

Minutes of the Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association (OLRA) Board Meeting Thursday, January 26, 2023

Attendees: Martin Chepesiuk, Brad Chittick, Rob Cribbie (left the meeting at 7:00 pm), Gerry Doyle, Brian Hindley, Nicole Mailloux, AJ Mueller, Kerry Mueller

Regrets: David Amy

1. Welcome: Kerry Mueller started the Zoom meeting at 6:30 pm. Quorum was confirmed.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests: None were declared, except that Gerry Doyle abstained from voting on New Business Agenda Item # 9, Seminar re transitioning the family cottage as offered by RBC's Greg Bruns.

3. Approval of September 29, 2022 OLRA Board Meeting Minutes:

Motion: Approve the minutes of the September 29, 2022 meeting:

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

4. Treasurer's Reports: AJ Mueller.

Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association – Cash and Investment Holdings: Total holdings as at December 31, 2022 is \$77,657.26

Balance Sheet, Income Statement and 2022 Budget as at December 31, 2022: Both Revenue and Expenses were higher than expected. There was an increase in memberships and donation(s) to the environmental fund, and a decrease in BBQ ticket sales. The Board discussed using the Operating Fund (VS the Environmental Fund) to cover 2022 eDNA monitoring costs and to add the final outstanding eDNA monitoring invoice of \$1,105.00 plus HST, as an Accounts Payable.

2022 Memberships: As at December 31, 2022, there are 494 total members (VS 465 in 2021) consisting of 185 households (VS 183 in 2021) and 309 extra family members (VS 282 in 2021). In 2023, there have been 34 renewals to date versus 58 renewals by the end of January, 2022,

Motion: That the financials for year end be approved, including an expected eDNA invoice of \$1,105.00, as an Accounts Payable:

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

5. Stewardship Report 2022 and 2023: Brian Hindley.

GBB Benthic Invertebrate Sampling: It was recommended that sampling continue in 2023, given that 2022 identifications were lower than in 2020, but similar to 2019. Discussion took place relating to the continuance of this program after 2023, or if it should be done every 2-3 years. It was noted that Seguin Township pays for two samples and OLRA pays for one. Whether or not such sampling is intrusive was also discussed. The benefits of this program are that it's possible to compare our data with the Muskoka area lakes' data which has been collected annually for over a decade.

Motion: That GBB Benthic Invertebrate Sampling be completed in 2023.

- Moved by: Brian Hindley
- Seconded by: Martin Chepesiuk
- **Motion carried**

Lake Partner Program: 2021 results have just been received. Total Phosphorus is similar to past years at an average of 6.68 µg/l in Otter Lake and 6.63 µg/l in Little Otter Lake. This is below the 10 µg/l standard for pristine oligotrophic lakes. This program is paid for by MECP, but does require the Lake Steward to collect samples. Dissolved Oxygen (DO) monitoring needs to be done in 2023. This program tells us if there is sufficient oxygen in the bottom waters of the lake (hypolimnion) to support fish and other species, when the lake is still stratified in September. Also, when the hypolimnion is oxygen deficit, some nutrients, such as phosphorus can be released from the bottom sediments which can lead to blue-green algal blooms. An oxygen meter needs to be rented at a cost of about \$50.00 from GBB to measure oxygen levels.

Motion: That DO monitoring be completed in Otter Lake embayments in 2023, using GBB equipment.

- Moved by: Brian Hindley
- Seconded by: Martin Chepesiuk
- **Motion carried**

eDNA sampling: 5 samples from Otter Lake and 1 sample from Little Otter Lake were collected in August 2022 and submitted for analysis. Results have been received but have not yet been analyzed by OLRA's consultant Cameron von Bratt. Results show many diverse invertebrates, a total of 364 taxa including flies, beetles, mayflies, stoneflies, caddisflies, crayfish and a clam. A good representation of vertebrates was present, including many baitfish species, large and small mouth bass, northern pike, black crappies, salamanders, raccoons, beavers, muskrats, deer, wood duck, snapping turtles, painted turtles, otters, eastern newt, etc.

Deep waters were not sampled and therefore species such as lake trout and spiny water fleas were not identified.

Action: Brian Hindley will follow up with Cameron von Bratt on his eDNA results analysis and related invoice, which is a 2022 Accounts Payable.

Wave Study: Dr. Chris Houser of the University of Windsor will be studying several lakes, including Otter Lake, on the effects of wave action on shorelines. He identified 10 locations that would be good areas of the lake to monitor, where he will install equipment on properties of owners who have volunteered.

Lake Plans: Various approaches and types of plans were discussed. It was decided to set up a committee to look into a 5-year plan. Kerry Mueller, Martin Chepesiuk and Brian Hindley volunteered.

Actions: 1) Brian Hindley, Kerry Mueller and Martin Chepesiuk will look into a 5-year lake plan. 2) Martin Chepesiuk will send the Board the link for the freshwater fish contamination work that was done on Otter Lake years ago, and report back on what laboratories would analyze fish samples for contaminants and “forever” chemicals 3) Brian Hindley will look into if Otter Lake can get on the list of MECP Contaminants in Fish testing program.

6. Loon Report: Kerry Mueller.

While 2021 was a stellar year, with 5 chicks surviving, only 2-3 loon chicks survived in 2022. Discussion took place relating to decommissioning the loon nesting 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. The Loons in south centre Otter Lake are successfully nesting on natural shore areas. Unfortunately, no loons have nested on the Long Arm for over 6 years despite a Loon nesting platform having been constructed and placed in 2 different locations over the last 5 years. Various options were discussed relating to moving the newer platform to another part of the lake. However, there does not seem to be a location where there would not be loon territorial issues on Otter Lake. The nesting platform on Litter Otter Lake is being used yearly by loons and cleaned up every year by a volunteer, Allan Campbell. Thank you, Allan!

Motion: That the OLRA Board make plans to decommission the 2 Otter Lake loon nesting platforms on Otter Lake since the loons have found natural shores on which to successfully nest.

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

New Business:

1. Review and Update of OLRA Bylaws as per ONCA: Kerry Mueller

The ONCA Committee, comprised of Kerry Mueller, Nicole Mailloux, David Amy and Rob Cribbie, met in January to discuss some of the impacts of ONCA. All are reviewing ONCA and drafting their thoughts on how OLRA bylaws should be updated. Their next meeting is in February.

2. Lake Stewardship Initiatives for 2023: Brian Hindley

Refer to Agenda Item #5, Stewardship Report and New Business Item #11, 2023 Budget

3. Seguin STR Survey and STR Developments: Kerry Mueller

OLRA sent a letter to Seguin Council expressing their concerns relating to the integrity of the Seguin STR survey and the survey's bias towards STR. The Rankin and Seguin Estates Associations both supported OLRA's letter. Seguin Staff are expected to present options to Council in early 2023. Mario Buszynski, Seguin Ward 2 Councillor, will be presenting his report to Council on a meeting of Northern Ontario Municipalities Associations he attended where STRs was a topic. He will report back to OLRA.

4. Surveying OLRA Membership for Ideas and Feedback: Gerry Doyle

Gerry Doyle and Rob Cribbie are developing a survey. The 2017 survey feedback from the membership has already given the Board direction to focus on the environment and social events. The 2023 survey will gain further information on additional member preferences and feedback on various topics and events such as year-round events/activities/clubs, member participation, communications, etc. They have reviewed what other associations are doing to help develop the survey.

Action/Timing: The draft survey is expected to be ready for review by the Board by the end of February/early March, with a goal of being finalized by April/May.

5. OLRA 3rd Annual Boat Parade: Kerry Mueller

A committee was formed with volunteers Nicole Mailloux, Gerry Doyle and Brad Chiddick.

Action: Nicole Mailloux will reach out to Rob Cribbie to see if he would like to chair/lead this committee.

6. OLRA BBQ on August 12th, 2023: Kerry Mueller

It was decided to wait for survey responses before planning this event.

7. 2023 Budget: AJ Mueller

It was noted that the \$1,800.00 budget for Benthic Monitoring did not include HST, and should be revised to \$2,034.00. At the 2022 AGM, the membership approved the use of money from the Environment Fund for items such as eDNA. The discussion centered on eDNA sampling and increasing the \$3,500 budget to \$4,700 in the Operating Fund for 6 eDNA samples, with timing and locations to be recommended later.

Motion: That the OLRA Board approve the 2023 budget, as amended with \$2,034.00 for Benthic Monitoring and \$4,700.00 for eDNA sampling, for a Net Loss of (\$1,344.00).

- Moved by: AJ Mueller
- Seconded by: Brian Hindley
- **Motion carried**

The 2022 sampling results and the proposed 2023 eDNA sampling project will be presented to the membership at the OLRA AGM.

8. OLRA Annual Photo Contest: Kerry Mueller

The role was successfully transitioned in 2022 from Denise Exler to Catherine Rakosy. Thank you!

Action: Kerry Mueller with reach out to Catherine Rakosy to see if she would like to volunteer in 2023.

9. Seminar re Transitioning the Family Cottage: Kerry Mueller.

Greg Bruns, RBC and Ryan Cons, a lawyer, gave a seminar on transitioning the family cottage in 2022. Should OLRA help them host such a seminar for its members in 2023?

Motion: That the OLRA support Greg Bruns hosting another seminar in transitioning the family cottage.

- Moved by: Brad Chittick
- Seconded by: Brian Hindley
- Abstained by: Gerry Doyle
- **Motion carried**

10. Nominate OLRA for Recognition Awards: Kerry Mueller.

It was suggested that OLRA should be nominated for the FOCA Achievement Award. Such applications can require lots of work. Brad Chittick volunteered to help.

Motion: That OLRA apply for the FOCA Achievement Award.

- Moved by: Brad Chittick

- Seconded by: Gerry Doyle
- **Motion carried**

11. Newsletter Advertising: AJ Mueller

OLRA now has about 10-12 business cards or 2 pages in its newsletters and we could increase this to about 12-18 or 3 pages, if we wanted to. This would mean all of us reaching out to our contacts. It costs \$175.00/year (no HST) for coverage in spring and fall newsletters and the OLRA website for the year. It costs \$330.00 for double the coverage. A business card proof would be needed (or a physical one).

Action: All board members to let AJ know of any of their contacts interested in advertising in OLRA communications and AJ will then reach out to them with details.

12. Spring 2023 Newsletter Planning: Kerry Mueller

Action: Kerry will send out a communication on this with more details. Board members are asked to think about what articles they will write for the spring newsletter e.g., boat parade, BBQ, photo contest, survey, stewardship, etc. The deadline for submitting articles will be early March.

Adjournment: Kerry Mueller called the meeting to a close at 9:16 pm.

ADDENDUM A

Email Business and Decisions from 2022 to January 27, 2023

GBB 2023 Benthic Monitoring Contract: AJ Mueller emailed to the Board a copy of the new contract for GBB Benthic Monitoring in 2023 with an estimated increase of \$100.00 from \$1,700.00 to \$1,800.00.

Motion: That the Board accept the new GBB Benthic Monitoring contract for 2023.

- Moved by AJ Mueller by email on November 22, 2022
- Seconded by Gerry Doyle on November 22, 2022
- **Motion carried** by email on November 23, 2022

STR Letter to Seguin Township: The OLRA Board commented via email exchanges on the contents of a second letter to be sent to Seguin relating to STR to be considered at the December 12th, 2022 Seguin Council meeting.

Motion: That OLRA submit another letter (copy attached) to Seguin reinforcing the one that was sent in June listing several concerns which are not yet addressed.

- Moved by Kerry Mueller by email on December 9, 2022
- Seconded by Brian Hindley on December 9, 2022
- **Motion carried** by email on December 22, 2022

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