

Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Location: Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), Auburn, Maine

Time: Meeting began at 3:30 PM

Recording: The meeting was recorded.

Commissioners Present: Dan Dube, Mary Ann Brenchick, Amy Landry, Dan Bilodeau, Alan Holbrook, Evan Cyr and Steve French

Commissioners Absent: Camille Parrish, Rick LaChapelle

Others Present: Kevin Gagne, LAWPC Clerk, Sid Hazelton, LAWPC Clerk, Michael Broadbent, LAWPC Secretary, Erica Kidd, Watershed Manager and Carolyn Houtz Education and Outreach Coordinator, Heather Hunter, Finance Officer, Jim Pross, Legal Counsel.

Agenda Item 1: Executive Session regarding potential litigation in accordance with 1 M.R.S.A. 405 (6)(E)

Vote-1 On a motion by Commissioner Cyr and seconded by Commissioner Brenchick to go into executive session in accordance with 1 M.R.S.A (6)(E).

Passed 7-0

The meeting resumed at 4:25 pm

Agenda Item 2a: Minutes of the regular meeting of November 10,2021

Vote-2 On a motion by Commissioner Brenchick and seconded by Commissioner Bilodeau to accept the minutes for the regular meeting of November 10, 2021 as presented.

Passed 6-0-1

Agenda Item 2b: Minutes of the workshop on December 1,2021

Vote-3 On a motion by Commissioner Brenchick and seconded by Commissioner Holbrook to accept the minutes of the workshop held December 1, 2021 as presented.

Passed 7-0

Agenda Item 3: Consent Agenda, A. Quarterly Financial Update, B. Water Quality & Watershed Update, C. Education and Outreach.

Vote-4 On a motion from Commissioner Bilodeau and accepted by Commissioner Brenchick to accept the Consent Agenda items A,B and C as presented.

Passed 7-0

Agenda Item 4: Open Session-Public Comment

Eric Cousens from the City of Auburn Planning and Permitting Department extended an invitation to the Commissioners to attend a Public Meeting planned for 6:00pm on February 16, 2022 at the Auburn Senior Community Center. The Meeting will be on proposed ordinance changes in the City of Auburn. The presentation will highlight recommendations of the City Commissioned Lake Auburn Study and other efforts the City is undertaking in the watershed. Eric feels there is urgency at this time to review this now.

Agenda Item 5: Staff Clerks Report – Kevin

Kevin prepared a Clerk’s Report for the meeting which was included in the agenda packets. Kevin reported that he and Sid had spent considerable time reviewing the Lake Auburn Study. Their comments are included in the report. Kevin reported that both the Lewiston Water Division and the Auburn Water District have individual waivers from filtration granted by the Maine Drinking Water Program. Both entities have requested feedback from the DWP on a recent proposal for the City to adopt State Septic Standards. The Auburn Water District has received a response and Lewiston is still waiting. Kevin pointed out that both entities are going to continue to work and understand the impacts of the proposed changes and how they will affect long term water quality within the Lake.

The city is also considering a watershed boundary change on the South End of Lake Auburn which would open up a large chunk of land for development. Kevin felt that there is documentation that would support this change as it would not impact the lake. However, he was mindful that we should monitor this as we do not want something out of the ordinary that could affect the lake, like chemical exposure or a change in topography so that the property would drain towards Lake Auburn. This should be monitored and the language of the boundary change should be reviewed closely.

Kevin also reported that there is a new Lewiston City Councilor appointed to the Commission, Rick LaChapelle. He was not able to attend today's meeting but he is looking forward to contributing in the future.

Agenda Item 6: Lake Auburn Study, A. Highlights/Discussions – Erica

Erica gave a review of the Lake Auburn Study conducted by the City of Auburn. She directed the Commissioners to the Executive Summary and Section 6 of the final report. Erica read the key points from the Study including, regulatory frame work, aligning septic ordinance standards, standards for farm management and development of low impact development standards. Erica pointed out that the study says that low impact development, while being a good practice, is only effective for very small amounts of development. The report finds that any easement of current restrictions will result in an increase of phosphorus into Lake Auburn even if new septic standards were adopted and low impact development practices were applied. Erica cautioned that increased phosphorus leads to algae blooms and degraded water clarity. Erica pointed out that the economic impacts of development are negligible given the offset result of declined water quality.

The Study also encourages that the Commission work with our neighbors in the watershed like, Minot, Hebron, Turner and Buckfield.

Steve French asked what would happen if a filtration plant was built? Would we still need to protect the Lake? Erica pointed out that, yes, we would still have to follow all of these guidelines and continue all efforts to protect the clarity of Lake Auburn. She pointed out that filtration plants can't filter out toxic algae, and that decreased water quality greatly impacts the operation of a filter plant. Erica also referenced several other systems within the State where communities do filter the water and they continue with their watershed protection efforts. This was also explained in the Lake Auburn Study. Sid pointed out that this is covered on page 61 of the Study.

The study suggests that the City should acquire permanent recreational trail easements from the Commission. The Commissions properties were purchased with the sole responsibility of preserving the quality of Lake Auburn. Recreational opportunities are a secondary benefit to that when and if they do not negatively impact the lake. Dan suggested and Marry Ann agreed to having this discussion as a future agenda item.

Other highlights were boundary modifications, adoption of septic, low impact development farming and logging standards. It was asked if we could move forward with adopting more restrictive logging standards. It was requested to bring this up as an agenda item.

Sid pointed out that the Study makes several recommendations to adopt State Septic Standards, yet they then point out that if this were done it would result in the development of 100 additional homes. They admit in the Study that this is a contradiction to the numerous recommendations of the Study to Not develop within the watershed. If the State Septic Standards are adopted, they recommend restricting development through ordinances.

Vote-5 On a motion from Commissioner Dube and accepted by Commissioner Bilodeau to move agenda item numbers 7,8,9 and timber harvest to the next Commission meeting.

Vote-6 On a motion by Commissioner Cyr and seconded by Commissioner Brenchick to amend to keep agenda item 7 on this agenda.

Vote-6 Passed 5-1

Vote-5 passed with the friendly amendment. 6-0

Agenda Item 7: Review of proposed septic ordinance changes

Kevin reported that he has reviewed the current State Septic standards. He said there is not enough information available to confirm that there would be an improvement of system discharges from what he has reviewed. This will need to be reviewed in more detail in a site-by-site case. Mounded or drip systems which are currently not allowed with the current restrictions have very broad treatment benefits. There is also the additional concern that the development of 100 additional homes will have an adverse effect to the lake regardless of the septic system that is installed.

Vote-7 On a motion by Commissioner Brenchick and seconded by Commissioner Cyr to adjourn the meeting.

Passed 6-0

A true record, attest;



Michael Broadbent
LAWPC Secretary