

CARIBOU LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION (CLPOA)

Saturday September 5, 2015

10:00 a.m. – 12 Noon

Lutsen Town Hall

ANNUAL MEETING

CLPOA Board Members Present: Fred Morris, Larry Mullen, Bob Reid, Louise Suomi and Bob Hewitt.  
Board members excused: Bill Dunn and Julie Bittinger

**1. Call to Order** – the meeting was called to order by board president Fred Morris at 10:05 a.m.

**2. It was MOVED and SECONDED that the minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting be approved. Motion CARRIED.**

**3. Treasurer's Report** – Bob Hewitt, chair of the governance committee, reported that he had reviewed the treasurer's report as submitted by Treasurer Louise Suomi and reconciled it to the bank statements. The organization currently has a balance of \$4,888.45.

**4. Cook County Commissioner Ginny Storlie**

Commissioner Storlie gave an update of activities in the county. A celebration was held in August to recognize the Oak Grove foundation established in 1986. The Caribou Lake sign residing on the Caribou trail was taken and a new one is being made. A member reported also that the White Sky street sign by the landing was taken. A new building is going up in Lutsen, behind the credit union, which will provide housing for area workers. The commissioner showed an article in the August 9<sup>th</sup> Minneapolis Star and Tribune which highlighted stress conditions on Minnesota lakes (the article reported on in more detail later in the meeting by member Diana Kamp). She reported that the county budget process is ongoing. Elections are coming up for school bonding and the replacement for Minnesota House representative Dill. There is a \$25,000 matching grant in place for the establishment of a west end telecommunications work force site.

**Questions from the floor:**

Why no progress on the rock removal on South Caribou Drive (county #39) and the debris piled from the previous blasting? Answer: Resources are limited. Currently the county bulldozer is operating on the ski hill.

How are things going with the YMCA? Answer: The YMCA has been very successful.

What is the classification of the Birch Grove School? Answer: It is public.

## **5. Cook County Planning and Zoning Administrator Bill Lane**

President Morris introduced the Administrator, prefacing that our association board reviews all requests for variances on the lake. A position statement is submitted to the county planning commission regarding the variance request, with the association's main concerns being the preservation of water quality and shoreline esthetics. All members seeking variance requests are encouraged to discuss their plans with the board.

Administrator Lane reported that this is his eight year as the county Planning and Zoning Administrator. He complimented the substance of the recent association's board position statements on variance requests as submitted by President Morris.

Lane stressed his position to go out of his way to work with people on planning and zoning issues. He handed out "The Property Owner's Resource Guide", a reference guide to Cook county land use. He reported that the draft of the county's Land Use Plan was completed and a public hearing on it was set for September 14.

Lane highlighted the challenge of the former DNR lots, by the public landing, where lot sizes are small and county zoning is applied, necessitating the need for variances. There are now 21 variances given to those lots, with eight there when he started as administrator.

Lane also reported that the county is considering changing the zoning ordinances to allow "water oriented" structures on shorelines, for structures like sheds to store life jackets and outboard motors etc. This would not include saunas.

The Administrator stated that Septic systems continue to be the department's biggest concern and county inspector Mitch Everson is doing a great job. A challenge is that contractors are not always on the same page as the county.

Lane also reported that there is "after the fact" variance requests activity county wide, with one recent case on Caribou Lake where a structure was required to be moved from the shoreline. The worst fine given out to date was approximately \$1,200. All lakes are treated the same

### **Questions/Concerns from the floor:**

President Morris expressed a concern over the "water oriented" zoning consideration. Existing sheds would not be a problem but new sheds would not be appropriate and a concern, Morris expressed.

Question: Will there be a comment period if this ordinance goes forward? Answer: Yes and public notice will be given.

Question: If there is an existing structure on the shoreline for a number of years which is out of compliance, will it be addressed? Answer: It will be addressed if there is a request for a new variance on that structure.

Question: Do the two lots for sale on Whitesky need to adhere to the existing county setbacks? Answer: Averaging of the neighboring lot's setbacks plus ten feet will be used as the guideline for the setback.

Question: Will a "point of sale" inspection of septic systems policy be adopted? Answer: A good chance that will happen.

Question: Do saunas have to be connected to a septic system? Answer: If there is pressurized water in the structure, then it will need to be connected to a septic system.

Question: Are septic regulations posted on the county web site? They couldn't be found. Answer: I'll get them on the site.

Question: How many property owners are notified when there is a variance request? Answer: All property owners within a quarter mile are notified. The Caribou Lake Association board is made aware of all variance requests on the lake shoreline through a process where I notify the Cook County Coalition of Lake Associations and that association notifies the Caribou Lake Association Board.

Question: What are the rules in the cutting of shoreline trees? Answer: Cutting for a site view of the lake is allowed. Clear cutting is not allowed.

Question: What do you do after finding a shoreline clearing of trees? Answer: Initiate an enforcement of statute and get Soil and Water involved in replanting.

## **6. Firewise - Todd Armbruster**

Armbruster explained the Firewise Communities program and solicited involvement of our association. To be a Firewise Community, the participants must 1) Complete a community assessment, 2) form a Firewise committee to monitor activity, 3) hold a Firewise day event, like slash collection, 4) invest at least \$2/capita annually in activities, and 5) complete and submit a program application. Grants are available for activities like slash cleanup and collection. Currently Tait Lake is the only lake association designated as a Firewise community in the county. President Morris expressed that it would be brought up at the association's board meeting.

## **7. Lake Levels – Sally Westby**

Westby reported that she has been taking lake level readings (May through November) since 2008 from a marker installed on the end of her dock by the DNR. Lake levels remain consistent over the years. Variations in levels in any given year range from 7 to 10 inches, historically being higher in the spring and lower in the fall.

## **8. Stress on Minnesota Lakes Article – Diana Kamp**

Kamp handed out an August 9<sup>th</sup> Star and Tribune Article on the condition of Minnesota Lakes. She reported that the article highlighted that the states southern lakes are under major stress and are beyond restoration, while lakes in our area are still of good quality and must be protected, and she emphasized the need for us to remain vigilant in our efforts for good water quality on Caribou Lake.

## **9. Water Quality – Bob Reid**

Reid reported that we continue to test phosphorus and chlorophyll levels, and secchi disk readings, at five sites four times a year, beginning in May and ending in September. The reading at the five sites are consistent with one another, i.e. the levels are the same around the lake. We are doing good as far as the readings, being near or better than our set goals of 15 parts per billion or less of phosphorus and 8 parts per billion or less of chlorophyll. Oxygen testing was also started this year with equipment supplied to us by Karen Evens of the MPCA. The oxygen levels are taken at different depths and were at acceptable levels (see appendix A for sampling results).

## **10. Cook County Coalition of Lake Associations (CCCoLA)– Irene Mullen**

Mullen reported that the county AIS is placing a camera on the Gunflint trail to track the number of boats being brought in. If this information is useful, cameras may be also installed on the Caribou and Arrowhead trails in the future. Cook county AIS is slated to receive \$200,000 next year. She reported that CCCoLA has representatives on the county septic taskforce, the land use plan committee, and AIS.

## **11. Board Elections**

President Morris opened the floor for board nominations. Incumbents Bill Dunn, Fred Morris, Louise Soumi, Larry Mullen and Julie Bittinger were nominated and approved by unanimous vote.

## **12. Issues from the floor**

Any update on School trust land was raised. No update from the board. Member Linda Slocum, a state representative, acknowledged herself as a resource on this issue and would keep us abreast.

## **13. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55**

*Submitted by Larry Mullen, substitute secretary*