DNR to provide stormwater treatment for this urban road to urban road reconstruction project, the City wanted to be good stewards of the lake and provide some storm water treatment where possible. Modeling software indicates the device will filter 43% of suspended solids from the watershed flowing through the device. This system will cost approximately \$15,000 initially and will require periodic clean-out by City staff. You will also see a new outfall to the lake near the intersection of Lakeshore Drive and W. Lake Street.”

Shar also said some trees will also be removed in order to complete the project. Patricia suggested writing something to highlight the City's positive actions which Shar will work on.

B) Spring Cleanup. Given the CoVid situation, it was felt that a mass gathering could not be held this year. Instead, Bruce and Corey, working with Ralph and Stan, will come up with a plan to encourage individuals to clean up their yards and adjacent public properties of trash and garlic mustard. RLIA will arrange for a dumpster to be placed at Bartels for the deposition of the collected trash/garlic mustard. A target date of 4/22 was set, but that can be changed depending on the weather.

C) Town Chair Election. Susan suggested we send the candidates a list of lake related questions and ask their positions on them. A motion was made and seconded to do so. The discussion involved how the questions should be worded, i.e., general or specific, and timing of it. The motion to have Susan and John C write the questions and send to the candidates, asking for a response by 3/29. was passed unanimously. Consideration will also be given to publishing their responses on our website and in the Leader.

**11) Adjourn** – A motion was made to adjourn, which was seconded and unanimously passed at 8:40 p.m.

Next Meeting (via Zoom): Monday, April 19, 2021, 6:30 PM.