

STURBRIDGE LAKES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 18, 2018

Call to Order: 6:30 by President Laurie Palmer

In Attendance:

Leigh Darrin CL
Chris Mazeika SP
Chuck Roy BA
Marita Tasse SP
Bruce Gran BA
Laurie Palmer LP
Dave Mitchel

Determination of Quorum: Quorum present 7/11

Introduction of Guest: Laurel Carpenter and her students, Sam Alsaoy, Courtney Gilligan, and Evan Klause

New Business: (New Business was addressed prior to Old Business to let Laurel and students leave early)

1. Laurel Carpenter explained the nature of the students project. The students would like to analyze data from the Lake Studies done over the years, as well as visit these six Great Ponds in Sturbridge and do their own studies. Dave explained that Long Pond is officially one of the Great Ponds in Sturbridge, even though it is now part of the Brimfield Dam project, and that SLAC has no representative from Long Pond.

Student's project is looking to determine how the various Ponds' water quality has changed over the years, and contributing factors. They would like to see any general history of the lakes' industrial or commercial use that might have affected the water quality of the Ponds in the past. Relevant examples might be mining, or water diversion for industrial use like at Ceder and Big Alum.

The project is looking at Ponds from 2000 to the present. Dave mentioned there are numerous studies that have been done over the years that may be accessed via the Internet.

Evan wanted to know if Town had a GIS? person to whom they might speak. Dave didn't think the town did have such a person.

Bruce Gran will coordinate with students for visit to Big Alum. Leigh Darrin will coordinate visit for Ceder, Chris Mazeika will coordinate visit for South Pond, and Laurie Palmer will coordinate for Lead Mine. E-mails will be given to the students by SLAC for these individuals as well as those of our other absent committee members from Walker Pond. Laurie suggested Rob Sparrow.

Laurel and students thanked the committee and left the meeting.

Action: Bruce, Leigh, Chris, and Laurie follow up with e-mails to students and coordinate visits.

2. Discussion of green Algae found in Big Alum. Bruce explained this Algae was found floating in Big Alum late this summer. Dave thought this Algae was an Alga Matte, not Algae per se. Alga Matte disburses easily compared to Algae, which grows on bottom. It was speculated that this Alga Matte bloom may have been caused by the run off from heavy rains this summer causing phosphate based fertilizers, as well as decaying debris, such as gypsy Moths, etc. to flow into the lake more abundantly than normal. It was stressed this is a temporary effect, and not dangerous.

Chuck explained what BALA is doing to control runoff from surrounding properties at Big Alum. BALA membership allocated \$2000.00 for an engineering study to correct problem areas, and has agreed to support a project to fix these areas once they are determined. Dave mentioned that Big Alum should look into a "319 Grant" which is Federal money directed by the State for possible financial help.

It was recommended that in the spring SLAC reach out to all the area landscaping companies, as well as, home owners to educate them on phosphates in fertilizers and their affect on the lakes in the area. It was suggested a protocol be developed for landowners and landscaping companies to follow. Marita Tasse, and Bruce Gran will work on putting this protocol together.

Action: Marita and Bruce create a protocol to be reviewed at next meeting.

3. Discussion of Ceder Lake beaches being closed, but no notice from Board of Health on their reopening. Leigh Darrin mentioned that Blue Green Algae was found at the Sturbridge Host Beach and at the Town Beach, resulting in a close down of those beaches. She explained that, the Town was supposed to re-test and let residence know when it was safe to re-enter the water. The Town never got back to the residence. Leigh suggested that the various Lake Associations meet with the Board of Health to monitor testing at each Lake, and subsequent reporting.

Chuck Roy felt SLAC should take a more aggressive position on issues of this nature as an advisory committee on the Lakes. He questioned, "What is role of SLAC"? Dave Mitchel suggests SLAC needs to identify a contact on The Board of Selectmen that will be our liaison to the Board in the future on Lake issues. Laurie Palmer suggested we define what actually happened at Ceder Lake, then SLAC can meet and use this issue to help define our role as an advisory committee, and how we communicate our advise to the Board of Selectmen.

Bruce Gran felt we need to define the areas of the various lakes that the Board of Health tests. i.e. boat ramps, beaches, etc. It makes a big difference where these tests are done according to Bruce. Dave suggested we might designate a representative from SLAC that will attend BOS meetings to represent Lake issues. Laurie Palmer will send an e-mail to BOS asking how they would like SLAC to communicate our thoughts and advise to the BOS. She will ask if they felt we should be on the Agenda.

Action: Laurie to send e-mail to BOS.

Old Business:

1. There were no minutes from September meeting to approve. Meeting was not official.

2. Report on disbursement of 5000.00 from Town Betterment Fund for Lakes' weed control programs. Ceder Lake spent 52% pro rata, and will receive 2600.00. Big Alum spent 36%, and will receive 1800.00. South Pond spent 12% and will receive 600.00. Remaining Lakes did not participate in weed treatment and will receive 0 dollars. These are final numbers. Percentages are rounded.

Action: Get disbursements to various Lake Associations.

3. Discussion of Boating Course followed. Presently we ask a 10.00 donation from each participant to cover cost of food. The course itself is free. For 50 participants the cost of the event is 500.00 plus dining tax. Last course we collected 350.00 in donations. This left around 175.00 deficits. SLAC collects 60.00 per lake to cover these costs, for a total of 300.00 per year. With two courses per year, we are presently running a deficit. Marita questioned if SLAC should be taking the deficit money out of the 5000.00 presently used for weed treatment to cover the cost. Chuck Roy didn't feel this was the first choice of options. At the last meeting a suggestion was made to use money from Municipal Waterways Improvement Fund. This is a different fund than the Town Betterment Fund that the weed money comes from. Leigh said she would research use of these funds at the last meeting, and how it comes back to lakes. She believes expenditures are approved at the Town Meeting. She will report back to the committee.

Dave Mitchel suggested we look into the possibility of getting money from some “Public Safety” fund rather than Betterment Fund. Chuck Roy felt it “never hurts to ask”. These safety courses provide a public service to all the Lakes in Sturbridge. These are Mass. Great Ponds, and as such are open to all the public. Laurie and Marita felt that politically, they are wary of asking for more money for Lakes in that it only impacts a small percentage of the Town’s citizens. Chuck pointed out that there are many other areas in the Town budget that affect only a small number of residences, such as Town Commons, ball fields, etc. He felt lakes fall into this category. There was no further discussion.

Action: Leigh to follow up on Municipal Waterways Improvement Fund.

4. Dave Mitchel announced he will be stepping down from SLAC and that this was his last meeting. He will still be around for advice, but he has personal projects he is working on as he is slowing down his career. He will be missed on the SLAC committee. We wish him good luck. Dave suggested we might speak with Laurel Carpenter about filling his position on SLAC.

5. A brief discussion as to South Pond and how much of south Pond is in Sturbridge and how much is in the Brookfield’s. This was mostly for enlightenment and edification on Chuck’s behalf!

Action: Possibly ask Laurel about joining SLAC.

Next Meeting: 4/18/2019 at 6:30

Motion to Adjourn: Chuck Roy, second Laurie Palmer

Adjournment: 8:26

Minutes taken by Chuck Roy/Secretary