

Minutes of the Lake Hopatcong Commission November 21, 2016

A meeting of the Lake Hopatcong Commission was held on November 21, 2016 at the Mount Arlington Municipal Building, 419 Howard Boulevard, Mount Arlington New Jersey. At approximately 7:00p.m., Acting Chair McCarthy called the Meeting to order. He stated the meeting was being held in accordance with “Open Public Meetings Act.”

Salute to the Flag: Daniel McCarthy (acting chairman) and all those in attendance joined in a flag salute.

Moment of Silence: Daniel McCarthy asked for a moment of silence for our armed forces.

Roll Call:

Present: Mark Crowley, Anne Seibert-Pravs, Daniel McCarthy, Mark Fisch, Robert Tessier, Joshua Osowski

Absent: Eric Wilsusen, Mark Fisch, Richard Zoschak, Joel Servoss, Commissioner Morris, Fred Steinbaum, David Jarvis, Arthur Clarke

Speakers: None

Roll Call

Commissioner Steinbaum – Absent
Commissioner Osowski - Present
Commissioner Fisch - Present
Commissioner Pravs - Present
Commissioner Tessier - Present
Commissioner Crowley – Present
Acting Chair McCarthy – Present
Commissioner Servoss - Absent
Commissioner Jarvis - Absent
Alternate Commissioner Clarke - Absent
Alternate Commissioner Zoschak - Absent
Alternate Commissioner Morris- Absent

Gubernatorial and citizen seats are still empty

With six commissioners present Acting Chair McCarthy declares a quorum.

Treasurer’s Report

Commissioner Mark Fisch reports that Acting Chairman McCarthy, Commissioner Steinbaum and himself went to Valley National Bank. They need to sign one more form, and at that point all of the signatures will be ready. They will need one signature on checks up to two thousand

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dollars and anything above that will require two signatures. There is also a safety deposit box that hasn't been accessed in over ten years. The Commission does not know where the keys are, and the people who may have the keys do not have any knowledge of the keys or the safety deposit box. He also mentions that former commissioner Betty Ganter passed away about two weeks ago. She was treasurer on the commissioner for about two years and was an appointee of the Governor. Acting Chair McCarthy adds that she was a good person and will be missed by all.

New Business

Acting Chair McCarthy adds that the bank will be researching whether they have the keys. He comments that there are also old Lake Hopatcong files from when the Commission had an office at the state park. He believes that these files are still at the state park and it is possible that the keys could be in the file cabinets. Melissa of the State Park Service says that she can check to see if the keys are in the unlocked portion of the file cabinet. Acting Chair McCarthy adds that at some point an inventory of the files should be taken to have a record of what is available. Commissioner Crowley comments that they have not paid for the box in over ten years, and he would like to make sure that they will not be charged for the box.

Correspondence

Acting Chair McCarthy received a letter from Valley National Bank on November 9th 2016 notifying the Commission that someone had requested an authorized signatory be added. This is consistent with their duty to notify the account holder under security laws.

Commissioner Pravs asks Acting Chair McCarthy if he ever received a response from the Governors office. He responds that he got a response from the Governor a few months ago that they are looking to fill the gubernatorial seat. He has received no word from the Attorney General's Office. The only letter that they received prompt action on was from the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs who sent Commissioner Tessier. If not for that, there would not be enough members for a quorum at this meeting.

No other correspondence is noted.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Osowski comments that NJDEP recently sent the municipalities a drought tool kit. This highlights different ways to conserve water. If the public would like to access this information they are asked to contact their municipality. He adds that Kerry and the NJDEP will not be here tonight to discuss the findings of the hearing. They received the transcripts late, and did not have time to put everything together. Overall they said there is broad support for the two changes, which DEP had asked for comment on. They will provide additional information next month, but he notes that 42 oral comments on the night of the hearing, 41 written comments,

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approximately 600 form letters that were submitted the Musconetcong Watershed Association and the Jersey League of Conservation Voters. There is broad support for the reduction in drawdown from 26 to 22 inches.

Commissioner Crowley - No Comment

Commissioner Fisch - No Comment

Commissioner Pravs- Asks if the drawdown has begun. Melissa of the state park responds that it has not, and that the lake is already down 18 inches.

Commissioner Tessier - No Comment

Weed Harvesting Update

Melissa gives the weed harvesting update. Between May 24th and October 20th 2016 4,024 cubic yards were harvested. The goal at the beginning of the season was to have three harvesters running full-time and one running part-time, however with staffing issues it was usually only the three full-time harvesters. The park will be keeping the two permanent staff and three seasonal staff over the winter to help with assembling and disassembling of the machines. This process has already begun, and they will begin repairs soon. They will be sending out one of the two trailers out for repairs, and will prioritize equipment needs and equipment purchases for continuing the harvesting program. One item she anticipates buying is a new pressure washer, and a new conveyor belt for one of the harvesters. Commissioner Pravs asks if Melissa is comfortable with the money in the budget to cover the repairs and storage for the winter. Melissa is confident that the budget is sufficient and the harvesters will be going into storage on November 29th. A CDL driver is needed to haul the harvesters to the storage facility and should be done in one day.

Acting Chair McCarthy asks Melissa if there are any significant repairs needed. She responds that there are not, but that they want to replace all of the conveyor belts on the harvesters because they are due for replacement. Commissioner Pravs suggests organizing a visit to the facility so that some of the new commissioners can see the operations first hand.

Communications

Acting Chair McCarthy comments on the existing MOUs between the NJDEP and Musconetcong Watershed Association. Commissioner Crowley makes a motion to continue both, and Commissioner Fisch seconds the motion. Roll call is held.

Commissioner Osowski - Yes

Commissioner Tessier- Yes, but he doesn't believe this a long term solution.

Commissioner Fisch- Yes

Commissioner Pravs - Yes

Commissioner Crowley - Yes

Commissioner McCarthy - Yes, with the same observations as Commissioner Tessier

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Fiscal Year Budget

Acting Chair McCarthy distributes the draft cover letter for budget that was voted on last month. The letter states that the plan is to break down the two accounts for the NJDEP into the bank account and the grant accounts which have had more activity to provide greater clarity on the accounts. Commissioner Tessier suggests that before mailing out the budget, a few people should go meet with the State senators, or NJDEP commissioners and explain what the Commission is going to be asking for. A general discussion of these procedures continues.

Acting Chair McCarthy comments on Item 9E for the 319 Grant money audit. Originally, he was concerned that the Commission does not have the means necessary to hire someone to perform the audit. The Commission has not responded to the request, so he would like to follow-up with them. Commissioner Pravs asks whether Princeton Hydro has the information for the audit. Acting Chair McCarthy agrees that they have the information, and that it should not take too much of an effort to compile the information. Commissioner Osowski agrees to follow-up with someone at NJDEP. If nothing is found out by the next meeting they will send a follow-up.

Public Comment

John Kuzeman of Lake Hopatcong comments on the 2016 Water Level Management Plan and talks about how NJDEP and Fish and Wildlife managed the lake this year. NJDEP and F&W no longer use the 7 inch over 90 day rule which managed the lake in dry conditions. In the latest plan he doesn't believe that the public was aware that this protection had been taken out. He doesn't believe that there is any reason to take out the dry weather protection for the lake. He asks that people go to lakehopatcongcitizensforaction.com for more information on the change in NJDEP policies.

Mr. Beebe comments that the state is violating their own law which stated that the lake should be held at the high water mark subject to the elements. The law goes back to 1922 when they built the spillway to fix the problems that they used to have. Now, he can't get in and out of his business or Halsey Island properties.

Barbara Loring comments that we are in a drought and would like to know if the pipes are still in that can drain water from the lake to provide drinking water for other communities. The commission comments that the pipes are in place, but they do not know where the pumps are. Barbara feels that she is paying a lot in taxes to the state and that if the state is collecting taxes and uses the water in drought situations then they should pay to fund the water quality testing etc. for the lake.

Earl Riley Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board comments that at the bottom of his monthly report there are totals for the total hours put on the harvester and the total amount of weeds collected from Lake Musconetcong. In addition, Lake Musconetcong will pay for the

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normal maintenance of the weed harvester over the winter. Any extraordinary repairs will be covered by the state park.

A motion is made to adjourn and seconded. The meeting is adjourned.