

Property Owners Association Lake Hayward
Annual Meeting
August 16, 2015
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The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. at the pavilion by President Bob Sudell. Present at the roll call of the Board of Governors were Gail Miers, Jason Griffing, Gary Petersen, Deborah Smith, Bob Sudell and Bonnie Sudell. Also present were Ed Bader, Tax Collector and Lee Griffin, Treasurer. There were 91 members present.

Bob Sudell asked that members be respectful of one another and that everyone use a microphone when speaking. Don Smith had a microphone to take to members wishing to speak. Members were asked to state their name and Lake address before speaking. He also asked that members put their phones on mute and take calls in the parking lot so as to not disrupt the meeting. He requested that members limit their comments to no more than five (5) minutes and speak no more than twice on the same topic. He reminded members that the Board consists of non-compensated volunteers and that the POALH had neither a public works nor a police department.

Minutes: A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the June 28, 2015 Meeting Minutes.

President's Report/Introductory Remarks: Bob applauded the efforts of our Tax Collector which resulted in a decrease in our mil rate to .0035 mils. He complimented the Budget Committee on their diligence and remarked that many of our ongoing projects would be discussed under individual committee reports. He stated that maintenance of our rights of way and improved access to the water were among our initiatives. He said that we were looking into an enhanced electronic method to effectively manage our communications, as a result of a FOI complaint made earlier in the year. The Board is also working to better document our policies and procedures so that as Boards change, we don't revisit issues already settled.

Financial Reports:

Treasurer's Report: Lee Griffin stated that our Year End Report was in yesterday's newsletter (August 15, 2015). The information, including a breakdown of our reserves, was also on our website. There was some discussion regarding the reporting of the dredging project and the bottom line of our budget to actual, which was also on our website.

Tax Collector: Ed reported that the POALH had a long history of dealing with delinquent accounts, including accounts that hadn't paid in over 20 years. His first task when becoming Tax Collector was to recreate the data, including determining the mill rate in effect when original bills were sent. The POALH did not have a history of its mill rate, and he thanked a long time property owner for sharing their records to determine the mill rate. After assembling all of the data, he engaged Pullman & Comley, LLC, a firm used by over 60% of CT towns, to initiate tax collection efforts. As a municipality, the POALH does not pay for tax collection efforts; it is the property owner who pays. After about six months of collection efforts, 19 of the 21 paid. The remaining two properties were sold at tax lien auction on June 30, 2015. The original property owners have six months to reclaim their property by paying all outstanding taxes, interest, liens, attorney fees, etc.

Ten accounts that had historically been very slow at paying taxes were subject to jeopardy billing, where, in addition to being billed by the attorney for the past due taxes, they were billed in advance for the next year's taxes.

Ed reported that in total \$71,000 had been collected, including \$4,300 in advance collections.

Ed reminded members that when 20% of property owners did not pay their taxes, the remaining 80% were taxed more to make up the difference.

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Another group of 29 taxpayers were late in paying their 2014 taxes. According to CT Statutes, an implied lien was placed on their property as of October 1, 2014, this inchoate lien expiring June 30, 2015. The tax collector sent demand letters to these 29, and 12 paid before June 30. Liens were placed on the remaining 17. Seven paid in July, leaving 10 with liens.

So far this year, the POALH has collected 93% of what was billed.

Ed reported that he instituted a new billing system as of July 1, 2015, the same system used by more than 60% of towns, working off the tax assessor rolls. Brenda Armstrong had used Quickbooks, which was very labor intensive and difficult to work with. In the course of the transition, Ed found eight accounts that had not been billed in the past.

Ed is confident that, going forward, all property owners will be paying their fair share, either voluntarily or through tax collection efforts. He reminded us all that the law is very clear that it is the taxpayer's responsibility to obtain the bill, not the Town, not the Association.

Before entertaining questions, Bob reminded the membership that the Board cannot interfere or intervene with tax collection matters, and that all questions and concerns must be directed to the Tax Collector.

Peter Paschke asked if any provisions had been made for those experiencing hardships. Ed replied that to his knowledge, no one had approached the Tax Collector asking for consideration due to hardship. Some members, whose disposable income varies widely, have asked to pay in advance, and those requests have been granted. Very few Towns have "hardship" options, and a special ordinance needs to be passed to allow it. Ed said that, as some cottages have been in the same family for years, possibly in trusts, he had also been contacted by family members, asking if taxes had been paid by their parents or whoever the property owner was. Ed was able to answer the family members' questions.

Linda Abel asked where the money was that had been collected. Ed said that \$55,000 had been used to reduce the current year's tax bills. \$11,000 went into the current year's (2015-16) operating budget. Collection efforts resulted in a lowering of the mill rate for the current year to 3-1/2 mills and taxes would be lower next year also.

Fred Odell asked Ed when he was available to discuss taxes with property owners, to which Ed replied 52 weeks a year, anytime a property owner wished. Fred then thanked Ed for everything that he did.

Gail Edgington asked how our taxes could be lower when the budget was higher. Ed replied that he would explain when we went over the budget.

Linda Ryder-Munet asked if our financials were on our web site, and Ed replied yes.

Budget: Ed acknowledged members of the Budget Committee, including Roland DePratti, Dave Edgington, Lee Griffin, Kim Jonah and Gail Miers. He directed members to the three page "Report of the POALH Budget Committee – Proposed 2016-17 Budget" for details on specific allocations. In advance of preparing the budget, the committee met with chairs and those responsible for specific line items to determine their needs. Long term capital projects were also reviewed and requests were made for specific reserves related to 2016-17. The Properties Committee requested money to improve the stairs at Third Beach, hot seal and reline the First Beach parking lot, increase docks at Third Beach and expand existing boat racks. Other projects include cleaning land adjacent to Third Beach to make it more usable, adding sand to the beaches, putting in a drinking fountain at First Beach, acquiring a jon boat to put the swim lines and rafts in and out of the water, putting in permanent anchors for the rafts, and inventorying the amenities at each beach to determine what may be needed.

Ed said that members who worked on the budget process were passionate about the Lake and what they wanted to do to make it better. Feedback from Town Hall meetings indicated that members wanted improvements made, and that further reduction of the mill rate would not allow progress going forward.

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Randy Miller spoke about the methodology employed by the Lake Quality Improvement Committee (LQIC). They used the Best Practice Methodology, going out 17 years, anticipating future projects to improve lake quality. Starting with the existing \$65,000 ("Lake Quality Reserve" to be redesignated "LQIC Capital Reserve Account"), LQIC is requesting \$25,000 to be added to the reserves each year to fund projects, including remediation of outfalls and muck removal.

Kathryn Sabo had a concern about the amount of money in reserves and the ability of the Board to spend the money without approval of the membership. Ed directed her to the language in the three page handout and assured her that no money could be spent from the designated reserves without the approval of the membership at the August Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting called specifically for that purpose. He explained that there were Operating Budget Contingency Reserves and that the Board had the ability to reallocate line items to meet the needs of specific committees.

Sandy Zawistowski said that it was her understanding that the Board could spend up to \$1,000 without approval of the membership. Gail said that the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve was established to take into consideration emergencies during the year, bearing in mind that the budget gets approved more than one year out. Ed further clarified that, in order to spend the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve, all other funds generated in the current year operating budget must be expended first.

Linda Ryder-Munet asked if revenues were in interest bearing accounts. Ed replied that they were. She then asked what voice residents of the East Side had. Ed replied that they were not members of the Association, but they were active in the LQIC and were welcome as non-voting participants at our meetings. Felicia Tencza commented that the LQIC consisted of four members of the POALH and four members from the East Side. The East Side Gazette kept residents informed of lake quality issues, and that the monies that they donated were segregated for weed control efforts.

Justin George had questions about money that had been received from the State and from the Town in the past. Randy Miller said that we have received money from East Haddam for six years, as part of the Town's operating budget, and that last year, for the first time, we received a State aquatic invasive species grant in the amount of \$9,050. He said that we could reasonably expect to receive some money on a yearly basis from the Town, but that additional money from the State was doubtful.

Gary Zawistowski objected to the bonuses and raises given to Treasurer, Tax Collector and Communications Manager. Bob replied that the Board had the authority to reallocate funds within the budget, and that they did so to more fairly compensate the individuals in these positions. Linda Nuzzo, former Board member, said that compensation was still very small for these individuals, and that together with the unpaid Board, they spent countless hours throughout the year, working for all of us.

Lois Campanelli asked if there were any limits on the amount of money that could be transferred between categories. Ed answered that there wasn't. He also reminded members that money not spent in a given year goes to reduce the budget two years out. Gail said that the Board was trying to fairly compensate those who were responsible for vital parts of the organization and to reward them for results achieved.

Dave Edgington said that he could understand transferring money from, for example, Public Safety to Properties, to accomplish projects, but that putting money in someone's pocket was an entirely different matter.

Linda Bailey asked if there was money in the budget to address emergency water quality issues. Ed replied that there was.

Bob Sudell entertained a motion that we suspend the order of business to vote on the budget. The motion passed. A motion was made to approve the proposed 2016-17 Budget, as presented by the Budget Committee and approved by the Board. The motion was seconded and passed, with six opposed.

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Committee Reports:

LQIC: Felicia Tencza began with the Permit to Discharge drawing, with Kim Jonah winning \$200. Felicia said that we will do the drawing again next year so you have plenty of time to get your Permit to Discharge in order to enter next year's drawing.

She remarked that the POALH had received more than \$2,500 this year in donations from East side residents for weed control.

The spot treatment for weed control was successful this year, treating approximately 30 acres for fanwort and v. milfoil, including the north end.

Kathy Connelly's educational event, Landscaping for a Better Lake, was very successful, encouraging members to construct rain gardens to retain and filter water before it reached the lake and the tremendous value trees play in controlling runoff.

Felicia talked about the makeup of the LQIC, and how they recruit members based on the committee's needs. They are looking for a master gardener and a desktop publisher at this time.

Randy said that the outline presented at the Town Hall Meeting July 18th would be developed into the Lake and Watershed Management Plan (LWMP). LQIC worked with a limnologist this year to develop the outline. They have begun sampling for total phosphorus and chlorophyll a for the first time. While levels are acceptable at this time, they will continue to collect this data to look for trends. With Steve Nelson's help, they have mapped all the catch basins and marked the direction the drains flow, with the goal of developing effective storm water management alternatives. As they determine which outfalls contribute the most water, remediation plans will be developed.

Social: Don Smith thanked everyone who came to this year's events, those who sponsored the events, and those who volunteered. The three "pavilion parties" with music and food trucks were successful, with another one planned for August 29th. Lake Hayward Days began yesterday with the campout at Second Beach, with additional activities scheduled throughout the week, culminating in day long activities next Saturday. Starting with the second annual triathlon, the day will also include beach games, the carnival and karaoke. Linda Nuzzo spoke on behalf of her co-chair Diane Nelson, asking for more volunteers for the day.

Don asked members to help him plan additional activities by completing the electronic survey which he planned to send in September. A show of hands indicated that the food trucks/bands were well received.

Linda Abel said that, following the success of Halloween in July, in 2016 she and Fran Fantozzi would be sponsoring Christmas in July. She asked that members buy a gift for each child attending, with a \$10 limit. Linda thanked Don for putting together all of the activities over the summer.

Public Safety: Bonnie Sudell thanked everyone for using their new parking permits. She said that the Police will approach drivers in cars that pull into our parking lots without permits and question them. Police have been hired on an irregular basis throughout the summer, running radar and sitting in the three main parking lots. She thanked those who walked facing traffic and carried a flashlight after dark (signs posted during the summer), but reminded those who still walked with their backs to traffic that they had no way to get out of the way of approaching cars.

Mary LaPorte urged members to better mark the addresses of their cottages, as during an emergency over the summer the Police were unable to find a neighboring cottage. She also reported an unusual occurrence, as her phone repeatedly dialed 911 on its own.

Linda Abel said that she had called the Police about cars illegally parked in the First Beach parking lot, and they declined to come out. She urged the Board to hire a time security company to sit at the parking lots and check every car driving in, or hire an Association member to do the same. Bonnie replied that they were looking into hiring someone to monitor the parking lots but, that in the case described by Linda, she reached the State Police. The Town Police are more than happy to come out to help us, not so the State Police. She also clarified that the Police cannot ticket vehicles on

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private property, i.e. our parking lots, but that, according to Officer Mansfield, they will arrest trespassers. She said that the Board was also looking into stickers with difficult to remove glue to place on the windshields of cars that didn't belong, with the hope that the stickers would discourage repeat offenders.

A comment was made to trim branches extending out into the road so walkers didn't need to walk in the middle of the road.

A suggestion was made that we buy bracelets for everyone to wear at the beach, to discourage people being dropped off.

A request was made for recycling buckets for cans and bottles at the beaches. Gary Petersen replied that our trash hauler sorts through the garbage and removes recyclables.

Charlene Reagan thanked Public Safety for the additional patrols and commented that the Police were very friendly.

A question was raised as to why Reliable was not booting or towing. Bob Sudell said that their tow truck drivers did not want to confront the drivers, but that if anyone knew of a company that would tow and/or boot, to please contact Public Safety.

Properties: Gary reported that there was new sand at Third Beach and that the buckets and shovels for goose poop were being used. Gary received many suggestions to handle the geese and planned to put snow fence across all of the beaches in the early spring of 2016 to discourage them.

He said that a major project was to put ramps at Third Beach and that they would start the project in the off season. He thanked Bill Taylor for his help dealing with Third Beach issues.

Gary said that the tennis courts had been unlocked over the summer, but suffered some vandalism recently, so they may be locked in the future. A member asked if the security cameras covered the tennis courts. The cameras show the parking lot but not the tennis courts.

Joanne Gallant asked that Properties not forget Little Beach when planning projects and dealing with goose poop.

A member asked that the beach rakers be better supervised so that they did a better job of raking and picking up goose poop and trash.

Special Committees:

Glimmer Glen: Gail reported that her committee had met with Mark Walter, First Selectman and Beth Lunt, Public Works Director and made their case that the Town should take over Glimmer Glen. They feel that it was an oversight on the part of the Town. Mark authorized a study to be done at their expense to determine what needed to be done to bring the road to code.

Pilgrim Way: Don reported that he, Adam Thompson and Cari Eckert had been asked to look into drainage issues on Ridgewood, Pilgrim Way and Lake Shore Drive. They have walked the area and talked with homeowners to determine what had been done in the past, including some work done in 2008. They will take their findings to the Town.

Voter Registration: Bonnie reported that a motion was made at the June Meeting to form a committee to review the Charter regarding the registered voter definition and the voting rights of POALH members and to bring the suggestions to the August meeting and not make any changes before the August meeting. Joanne Gallant and Diane Camacho asked to be on the committee, along with Gail Miers and Bonnie. They obtained a legal opinion from our lawyer, and reported their findings in the August 1st newsletter. In 2016, only registered voters will be able to vote at Association meetings.

Bylaws: A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Bylaw revisions.

New Business:

Nominations to the Board: Bob acknowledged the contributions of Deborah Smith, who was stepping down after her term.

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Steve Nelson presented the following slate of new members to the Board of Governors: Gary Petersen as Rep at Large with term expiring 2018; Don Smith as Second Beach Rep with term expiring 2017; Bill Taylor as Third Beach Rep with term expiring 2016; Adam Thompson as First Beach Rep with term expiring 2017 and Gail Miers as Third Beach Rep with term expiring 2017. Continuing their terms were Jason Griffing as Rep at Large with term expiring 2017; Cari Eckert as First Beach Rep with term expiring 2016; Bonnie Sudell as Second Beach Rep with term expiring 2016 and Bob Sudell as Rep at Large with term expiring in 2016. There were no nominations from the floor and the slate was approved as presented.

Announcements:

Linda Abel made a motion which was seconded and passed that the Association pay for the Board go out to dinner.

Diane Nelson thanked everyone who had stepped up to volunteer for Lake Hayward Days and asked for more help for the Beach Games and Carnival.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie F. Sudell
Recording Secretary