

**Lake Beseck Environment Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday March 28, 2018**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Middlefield Community Center**  
**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.

**2. Members Present**

Amy Poturnicki, Robert Poturnicki, Rebecca Adams, Rick Santos, Randy Bernotas, Hannah Malcolm, Craig Lundell, John Lindner, Daria Vander Veer. Peter Parker, Town of Middlefield, and Larry Marsicano of AER was also in attendance. Darin Overton joined the meeting at 7:10 PM. Ed Bailey joined the meeting at 9:05 PM.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion to approve agenda for 3/28/18 meeting made by Amy Poturnicki and seconded by Rick Santos; passed unanimously.**

**4. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2018 meeting made by Rob Poturnicki and seconded by Craig Lundell; passed unanimously.**

**5. Public Comment**

No members of the public were present.

**6. Chairman Report**

Amy Poturnicki noted that the lake level is coming up, but more slowly than expected; a weir board got caught in the intake valve. Divers had to be sent down, and the issue was fixed, but the water level is still not where it should be. Amy will contact DEEP in the upcoming week about adjusting the water flow.

**7. AER Report**

Larry Marsicano began by talking about a program at Candlewood where they were taking weekly samples to check for toxins created by blue-green algae. Amy had asked Larry to look into whether the program was possible for us; it is possible to have algae testing done at cost for \$1,000 through a summer monitoring program offered by WCSU. Samples would be collected every Thursday to September 5th. An email with results would be distributed on Friday afternoon. The data can be used in assessing the extent of the health risk from exposure to Microcystins for the upcoming weekend.

Larry also described his experience working with DEEP on whether we will need permits to do plant management on the lake bottom. The answer was “yes;” Larry described the process he went through to get permission to control vegetation at the beach. He noted he had more trouble getting permission to control vegetation in front of homes along the shoreline. For those locations, individual requests would need to be made so DEEP can determine whether the home is near endangered species and look into what kind of control methods will be used. Larry felt that if it looks like it’s going to be a bad year, there may be a way to fastrack the requests using boilerplate for each home plot.

Larry also priced out floating islands; he explained how companies gauge the size and number of islands needed based on phosphorus load. Using the reports from Milone & MacBroom, he came up with load numbers. The first estimate was \$177,000, but he believes the actual cost would be much lower; each island is about 88 square feet and costs about \$2,250 + shipping. Larry listed some of the benefits of the islands, including fish habitat, lowering bug levels and reducing phosphorus.

Randy Bernotas said that as a shoreline homeowner, he doesn’t have confidence in the state to provide guidance or approval. Many homeowners will take these matters into their own hands if approval doesn’t arrive quickly; Larry agreed that he tried to impress on DEEP that if they are unresponsive, they forfeit their ability to know what homeowners are actually doing along the shoreline.

Rebecca Adams said that she has reviewed the legal documentation and believes that DEEP does not actually have jurisdiction over much of the situations that Larry was describing.

Randy Bernotas asked whether the algae testing would be for the whole lake or just the beach; the prevailing winds mean that the north end of the lake will be a source of algae for the rest of the lake. Larry Marsicano said the focus in testing was just on the public beach; he’ll mention the north end of the lake to the researchers.

Jon Lindner asked whether the floating islands will help with the algae in the north end of the lake. Larry said he believed so. He has left us some paperwork on the floating islands; Amy noted that Mark June-Wells says that the islands are something we can scale back and do slowly, in parts, over time.

#### **8. Kathy Connelly Beach presentation**

Before Kathy Connelly made her presentation, Amy Poturnicki noted a problem with the earthen berm plan in regard to the likelihood of it being undermined by wave action from boats unless riprap was installed on the lake side of the berm. Additional concerns include the installation of sand over the earthen berm which may be difficult to maintain. Amy mentioned that the sand dune that was installed last summer has flattened and eroded. Peter Parker also raised issues with maintaining a swale on the beach side of the earthen berm that was included in Kathy’s plan. Kathy Connelly pointed out that plants would be putting down some deep roots eventually to remedy those problems, but that would take some time.

Peter Parker indicated that the entire area north of the guard chair is deep sand and said the hillside dune and the new gutters on the pavilion have already slowed the erosion. He described a clay pipe that

comes out right where the berm was going to be installed. This pipe probably pre-dates the town owning the beach and creates a sinkhole during heavy rains. Peter Parker made a few recommendations, and also described an additional problem with a drainage pipe that runs along the far northern edge of the beach.

Amy Poturnicki had visited the site with Darin Overton who made suggestions on ways to reduce erosion with the creation of a gentle swale, some re-grading on the northern end, and the extension of the retaining wall and drainage along the hillside. He argued that ultimately there will need to be flat, grassed surface in the north area to relieve some of the sand erosion.

Kathy Connelly reminded the group of the two objectives (control erosion & geese). She also addressed Darin's suggestions and pointed out that adding canopy will dramatically reduce the amount of heavy rain that lands directly on the beach and causes runoff trenches. She said it's important that we keep talking about the vegetation on the hillside as ultimately contributing to the solution.

Kathy Connelly continued with her presentation, discussing native grasses. She made recommendations for warm season grasses that turn green in summer. These involve minimal maintenance (annual trimming). She provided examples of grasses at different heights. The committee discussed various options for both ends of the beach, including incorporating some boulders that Peter Parker has collected, with grasses in between. Additional methods of geese control were discussed, including nautical-themed pylons with rope for fencing. The committee agreed that they preferred a combination of grasses and boulders rather than a berm, which might concentrate stormwater runoff and create additional problems.

**Motion to abandon the installation of a berm in the northern end of the lake made by Amy Poturnicki and seconded by Randy Bernotas; passed unanimously.**

## **9. Spring Projects**

Amy informed the group that she and Rebecca Adams have met to consider ways to reach out to the community and re-invigorate the LakeSmart program. One idea was giving wholesale pricing on native plants extended to watershed residents. Kathy Connelly can do a presentation about native plantings at an event. Later in June, an open house could be held. Amy went over the results of a survey which indicated that people were interested in plants for their yards. (she is still waiting for more people to respond). The group agreed the challenge is to get people who don't live right on the lake's edge to realize they have an impact simply by living in the watershed. Proposals included adding some signs reminding people they are entering the Lake Beseck watershed.

**Motion to purchase signage denoting the Lake Beseck watershed area to be placed around the lake area made by Amy Poturnicki and seconded by Rebecca Adams; passed unanimously.**

The group discussed having Kathy Connolly do a presentation on Earth Day and how to use the wholesale plant pricing as an incentive to attend. Kathy can also offer individual site assessments for a fee. The challenge is maintaining interest between the event and May, when planting would actually

return. Robert Poturnicki noted that if people had the chance to order plants at the presentation, they will arrive in 2-3 weeks, just in time for planting. Amy stressed the importance of following up with attendees to ensure they get their orders in, since they may not be ready to place orders the day of the workshop. Rebecca Adams recommended collecting people's emails when they take an order form so we can follow up. John Lindner also suggested sending out the order forms in advance of the Earth Day event so people can turn in the forms at the event.

**Motion to pursue a plant sale and workshop made by Amy Poturnicki and seconded by Rebecca Adams; passed unanimously.**

**10. Selectman Report**

Ed Bailey reported that the budget has been submitted to the BOF (annual meeting early May), which includes an additional \$1000 for the Committee to do algae testing. The Committee's other funding was unchanged.

**11. Wetland Enforcement Officer Report**

Randy Bernotas updated the group on 55 Lake Road and 111 Lake Shore Road.

**12. Park and Recreation Director Report**

Hannah updated the group about possible plans to hire more lifeguards; she plans to continue to work with P&R on erosion issues at the beach.

**13. Misc.**

**14. Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn made by Darin Overton, seconded by Rebecca Adams; passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Daria Vander Veer