

Minutes of the Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association (OLRA) Board Meeting Thursday, September 29, 2022

Attendees: Rob Cribbie, Gerry Doyle, Brian Hindley, Nicole Mailloux, AJ Mueller, Kerry Mueller

Regrets: David Amy, Martin Chepesiuk, Brad Chittick

1. Welcome: Kerry Mueller started the Zoom meeting at 6:01 pm. Quorum was confirmed.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests. None were declared.

3. Approval of Post AGM May 5, 2022 OLRA Board Meeting Minutes:

Motion: Approve the minutes of the Post AGM OLRA Board May 5, 2022 meeting:

- Moved by: AJ Mueller
- Seconded by: Gerry Doyle
- **Motion carried**

4. Treasurer's Report. AJ Mueller reviewed his written report.

- **September 30, 2022 Actuals VS 2022 Budget:** As at September 30th, Revenues are higher than budgeted by \$1,397, mostly due to an increase in memberships and anonymous donation(s) to the environmental fund. Expenses are lower than budgeted, by \$3,323, due to lower-than-expected BBQ expenses, Legal, Boat Parade, Website and other expenses, as well as other expenses not being in yet (such as those relating to eDNA analysis and Benthic Monitoring). It's expected that by the end of 2022, Net Income will still come close to Budget.
- **Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet:** As at September 30, 2022, Total Current Assets are \$82,954.38, consisting of GIC's, the Operating Chequing Account and \$500 of Prepaid Expenses. A discussion took place relating to if the Operating Fund or the Environment Fund should be used for eDNA testing in 2022, considering that the fund allocations currently are as follows:
 - Environment fund Balance - \$17,698
 - Reserve Fund Balance - \$41,736
 - Operating Fund Balance - \$23,020

It was decided to defer this discussion to the February meeting.

- **2022 Memberships to date:** As at September 30, 2022, there are 488 total members (VS 465 in 2021) consisting of 183 households (VS 183 in 2021) and 305 extra family members (VS 282 in 2021). The 8 new 2022 member households were offset by 5 households not renewing as yet.
- **Reinvestment of Funds for 2022:** AJ Mueller provided a summary of how the Total Financial Investment Holdings of \$82,454.38 as of September 30, 2022 are invested

with TD, TD Direct Investing and Scotiabank, in several GIC's (with staggered maturity dates) and the TD operating account.

Action: Board to decide at the February meeting if eDNA testing should be paid via the Environmental Fund or the Operating Fund.

5. Stewardship Report: Brian Hindley reviewed his written report.

- **Lake Water Sampling:** Monthly sampling started in May and the final sampling will be in October. Water temperatures and Secchi depths are similar to last year's. Samples have been sent to MECP and results are expected in 2023. DO will be done in 2023.
- **eDNA sampling:** 5 samples from Otter Lake and 1 sample from Little Otter Lake were collected in August 2022 and submitted for analysis. Results are expected later in 2022. Each of the 6 samples consisted of combining one sample from a shallow bay and a second sample from a nearby inlet stream discharging into the same bay. Where the inlets were dry, or difficult to access, a sample was collected from ponded water or wetland in the streambed. Inlet streams sampled discharged from Rankin Lake, Salmon Lake and Sovereign Lake. 3 eDNA samples privately funded by AJ and Kerry Mueller will be collected in the spring of 2023 from several vernal (spring melt) pools on their property and a small watercourse/wetland.
- **Benthic Invertebrate Sampling:** Samples were taken from 3 locations, 2 in Otter Lake and 1 in Little Otter Lake in July 2022. Results are expected in early 2023.

Action: Brian Hindley will follow up on eDNA invoice to pay for analysis in 2022.

6. Loon Report: Kerry Mueller reviewed her written report.

- **Summary:** While 5 loon chicks hatched (the second highest number since 2012), only 3 survived which is average. Did they die of natural causes or because of careless boating?
- **Little Otter Lake:** 2 eggs were laid on the nesting platform Allan Campbell maintains. Unfortunately, only 1 chick hatched and survived the summer.
- **Centre North, Otter Lake:** 2 chicks hatched on a natural shore and one disappeared.
- **Centre South, Otter Lake:** 2 chicks hatched on a natural shore in early July. One disappeared near the end of July/early August.
- **Long Arm, Otter Lake:** No nesting occurred on the nesting platform or anywhere else, although two loons were photographed near the boat launch.
- There was evidence of adult loons fighting and territory disputes.
- Discussion took place relating to decommissioning the loon platform on Otter Lake established in 2017 and the one in south centre Otter Lake which is about 10 years old, because they have not been used for nesting in 5 years. It was decided to leave the newer one in place for another couple of years or so, and decommission the older one.

Action: AJ Mueller and Kerry Mueller will organize the decommissioning of the older platform in the spring.

New Business:

1. OLRA 2nd annual Boat Parade Update: Nicole Mailloux reviewed her written report.

- **Winners:**
 - **Most Creative:** Al Hanks received a sweatshirt from Otter Lake Marina and a mug from OLRA.
 - **Most Otter Lake Spirit:** Morris Eddy received a sweatshirt from Otter Lake Marina and a mug from OLRA.
 - **Most Patriotic:** Kevin Westra received a sweatshirt and mug from OLRA.
 - **Best Overall:** The Link Family received a \$100 Otter Lake Marina gift certificate from OLRA and is the recipient of the Otter Lake Parade Trophy.
- **Attendance:** The Canada Day Boat Parade was well attended, with 13 Boat Captains signing waivers. Additional unregistered boats joined the parade on the day of, which is difficult to track. It is understood that all boats are responsible for their own safety and liabilities. Unfortunately, the parade could not complete its planned route because many boats dropped out of the parade due to high winds and choppy waters.
- **Budget:** The event was \$239.11 under budget.
- **Thank you to Denise Exler.** The report detailed the actions needed to organize the 2022 boat parade which will be useful for 2023, since Denise Exler, the past Committee Chair is now not a Board Director. Thank you, Denise, for your great work on this Committee!
- Discussion took place relating to if there could be any events directly after the Boat Parade. The challenge is the lack of potential venues, sufficient boat docking and liabilities.

Future Considerations: The report suggested 1) that future Boat Parade Committees look at a communications plan in the event the parade cannot complete the route, such as sending out an email that day or one boat completing the parade route, if safe to do so, to inform anyone on docks expecting the parade, 2) that the Committee updating Bylaws determine how long waivers should be kept, and 3) that future Boat Parade Committees consider any requests for exceptions to parade rules with a view of not setting an unfavourable precedent.

2. BBQ Event Recap: Kerry Mueller reviewed her BBQ report as well as Martin Chepesiuk's BBQ Quiz written report.

- **Attendance:** There was a lower turnout than for other BBQ's, with 47 vs 64 tickets sold. Few tickets were sold to children. COVID kept some ticket holders and other potential participants away. There was discussion on what can be done in 2023 to increase attendance for this fundraiser.

- **Venue:** It had been 3 years since the last BBQ event, and the Grand Tappattoo Resort honoured prices previously agreed to and did their best for the indoor, sit-down dinner instead of an outdoor BBQ as in past years, due to staffing challenges.
- **Raffle:** Gerry Doyle provided a verbal recap. There was an overwhelming support from local merchants, with the \$620 in proceeds from raffles plus an additional \$50 donation from Richard and Mary Hood going to the environmental care of the lake.
- **Quiz:** There was lots of enthusiasm and fun had by all for the icebreaker quiz.

Action: Gerry Doyle will approach vendors to expand advertising in OLRA's newsletter, at a cost of \$175/year for advertising in OLRA's two newsletter and its website.

3. OLRA Annual Photo Contest: Kerry Mueller reviewed her written report.

- There have been 35 entries to date, with none from youth as yet.
- Google forms may be used to facilitate voting this year if testing is successful.
- Catherine and Rick Rakosy are taking over the organizing of this event from Denise Exler. Thank you to all three for making this highly popular event happen!

4. Candidates Meetings for Wards 1 and 2 and for All Seguin Candidates: Kerry Mueller reviewed her written report.

- **September 10, 2022 Wards 1 and 2 candidate Meeting:** The recording of this meeting was shared on Facebook and in an OLRA email and with associations from Oastler, Rankin and Salmon. It is also available on OLRA's website. Representatives from all 4 lake associations developed 5 standard questions for the candidates to respond to.
- **October 12th, 2022 Seguin All Candidates Meeting:** Kerry Mueller and 3 other Seguin residents are hosting this meeting. All candidates were invited whether acclaimed or not. To date, all candidates from the contested Wards 1, 2 and 5 have confirmed. Greg Getty, a candidate from contested Ward 3, and Terry Felner, acclaimed from Ward 4, will not attend. Mayor Ann MacDiarmid (acclaimed) has indicated she will do her best to attend.
- **Voting:** by telephone and internet is from October 11 to 24 and in person is on October 24th.
- **Duplicate Voting Communications and PINs from Seguin Township:** Brian Hindley indicated he received in the mail two communications and two PIN numbers to vote, presumably in error. He has informed Mayor Ann MacDiarmid and Craig Jeffery, Seguin Township of concerns of ability to vote twice and asked how widespread this issue could be? No response has been received to date.

5. Seguin STR Survey and STR Developments in Ontario: Kerry Mueller reviewed her written report.

Seguin STR Survey:

- To date, the ideas section of the survey indicates more support to continue banning STRs and stepping up enforcement.
- Doug Link has 9 neighbours accessing their properties via his private road and published his concerns with Seguin Township relating to liability risk and increased maintenance costs if Seguin approved STRs by neighbours. Seguin has liability insurance for its own public roads and maintains them (these costs could also increase with STRs). About half of roads in Seguin (about 400 km) are private according to Daryle Moffatt. If approval of STRs on private roads are approved by Seguin Township, then Doug Link is suggesting a Class Action against Seguin.
- The survey deadline was extended to the end of September due to delays in mailouts and results are expected by the end of 2022.
- Discussion took place relating to the pro-STS bias in Seguin's survey.

Oro-Medonte Township and the Good Neighbours Appeal of the Ontario Land Tribunal's (OLT) Ruling:

- The OLT confirmed that short term renting is a commercial use of residential property.
- The OLT also said that the Township's By-law could not have contemplated commercial use which can now be facilitated by electronic platforms that permit anonymous procurement of temporary, un surveilled occupancy of residential premises as commercial venues, more akin to a hotel than a residence.
- The ruling is being appealed by Oro-Medonte and the local organization called Good Neighbours Alliance. The Good Neighbours' director David Johnston has commented that the Alliance agrees with the OLT decision which makes it clear that STRs are a commercial land use. However, the Alliance believes that the decision erred in that it failed to recognize the well-established planning principle that the only land uses permitted are those that are listed in the zoning bylaw. Also, since, the decision applies only to the 2020 bylaw amendments which clarified the definition of STRs, the township's underlying zoning bylaw continues to apply. STRs are not a permitted use in any residential zone. Good Neighbours supports the township's appeal and intends to participate in the appeal process. Good Neighbours also urges the township to ensure that STR will continue to be prohibited in residential neighbourhoods through the Official Plan review process.
- OLRA will be watching closely any developments relating to STRs.

6. Committee to Review and Update OLRA Bylaws as per Ontario's Not-For-Profit Corporation Act: Kerry Mueller provided a verbal update.

- Further to previous OLRA Board meetings and the AGM, OLRA will be reviewing and updating it's bylaws as required to comply with ONCA, within the required timelines.
- At the last AGM, OLRA indicated they would come to the 2023 AGM with a request to approve updated Bylaws.
- David Amy, Robert Cribbie, Nicole Mailloux and Kerry Mueller have volunteered to form a committee for this purpose.

Action: The Committee plans to meet in early 2023 with a view of updating Bylaws for presentation and approval at the 2023 AGM.

7. Lake Stewardship Initiatives for 2023: Brian Hindley reviewed his written report, which provided a list of suggested initiatives for 2023, including:

- **DO measurements:** under ice DO measurements, but a probe may not be able to reach the deep part of the lake. Also DO measurements in some of the shallower bays in September when lake stratification is stable, before lake turnover.
- **eDNA sampling:** decisions would need to be made relating to where, when and how many. Could there be outside sources of funding?
- **Lake Capacity Model Review:** Look into running an updated model.
- **Lake Environmental Measurement Plan:** for Little Otter Lake and Otter Lake. Develop and overarching plan to 1) monitor environmental conditions, 2) support initiatives for invasive species management/sensitive area/habitat protection and 3) educate/inform landowners about shorelines/natural habitats. This could include a funding proposal for the next 5-10 years that could be used to solicit funds from members, Seguin Township, GBB, Muskoka Watershed Council, FOCA, provincial/federal agencies, etc., particularly since provincial agencies have materially decreased environmental oversight in Ontario.

Actions: Brian Hindley will look into sending the Board an example of a lake environmental plan already being used by another lake to educate the Board on such plans, prior to the February meeting. He also volunteered to provide an outline for Otter and Little Otter Lakes for review at the February meeting. He may set up a committee to bounce ideas for that purpose.

8. Surveying OLRA Membership for Ideas and Feedback: Gerry Doyle reviewed his written report.

- It's time to conduct another survey on member preferences and feedback on various topics and events. The purpose of the survey would be to ask about priorities, year-round event/activity/club/interests and preferences, member participation on committees, communications, etc.
- Reviewing what other associations are doing would also be helpful in developing the survey, such as book clubs, fund raising events for the hospital, golf tournament, cross country ski day, biking, paddle boarding, canoeing, kayaking, etc.
- Looking into partnering with local businesses to provide "swag", and to facilitate events.
- Kerry Mueller mentioned that OLRA's last survey was done in 2016. It may be useful to use some 2016 questions to measure changes in specific areas, i.e. how many people are now living at their lake properties vs in 2016.
- Discussion took place relating to how a survey would be done, timing of survey, etc.

Action: Kerry Mueller volunteered to send the Board a copy of the 2016 survey for review.

9. Fall 2022 Newsletter Planning: Kerry Mueller provided a list of topics and authors for the Fall Newsletter in the Board Materials emailed out to all Board members.

Action: All listed authors were asked to submit their articles to Kerry Mueller no later than October 12th, 2022.

10. Other New Business. AJ Mueller suggested that OLRA should donate \$123.60 to GBB in 2022 to match the \$123.60 already paid for OLRA's membership in GBB. GBB is a non-profit registered Canadian charity.

Motion: That OLRA donate \$123.60 in 2022 to the Georgian Bay Biosphere Mnidoo Gamii:

- Moved by: AJ Mueller
- Seconded by: Gerry Doyle
- **Motion carried**

Adjournment: Kerry Mueller called the meeting to a close at 8:33 pm.

Acronyms

- AGM: Annual General Meeting
- ATV: All-Terrain Vehicle
- dB: decibel
- DC: Decibel Coalition
- DFO: Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- DO: Dissolved Oxygen
- EP: Environmental Protection
- FOCA: Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association
- FOI: Freedom of Information
- GBB: Georgian Bay Biosphere
- LPP: Lake Protection Program
- MNRF: Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- MECP: Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
- OLRA: Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association
- OLT: Ontario Land Tribunal
- ONCA: Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act
- OP: Seguin Township Official Plan
- OPP: Ontario Provincial Police
- PCOC: Pleasure Craft Operator Card
- PFD: Personal Floatation Device
- PWC: Power Water Craft

- SAR: Species at Risk
- SQL: Safe Quiet Lakes
- SRA: Shoreline Allowance
- STR: Short Term Rentals
- STCR: Short Term Cottage Rentals
- TC: Transport Canada
- WDALB: Where Does a Lake Begin

APPROVED