

## AGM Minutes

Annual General Meeting of Clear Lake Property Owners' Association

Torrance Community Centre

10am, June 29 2024

1. Welcome - Ian McClennan
2. Tree clearing on Clear Lake Road - Ian McClennan
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  - Ian gave a summary of the tree situation: There were trees overhanging the roads on Clear Lake Road. Some trees needed to be trimmed for road visibility. But far too many trees got cut. There was a meeting a month ago with several people (from Township of Muskoka Lakes and CLPOA) about what was done, and how it can be done better next time.
  - Mayor Peter Kelley: We are under an obligation to maintain the trees for visibility, safety, and healthy growth. We are responsible for 350km of road. We adopted a practice of mechanical brushing and clearing, which was vetted by a team of environmental consultants. I think the key thing is communication, we need to communicate better that we're going to be doing this work. Also, part of the problem is that we didn't do it often enough in the past. If we did more frequent cleaning operations, there would be less cutting each time.
  - Bernie Shwartz: This wasn't just a cleaning - this was way more. It was a hack job. Why can't you do better?
  - Michael Silver: A little history on those trees and the agreement with Hydro: They were a special tree planting project. We got thousands of samplings for free on the basis that it was a natural tree barrier and a lot of work was done to plant them. We came to an agreement with Hydro to not cut trees down under those wires. Lots of the cutting this time around was done by the township, where Hydro would normally do it (more carefully). Historically, as part of the agreement with Hydro, when some cleaning needs to be done there, Hydro works closely with us to select which trees are trimmed. And trees are never cut.
  - Bob Cleverdon: I for one am happy about that tree cutting, the shoulders were cleared and the visibility was improved.
  - Jeremy Silver: It was actually several large trees that were cleared, and the damage was beyond just brush cutting. It was blanket cutting without regard for the line of the road
  - someone(?): There are quite a few stumps now which are remaining. Can we clear those?
  - Derrick Hammond: I will make a note of that
  - Michael Silver: I want to commend Derrick Hammond for his work on the Torrance Barrens
3. A call to approve last year's minutes - Ian McClennan
  - Raised: Ian McClennan

- Motion: Mike McClennan
- Seconded: Brian Ternoway

Motion was Passed

4. Treasurer's report - Jeremy Silver

- Motion to approve report: Mike McClennan
- Seconded: Simone Skopek

Motion was Passed

5. Auditing of finances - Ian McClennan

- Motion to waive auditing of financial statements: Mike McClennan
- Seconded: Paul Regan
- Question raised by Bob Cleverdon: When was the last time finances were looked at by an independent review? No one is quite sure, but a long time ago, anyways. Someone mentioned that the cost of an audit would likely exceed \$3000, not a good use of funds.

Motion was Passed

6. Review of current spending limits without approvals - Jeremy Silver

- Beaver removal project: stay at \$2000 per year
- Water testing: stay at \$1300
- Insurance: raised to \$2200
  - i. Raised by Jeremy Silver
  - ii. Motion to approve: Carolyn Shwartz
  - iii. Seconded: Paul Regan

Motion was Passed

7. Water Quality report - Bob Cleverdon

- See Appendix A for full report
- Water clarity 6.8 meters (good)
- Phosphorous: 5.7 (good)
- Ice out very early this year, March 17. Almost a month earlier than usual
- Reminder that we do discourage wildlife by the shoreline as it causes problems
- Ian gives thanks to Bob and Sharon for their hard work

8. Township monitoring of septic systems - Glenn Zavitz

- A note that the township will have an increased focus on septic systems this year with regards to proper care for the environment. Expect to see more inspectors going around to make sure people are keeping their septic systems in good condition
- Mike Silver: When a property changes hands there should be a mandatory inspection. Glenn Zavitz: Yes.

9. Tree health - Jiri Skopek

- Jiri: There is a big concern about increasing heat levels. One effect of this that has become very apparent on our property is that the pines are shedding far more needles this year already, far earlier. They appear to be under a lot of

stress. Is this being tracked? Could we implement a system of tracking this and what can be done?

- Derrick Hammond: The township is working with the province to prevent forest fires
- Mayor Peter Kelley: It is helpful if property owners take matters into their own hands a bit too. The "Friends of the Muskoka Watershed group" (disclosure, I am Chairman of that group) gears a lot of work towards citizen involvement. One study we conducted looked at sprinkling the base of trees with wood ash, we recommend this for healthier trees.
- Mike Silver: We implemented an active fire ban outside the Barrens, and this was quite helpful

#### 10. Membership update - Sharon Cleverdon

- See Appendix B for full report
- 144 memberships total, 6 more than last year
- Only 10 cottages not represented by membership, out of a total 138 cottages

#### 11. Regatta - Lisa Pennycook

- This year's regatta will be Aug 3
- It will be at the McClennan property this year. The Millers will be sharing some of this responsibility and helping
- The tug of war rope broke last year - new ones are being ordered
- **We need volunteers.** Please contact Lisa or Stephanie Miller. Or email [volunteer@clearlakemuskoka.com](mailto:volunteer@clearlakemuskoka.com)

#### 12. Beaver situation update - Bob Cleverdon

- See Appendix C for full update
- 19 beavers removed from the creek
- Water levels downstream have dropped significantly (by 2 feet)
- Water levels down 1 foot by the highway
- Questions:
  - i. Paul Regan: We have a beaver on our property. What should we do?  
Bob: I don't have a good answer for you. I could suggest getting a trapper.
  - ii. Chris Pennycook: Is there any work done during the winter? Bob: No. It's dangerous due to ice breaking. It's only done on open water.
  - iii. Mike Silver: Do we need more money? Bob: No. We have enough.
  - iv. Ian McClennan: Is Black Lake keeping up their end of their agreement?  
Bob: Yes. They have been great.
- Jeremy Silver: Want to raise a discussion and propose the board ceasing involvement for beaver removal, with three main points: Responsibility: It should be the responsibility of the property owners on that property, not the lake. Ethical: I am not happy about drowning 19 beavers. Liability: Are we opening ourselves up to legal liabilities by getting involved?

- i. Mike McClennan: I disagree entirely. The health of the lake is dependent on the water coming in.
- ii. Glenn Zavitz - something about whose responsibility it is? (I didn't understand)
- iii. Mike Silver: Jeremy's points are well taken. The property owners at that property bought the property in an effort to protect the lake. But we need to keep the healthy flow of the lake going.
- iv. Tom Skopek: I disagree with Jeremy. It's too risky to have the health of the lake be reliant on the whim of one cottager doing the right thing
- v. Charlie: the property owner there is very happy/grateful that we are helping out
- vi. Bob: There are 5 owners of that property that are doing it for selfless reasons
- vii. (Not noted): Regarding liability, has anyone looked at the professional liability risk? You can call the insurance and ask them?
- viii. Shelly Wagner: I had similar thoughts as Jeremy. I think that it should be the responsibility of the property owners there
- ix. Susan: Does Muskoka Lakes have an opinion on controlling the beavers?
- x. (Katherine Fuji?): There are more than just 2 lakes involved. The water levels are very high and Echo Lake is constantly calling about flooding situations.
- xi. Jeremy: Question for the township. Are there any initiatives to monitor this? Should township get involved?
- xii. Glenn Zavitz: Beavers are not traditionally a township issue. Usually they are on private properties. If the beaver is just on the side of the road, we can pick it up, but it's hard when it's interior, and it usually is
- xiii. Mike - Is there any possibility to use dynamite? (serious question)
- xiv. Motion for the board to abstain from beaver removal
  1. Motion by Jeremy Silver
  2. Seconded by Shelly Wagner
  3. All those in favor? 2 hands.
  4. All those against? Almost everyone else
  5. Motion not passed

### 13. Presentation of awards - Mike Silver

- Presentation by Mike Silver of the Torrance Barrens Award to Mike Nageleisen
  - i. Mike Silver read out an Email from Joyce Dell
  - ii. Mike Nageleisen accepted the award on behalf of the working group. "There's a lot of work involved and lots of good work by many people. We made the Barrens better, but there's still a lot of work to do."
- Presentation by Mike Silver of the newly created President's bowl award to all past presidents of the CLPOA. Given to current president Ian McClennan

### 14. Open floor for any other items - Ian McClennan

- Paul Treyes: We didn't lose any lake markers last year. The markers do need a thorough cleaning and we will redo the ropes soon.
- Jamie ?: Speaking on behalf of camp Pine Crest. Tomorrow (Jun 30) is the first day of camp. We are aware that the first day of camp often causes issues on the road due to lots of traffic. We appreciate your patience
  - i. (someone ??) - Can you continue to have some people with signs asking drivers to slow down, because it really is a problem with dangerous drivers speeding, and having people with signs helps
  - ii. (someone ??) - Can we get the townships to put up better signs, or perhaps one of those speed cameras that shows your speed and blinks?
    - 1. Chris Pennycook: Would that cost be on the association? Glenn Zavitz: No
- (Katherine Fuji?): Tue/Thu 2-4pm we are introducing games and fun for kids. [Ian asked to get details for this] There will be:
  - i. T-ball at the baseball diamond
  - ii. Men's baseball on Friday nights
  - iii. Cards on Thursday night

#### 15. Elections - Ian McClennan

- All directors except Tom Skopek staying on
- Nomination of Christopher Pennycook to the board
  - i. Motion by Mike McClennan (with a focus on fishing)
  - ii. Seconded by Lisa Pennycook
  - iii. Declined by Chris
- Nomination of Simone Skopek to the board
  - i. Motion by Mike Silver
  - ii. Seconded by Ron Algate
  - iii. Accepted by Simone Skopek
  - iv. Simone Skopek gave a bit of her background: lots of work in the government and private sector, including corporate real estate with a focus on environmental impact.
- ?: Appreciation for the board. Wanted to have on the record his appreciation to the board for their hard work
- Motion to accept the board of directors (Ian McClennan, Lisa Pennycook, Mike Silver, Jeremy Silver, Ron Algate, Charlie Wilkins, Natale Catalano, Simone Skopek)
  - i. Motion by Mike McClennan
  - ii. Seconded by Bob Cleverdon
  - iii. All in favour - yes!

## Appendix A: Water testing report

2023 water testing report for 2024 AGM July 1 2024

R.W. Cleverdon

Our Association has been part of the Muskoka Lake's Association water Quality Initiative program since 2005 and Sharon and I have managed the Clear Lake program and testing since 2008.

This overall program covers over 50 lakes and rivers with tests executed by over 100 volunteers, all using the exact same test schedules and protocols. According to the MLA, this is the most comprehensive program of any lake association in Canada. You can go to the MLA site for more info on the overall program or our own site for detailed test results.

Our 2023 program required 65 tests in total, on 5 test dates, on 5 different locations. The tests included bacteria tests of Total Coliforms and E Coli, as well as Phosphorous, water clarity and temperature. The results were generally unremarkable, being consistent with historical norms and well within MLA and Provincial water quality standards. I'll talk about the exception to that statement at the end of my remarks.

Water clarity averaged 6.8 meters, up from 5.5 in 2022 and better than historical average (6.25). Phosphorous, a key indicator of lake health, averaged 5.7 micrograms/litre, higher than last year (4.0) but still below our historical 6.04 and well below the 2021 revised thresholds of 10. The only abnormality in our 2023 results was finding bacterial/ecoli readings at the two Ridge Road sites on our June 26 tests, after heavy rainfall, that were well above the MLA and Ontario standards. The MLA protocol is to conduct additional tests at those sites as soon as possible to confirm the readings. We did the retest on June 29 and saw a return to normal levels. We saw similar high numbers at these two sites in 2022, which coincidentally followed heavy rainfall, which again returned to normal levels on retest. The only notable feature of these sites is that they are at the base of the typical Ridge Road steep topography, so run off is more likely than at the flat sites.

As mentioned at the top, our results are posted on our web site. Our 2024 testing program is underway with 5 sites this year and the same tests.

Ice out this year was very early, March 17, which was almost a month earlier than 2023. The impact of this is to be determined, but what we did notice was that the May test results this year showed higher phosphorus, higher temperatures and lower seecci disk readings than the May 2023 tests. We'll continue to assess our results against our historical records to determine trends.

I'll conclude by thanking everyone for doing their part to keep our lake true to its name. Everyone has a role to play with good shoreline vegetation practices, properly constructed and maintained septic systems, and minimizing the use of phosphate detergents, and in light of our e coli experiences, discouraging the shoreline presence of wildlife.

**Appendix B: Membership Report**

CLPOA Membership Report for 2023

A total of 144 memberships were received in 2023 which was 6 more than the previous year.

117 of those 144 memberships had been received by Aug. 27, 2023.

A personalized reminder was sent out on Aug. 28 last summer to 35 people which resulted in 22 sending in their dues.

A 2nd reminder was then sent out on Oct. 25, 2023 to 13 cottagers which resulted in 5 sending in their dues.

In total, the reminders did bring in an additional 27 memberships (\$810) raising the membership from 117 to 144.

We also received \$70 in donations.

There are 138 main cottages/residences on the lake excluding additional accommodation buildings. 10 cottages were not represented by at least 1 paid membership.

As of today's Annual Meeting, 91 memberships have been received (89 at the new \$40 rate and 2 @ \$30 as 2 members who had not paid last year sent in their 2023 dues this year).

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Previous years

2022	138	2018	110
2021	133	2017	114
2020	129	2016	124
2019	115	2015	132

**Appendix C: Beaver report**

Beaver report for 2024 AGM...R.W.Cleverdon

The beaver project is centered on Brandy Wine creek, which runs from the highway behind Clear Lake Rd to the Stone bridge at the camp intersection. This creek provides necessary drainage for Black Lake and our own outflow creek. The Creek and associated wetlands can be

seen between Old Torrance Road and the rockcut. The creek empties into Gull Wing Lake, which empties into Echo Lake, which empties into Lake Muskoka by Keeler Rd., but our efforts are focused on waterways upstream of the stone bridge.

Over time, a large population of beavers blocked the creek with numerous dams, which raised the water level high enough that Black Lake cottagers were experiencing significant flooding and our own lake was in danger of having the wetlands water back up and flow into our lake, resulting in a major ecological event. Concurrent with this, our former TML Director of public works sent a letter to all landowners threatening legal action if the landowners themselves didn't resolve the problem.

Discussion at our 2022 AGM about this issue and the opportunity to partner with Black Lake on solutions resulted in a unanimous vote to provide multi-year funding to match Black Lake on a 50/50 basis.

A trapper was hired to bust the dams and trap the beavers. 7 excursions were done in 2023, 17 last year and we have completed 10 so far this year.

Each excursion represents about 4 hours.....an hour to gather and transport equipment to the creek and return it, and usually 3 hours in the creek tearing apart anywhere from 10 to 20 dams, depending on what the beavers have rebuilt or built new since last outing.

Results are encouraging...19 beaver have been removed from the creek since we started.

Water levels in the creek downstream of our outflow creek are down over 2 feet, which helps our drainage, while the level at the highway is down about a foot which helps Black Lake. We have contributed \$2700 towards the effort since 2021, which was matched by Black Lake. I have accompanied the trapper on most excursions and our Black Lake partner has also accompanied us when available.

So much water has been moved from the lower part of the creek that this month only a paddle board can get through. There is still canoe access to the largest dam on the watershed located a few hundred feet from the highway and I'll be focusing on that over the summer.