

AMSTON LAKE DISTRICT

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

July 17, 2024

7:00 P.M.

Zoom and ALA Clubhouse, 16 Wood Acres Rd, Amston, CT

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. and interrupted by two power outages.

B. Roll Call of Officers and Directors

Present: F. Hoisl, B. Pelegano, L. Bowen, J. Caines, J. Arpin, J. Greenfield, T. Nixon, K. Patterson. K. Rustico joined the meeting at 7:20 and B. Pelegano left at 9:00.

C. Recognition of Guests, Residents, and Property Owners

John Matra, 265 Deepwood Dr, Hebron, representing the Amston Lake Association, highlighted two big upcoming events: Tiki Night on Saturday, July 20 and Lake Day on Saturday, August 3.

Laurel Hennebury, 458 Deepwood Drive, Lebanon. She sent an email to the board prior to the June meeting about remote-controlled boats that can go up to 35 mph, while our ordinances only allow speeds of up to 5 mph. She would like the board to do something about them. F. Hoisl responded that the topic would be considered when the ordinances are rewritten this coming year.

Nicole Graczewski, 125 Deepwood Drive, Hebron. Her mother (whose property was on the agenda) couldn't attend the meeting so she was there to listen and answer any questions.

Gail Golden, 203 Deepwood Drive, Hebron. She feels that the new ordinance regarding boat ownership, which went into effect on July 6, is not being enforced. She wondered why the person who has previously launched the pontoon boat in question had not been contacted by the board directly. By not enforcing violations, she feels the board is not being effective. F. Hoisl said the resident in question was, in fact, personally notified of the ordinance change.

There was some discussion among the board of having boat proof of ownership be provided when applying for passes next year, but B. Pelegano pointed out that the time to verify ownership is when the resident is physically launching their boat at Main Beach.

Al Fichtel, 203 Deepwood Drive, Hebron. He is one of the inspectors and doesn't have a problem asking for proof of ownership and enforcing the ordinance. He reinforced what Ms. Golden said and stated that the resident in question should have been personally notified. F. Hoisl reiterated that the resident in question was, in fact, personally notified of the ordinance change.

D. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the June 19, 2024 regular board meeting (K. Patterson/J. Arpin) passed without objection.

E. Presentation of Correspondence

B. Pelegano: Resident Barbara Scott of 20 Deepwood, Lebanon emailed that Habitat Services started herbicide treatment today on the Phragmites on her property, and her gardener is going to begin brush clearing this week. **F. Hoisl:** 1. The resident at the corner of Deepwood and Louise in Lebanon was seeking compensation for his removal of some trees that he felt was a benefit to the District. As the trees were approximately 20 feet off the road and on private property, the ALD attorney said we were not responsible for reimbursement. 2. A resident requested permission to hold a small celebration of life at Lollipop Beach on Thursday, August 8, 5 – 7. The board agreed that this was permissible as long as they didn't leave a

mess and that only cars with ALD tags be allowed to park in the lot.

F. Old Business – Discussion and Possible Action

1. Boat Ownership Ordinance: F. Hoisl liked the idea of having a special sticker next year for boats that were required to have proof of ownership. Discussion ensued over the proposed changes to the new boat inspection form. The new form has not been finalized, but in the interim, we need to simply add a checkbox to show that the person launching the boat is a resident of the ALD and has provided a vessel registration or title in their name.
2. Possible Ordinance Violation, 177 Deepwood, Hebron: Online aerial photos from the State of Connecticut indicated that the dock was in place prior to the ordinances being adopted in 2014, so the excessive length was grandfathered in. F. Hoisl will contact the owner to report that there was no violation.
3. 125 Deepwood, Hebron Variance Request: The hearing for a variance request on July 2 for a shed at this property, which abuts the Elsmere ROW, was canceled and is going to be rescheduled based on new information from the property owner. The town regulations stipulate a 10-foot setback, the resident applied for a four-foot setback, and K. Patterson reported that, based on the owner's measurements, the shed is only 8 inches from the property line.
4. Fines for Non-Resident Trespassing: B. Pelegano would like to add an ordinance and place signs in the District to deter non-ALD residents from parking on District property or launching boats in our lake. He suggested strong language and a steep, perhaps \$500, fine. It will be added to the list of possible changes for the upcoming ordinance review.
5. General Ordinance Discussion: Board members B. Pelegano and K. Patterson are licensed attorneys and will review the ordinances this year and then pass their suggestions on to the board. F. Hoisl asked the other directors to email any suggestions to them and an email blast will be sent out for resident input. The revised ordinances will have to be approved by the District at the next annual meeting.

G. Task List

B. Pelegano reported that the snow contract had already been finalized. F. Hoisl went over some other tasks including some end-of-season planning.

H. Receive President's Report

F. Hoisl reported that there has been a significant uptick in residents challenging the Beach Pass Checkers. He proposed that we have zero tolerance for residents' bad behavior going forward. For a first offense, he will send a letter to the resident, as he has done several times this summer. For a second offense, he'd like to impose a fine. For a third offense, he thinks we should consider revoking the resident's lake access passes. He'd like to discuss this topic further at a later date.

I. Receive Treasurer's and Tax Collector's Reports

J. Caines reported that the District collected approximately \$4,000 in June, including \$2,600 in taxes; \$600 in back taxes and liens; and non-revenue of \$1,400, including almost \$1,000 in dock rentals. Expenses of \$28,200 included \$3,000 in administrative, half of which were legal fees; \$7,400 for lake health; and \$5,000 for repairs and maintenance at the beaches and ROWs. Other lake expenses totaled \$12,700, including Beach Pass Checkers, some tree work, and the survey at Francis ROW. Net loss for the June in the General Fund was \$24,200, which is typical for this time of year. He reported total year-to-date income of approximately \$168,800, including \$148,900 of current taxes, \$6,700 of back taxes, \$6,100 in liens and interest, and dock fees of \$2,300. Year-to-date expenses were \$209,200, including \$92,400 in administrative, \$48,700 for lake health, \$26,900 for repairs & maintenance, and other lake expenses of \$41,200. The net outflow is approximately \$40,400. For Lebanon roads we've spent approximately \$625 in June. Year-to-date expenses were \$7,400 for snow and sand, and \$40,100 on repairs and maintenance. The net outflow in that fund was \$23,500. Invasive Weeds Fund outflow for the year was \$7,500. The final numbers will be posted to the website after our software vendor, QDS, prints the final tax book, which will

change our net income somewhat.

J. Consider and Act Upon Standing and Special Committees' Reports

1. Long-Term Financial Planning: 1. Minutes of the June 20 meeting are on the website. 2. Chair K. Patterson stated that they are looking for creative ways to fund our established funds, in an effort to avoid raising taxes. J. Caines is looking into moving some ALD funds into the CT Short-Term Investment Fund (STIF), as suggested by committee member Lisa Gonsor, who works in the Town of Bolton Finance Department. 3. The committee suggested renaming the Dam Fund to Dams Fund, to encompass both Main Dam and Duck Pond Dam, and the board agreed that this was acceptable.
 - Motion to establish an ALA Clubhouse Capital Improvements Fund (K. Patterson/ T. Nixon). Six directors approved, one abstained, and the motion passed.
 - Motion to create a Dock Repairs & Enhancements Fund and that going forward, dock rental fees or income would be allocated to this fund (K. Patterson/ T. Nixon). J. Greenfield made the point that the possibility of significant budget surpluses going forward to add to either of these funds is somewhat remote, and in the case of the Docks Fund, we will be segregating a particular existing revenue stream, which may or may not be more important than using it for another purpose in the future. J. Arpin suggested that next year we consider having residents that are launching boats pay the inspector fees themselves, rather than building these fees into the budget and having the District pay the inspectors. Six directors approved the motion, one abstained, and the motion passed.

Once the year-end books are completed and it's established what the small surplus is, K. Patterson would like to have the board decide where to allocate those funds.

2. Lake Health: 1. Chair J. Arpin recently recorded Secchi depth (for clarity) of 19 feet, which is very good, and dissolved oxygen is also very good. 2. GZA completed the plant survey on June 16 and found no invasives. GZA will look at the three questions from the Weeds Committee. 3. The treatments we've done for the invasive milfoil seem to have affected the native milfoil, as none was found during this survey. GZA was asked for a short summary report, as their full report will be not be delivered until year-end. 4. The presentation that GZA did this summer, as well as their April – June summary report are now available on the Lake Health web page. 5. During the plant survey, water hemlock was discovered in one area at a resident's water's edge. This plant, among others, is toxic to both dogs and humans. 6. J. Arpin will ask the town to demand silt fencing for the house at the corner of Deepwood and Wood Acres that is scheduled to be demolished. 7. J. Arpin held a meeting with two of the boat inspectors to go over a new protocol for inspections at the boat launch. 8. F. Hoisl has been monitoring the parking lots and the Berglund property for cars without ALD hang tags.
3. Weeds: Chair F. Hoisl reported that at the most recent meeting, the focus was on lake usage. They'd like to strike a happy medium between making sure the lake is healthy and still trying to make sure boats can get in and out of certain locations. He's suggesting that when the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) does their plant survey next summer, they focus on certain problematic areas and make some recommendations. J. Arpin stated that the Lake Health Committee is available to work with individual residents regarding waterfront weed issues.
4. Dams: F. Hoisl reported that the contractor is going to go through the setbacks in the next week or so and clean the area down to the tree line behind the dams.
5. Beaches and ROWs: 1. T. Nixon reported that Oakland ROW continues to have problems with dogs, people setting up tents along the waterfront, driving and parking golf carts, and feeding snapping turtles and fishing while people are swimming. 2. The no smoking signs at Main Beach have been

vandalized again. 3. Locking the porta-potties after hours is being considered. 4. Someone trimmed the bushes at Manion ROW and left the debris. 5. A biologic treatment for the pump at Meadowbrook ROW was requested for odor containment. 6. F. Hoisl is going to visit Ryan Terrace ROW to see what the issue is with growth in the "area of non-disturbance," as it's marked on the ROW survey. 7. K. Patterson reported that there was an uptick in the number of passes requested this year so they may have to order more next year. There are still twelve people that ordered passes and didn't pick them up.

4. Boats/Beach Pass Checkers: F. Hoisl had nothing new to report, other than what was discussed earlier in the meeting.
5. Lebanon Roads: B. Pelegano had left the meeting but J. Arpin read his report stating that BASE Construction removed a tree that fell on Park Road in Lebanon. J. Caines stated that he applied the \$250 expense to the General Fund, as it fell on District property.
6. Communications: Due to the late hour, L. Bowen ceded her time.

K. New Business – Discussion and Possible Action

1. Kids Driving Golf Carts/ Battery Scooters: There have been near-misses in the District, with potential collisions with automobiles. F. Hoisl reported that he researched this topic in the past, and in Hebron golf carts are regarded as motor vehicles and the driver needs to be licensed, as well as have certain safety equipment. F. Hoisl will get the ordinances regarding this subject from the two towns and we will make residents aware of them.

L. Prepare Agenda for Next Meeting

Add 125 Deepwood to Old Business.

M. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn (K. Patterson/ J. Caines) passed unanimously at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Liz Bowen, Clerk
Amston Lake District

Please refer to subsequent meeting minutes for approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.