

**Ashford Lake Property Owners' Association  
Annual Meeting  
October 5, 2019  
Ashford Town Hall, Lower Level Meeting Room**

**1. Call to order: Tom Barry**

Tom Barry called the meeting to order at 9:00.

Those Board members present were: Tom Barry, Jeremy Edberg, Harry Marshall, Sue Orcutt, Denise Pillion, Walt Wassil, and Ann Milner. Absent were Jason Pufahl, Don Judson, Mindy Carpenter, and Lisa McAdam Donegan.

A total of 22 voting parcels were represented including Board members present.

**2. Financial Report: Prepared by Don Judson**

General Ledger

Tom then reviewed the 2019 General Ledger as of 10-1-19.

Major expenses are road and drainage projects, plowing and insurance.

\$25,000 from the capital fund was used for the mandated drainage and road projects.

There is still a substantial balance in the capital fund.

Tom also reviewed the delinquencies. There are 27 owners who owe a total of \$28,000. There are two strategies the Board uses to recover money owed after numerous requests for payment and accrual of late fees. One is to work with the Town of Ashford Tax Collector to contact the financial institutions to inquire if the financial institutions will bring the assessments up to date. There currently are four owners who fall into this category. The other strategy is to refer the owners to small claims court. The judgement is always in ALPOA's favor. A lien is placed on the property if the payments are not made.

The insurance will be due soon. Don has requested an additional quote.

Questions and comments from the floor:

Rob Trotta asked for clarification of the insurance premium item on the general ledger.

Tom clarified.

**3. Committee Reports**

**Roads and Grounds: Tom Barry**

Tom reviewed the road projects completed this year.

Some of the mandated projects from the Ashford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission were completed. This included the swale on Sunset Dr. and the drainage in Sunset Beach were reconstructed. The intersection of Sunset Dr. and Ashford Lake Dr (ALD) was paved.

At the curve on ALD by the dam, an underdrain was placed in the swale, a culvert was replaced and the roadway paved. These were deferred projects from the previous year.

A section of Lakeside Dr. was paved. A new catch basin was installed on the lower road on Lakeside Dr. The swale was graded, and the pitch adjusted on a section of lower ALD. The pavement was patched on areas of Hillcrest and Lakeside Dr. Potholes were repaired.

Questions and comments from the floor:

Rob Trotta asked for the figures for what was budgeted and what was actually completed.

Tom responded that \$45,000 was budgeted for major road projects. The quote was \$69,000. There were overages especially when paving the intersection of ALD and Sunset Dr. There was old pavement found under the gravel which had to be removed. Rob Trotta asked if we should require there to be a cap on the amount of money that the Board can take from the capital fund without property owners' permission.

Tom read items from the Bylaws which applied to the Board's authority and responsibilities.

Denise stated that the Board moves \$5,000 into the capital fund each year for use as needed.

Tom stated that in the past people have asked why we aren't using money from the capital fund.

Aldona Allevo stated that nobody voted to establish the capital fund. It was originally earmarked for the dam if the need arose. Aldona is in favor in taking money from the capital fund. She has paid her assessment yearly and would like to see the benefit of that money for work that needs to be done. She and her neighbors have drainage issues that need to be addressed.

Rose Bergeron asked if the Board has an engineer come in and if we get more than one quote.

Tom stated that we look for a contractor that does good work and is within our budget.

Rose stated that we should have more than one quote for a major project.

Denise Pillion stated that we have had experience with a previous contractor and this person does good work. When we have same person who knows the history of our roads and drainage, it helps.

Aldona Allevo stated that it is not easy to get people to come to the lake to work.

Rose Bergeron stated that if we are taking money from capital fund, we should get more than one quote.

Tom stated that if we are not happy with the quality of the work, we would get another quote.

Next year, we probably won't take money from capital fund.

There are still two more mandated Ashford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission projects to complete; 1)The swale on Westview needs to be rebuilt, 2)The swale on Farm Dr. also needs work but will not be completed until the Town of Ashford corrects the problem on a section up the hill from Farm Dr.

#### Beaches

The picnic tables at Sunset Beach were replaced this year. Next year we would like to level out Sunset Beach and get more sand.

#### Landscaping

We have a new Landscaper this year, Jordan Lamarre of JCL Lawn Care. He works for the same price as the former landscaper who is no longer in business. The more volunteers we have to do some of the work around the lake the less we have to pay someone. We appreciate any small amount of help. Tom recognized the following people for their volunteer efforts: Walt Wassil mows at East Beach. Rob Trotta takes care of East Beach. Harry Marshall and Tom Barry painted the road lines and speed bumps. Denise and Matt Pillion take care of the rafts. Roger Ouellette paid for the removal of trees from the hurricane damage. There may be other who we don't know about. Carolyn Trotta recognized Gary Kaye for cutting and trimming the hill on Hillcrest Dr. Carol Barry recognized Tom Barry for overseeing everything around the lake.

Questions and comments from the floor:

Rob Trotta asked what was budgeted for the mandated wetlands projects for next year. Tom replied \$11,000 for the Westview project and \$12,000 for the Farm Dr. project.

Rob Trotta suggested that the sand be delivered in the fall when the ground is not as wet. He volunteered to help spread the sand.

#### Snow Plowing

We will be renewing snowplow contract. Mansfield Tree hasn't increased their rates since we hired them. We pay per storm. Sanding raises the snowplow rate.

#### **Environmental: Tom Barry**

##### Water Quality

Beach water testing was completed at both beaches in July and August for E.coli. Both results were far below any level of concern.

##### Canada Geese

There were no geese nesting on the lake this year. ALPOA continues to renew the permit to destroy the eggs. We need people to monitor them in spring.

##### Water Quality Monitoring Program (The Last Green Valley (TLGV) & Eastern CT Conservation District)

We have been participating in a water quality monitoring program at no expense to us. Volunteers were trained to take water samples from the lake. It was done twice a month from June through September at approximately the same time and location. The samples are being analyzed for blue green algae. There will be a meeting where the results will be reported. The date, time and location will be posted on the website. Tom acknowledged Janet Bellamy who was responsible for having Ashford Lake be part of the program.

##### Lake Vegetation

The weeds that grow on the bottom of the lake and float to the surface were back again this year. The weeds we have are native and not invasive. Ashford lake is a man-made lake that wants to basically become a swamp. There are interventions that can manage them; aquatic herbicides and stocking the lake with sterile grass carp.

A representative from the DEEP Fisheries Division came out to the lake this past summer and went around the lake with Tracey Judson and Tom Barry. They were investigating if the grass carp will eat the type of grass we have. It was determined that the grass carp would eat the grass we are having a problem with, but they could also eat grass that we don't want to be eaten and upset the balance of the currently robust and healthy ecosystem at the lake. The grass carp would also put more nutrients into the water which creates the green gooey algae.

We have great biodiversity at the lake; many types of fish, turtles, snakes, herons, and osprey.

There are cattails growing in places on the lake. These are native plants. We will have to spray the cattails at the spillway since removing them by hand last year did not work.

Questions and comments from the floor:

Caroline Trotta asked on behalf of her neighbor if we would ever draw down the lake.

Aldona Allevo responded that the actual mechanism at the dam doesn't work. The lake drains naturally at the spillway.

Tom stated that when you draw down the lake, we could get at the cattails on the shore, but it would not get rid of the weeds.

Rob Trotta thanked Tom for overview of the environmental make-up of the lake. He stated that chemical treatment is always last resort but that the Board had his support if needed.

Denise Pillion commented that when she was swimming this past summer, she could feel the grass, but that this year didn't get rashes.

Rose Bergeron commented that her daughter who is a science teacher has said that Ashford Lake is a healthy lake.

Tom stated that we need to keep outside people out, to keep the lake healthy. Guests need to hose off boats. Trailers and motors are the most likely to carry in invasive plants.

Caroline Trotta noted that she has seen bass boats on trailers drive by her house.

Tom responded that one belongs to an owner on Lakeside Dr. Tom has spoken to him. He stops his trailer back from the water and carries the boat into water.

Joe Allevo stated that maybe we need signs regarding the boats.

Tom responded that there is a sign on north side of the lake regarding trailered boats.

Rob Trotta stated that due diligence is on owners to monitor the boats.

Bernie Dubb commented on current research and that we need to consider climate change which affects things in the lake.

**Dam: Sue Orcutt**

Dam Inspection

ALPOA is up to date and in compliance with the dam. The spillway and the slope on the south side will be cleared.

There is still some minor bridge repair work that is still to be done; remove rust, repoint the broken concrete, and paint the girder, but we have not found a contractor yet.

### **Community Watch and Safety: Tom Barry**

#### Crime

There has been no significant crime just nuisance issues such as speeding and use of the beach.

Comments from the floor:

Bernie Dubb stated that Facebook has reported recently numerous break-ins in the communities around us. We need to report issues to the state police.

Rose Bergeron stated that during the summer there were 20 kids at East Beach. They were noisy and were drinking. The State Police were called.

Rose Bergeron also stated that she will be calling the State Police when people come to the Airbnb next to her and they are noisy. She has called the owner and the owner just texts the renter. The owner posts rules but they don't pay attention to them. It is getting out of hand.

Caroline Trotta stated that the Airbnb's rules do stipulate no parties, no yelling, etc. The owner should be told that this is what is stipulated but the guests are not abiding by them and it is disturbing the community. The owner should come and check when there is a complaint.

Also, their raft is close to shore. Kids could park at night and can easily get to it.

Tom responded that any floating raft in the water becomes ALPOA's responsibility. Our insurance policy currently carries two rafts. The policy is to have the owner pay the premium for a raft.

Amber Edberg stated that there have been out of state cars speeding on Lakeside Dr. The kids like to ride their bikes now that the road is paved. She thinks the owner should get a letter.

Tom Barry stated that we have signs and speed bumps. State police can't enforce private roads and won't be there in time for speeders. We could put more signs at certain intervals. FedEx and UPS can be called to report when their drivers speed.

Caroline Trotta asked if we could rent the sign that tells you how fast you are driving from the town.

Bernie Dubb stated that his experience with signs is placing a lot of signs doesn't reduce speeding. Approaching someone when they speed, works.

Joe Allevo stated that some speed bumps are very high. He asked if it is a liability on ALPOA and if there is a height requirement.

Tom responded that speed bumps are recommended for parking lots, not roads. We are liable if there is damage. We could make that speed bump lower by making it wider.

#### Beaches

There were incidents during the summer with people swimming late at night, so we put up temporary signs for beach closure at dark. We were wondering what people thought of permanent signage with rules.

Comments from the floor:

Caroline Trotta stated that East Beach is her family's access to the beach and they sometimes use it at night.

Aldona Allevo stated that people who are swimming at 1:00 am will not read signs.

Rob Trotta stated that signage is going to give us different recourse.

Tom stated that it seemed like the consensus was no sign. It is already clearly marked.

### Use of Beaches

#### Beach Passes

The Board has discussed having passes for ALPOA members to hang from their rearview mirrors when using the beaches. This will avoid people having to interrogate people who drive up and use the beaches. They would be mailed with the January bill.

Michelle Zimmerman thought it was a good idea.

Rose Bergeron asked if we were liable if something happens to them.

Tom stated that if we have something in place, they can be considered trespassing.

Denise Pillion stated that we talk about this every year and we need to do something about it.

A show of hands indicated a consensus to look into passes for the beach.

#### Tolland Model Airplane Club

The Board entered into agreement with the Tolland Model Airplane Club. The members fly remote electric planes and have been allowed to fly their planes in the morning on two weekends a month on Sunset Beach.

Caroline Trotta asked how many people are involved and where they park.

Tom stated that two planes fly at a time. They park on Sunset Dr.

The Board also entered into agreement with the Ashford Recreation Department for the girl's camp to use the beaches on two times during a week in the summer. Insurance documents were received from the Town of Ashford

Bernie Dubb stated that outside access to any ALPOA entity has potentially significant impact. He requested that this access should be subject to agreement with the whole membership. Yearly access only. There could be problems if more groups want to in the future.

Tom stated that the understanding with the airplane club was that if there were any issues, the agreement terminates. All are renewable yearly.

Aldona Allevo stated that we have to have a good relationship with the town.

### **Recreation: Denise Pillion**

Boat passes are available after the meeting or by contacting Denise Pillion. The boats on the boat rack need stickers also.

Spring clean-up was held. Everyone is invited to come to pizza party, if you can't do work.

Looking for ideas for events to bring the community together.

**Communication: Ann Milner**

The yearly newsletter will continue to be sent out with the January bill mailing.

Baskets were delivered to two new ALPOA members.

Thank you to Carrie Dyer for taking care of the website. Please check it for information and links to local and state agencies.

**4. 2020 Assessment**

It was recommended that the assessment rate for 2020 remain at \$500 per assessment annually. Aldona Allevo motioned that the assessment fees remain at \$500 for 2020.

Roger Ouellette seconded the motion. The motion carried with 22 in favor and 0 opposed.

**5. Election of Officers**

Tom indicated that 6 Board positions were up for election for a 2-year term and that the incumbents agreed to remain in these positions (Don Judson, Sue Orcutt, Harry Marshall, Jason Pufahl, and Lisa McAdam Donegan). There is also one vacant position. Paul Stansel was an additional nomination from the floor.

Rob Trotta motioned to elect the slate as presented. Bob Zanlungo seconded the motion. All were in favor. There were none opposed.

Board meetings are open to all members.

**6. Discussion of Other Business**

Aldona Allevo stated that there are old cars, trucks and lawn mowers parked on lake property. Unregistered vehicles parked on property is to be taxed by the town of Ashford.

Tom said he would talk to assessor about it.

**7. Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn by Roger Ouellette and seconded by Joe Allevo at 11:30.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Milner  
October 27, 2019