

**Caribou Lake Property Owners Association
Annual Meeting September 3, 2016
Lutsen Town Hall**

Board Members Present: Fred Morris, Bob Hewitt, Louise Suomi, Bob Reid, Larry Mullen, Julie Bittinger. Absent: Bill Dunn

Meeting called to order at 10:10 am

Introduction of Board Members and those attending meeting (49 individuals).

I. Reports and business

A. Minutes of 2015 Annual Meeting approved

B. Treasurer's Report by Louise Soumi- As of 9/3/2016 but not including dues received before the meeting and not including bills handed in at meeting, total in account is \$5295.44. Forty six people have paid their dues so far this year, a little fewer than this time last year. Fred Morris asked for a round of applause for the many years Louise has been Treasurer.

C. CCCoLA Report by Irene Mullen - Irene and Larry Mullen are now co-chairs of the Cook County Coalition of Lake Associations. 9 lakes are represented on the Board. CLPOA pays \$50/year for dues. Lake health, shoreline integrity and education are part of the mission. The group meets 4 times a year. During the meetings each lake reports on their lake, as well as, updates from Ilena Berg of Cook County soil and water, Karen Evens of MPCA on shoreline restoration, and Amanda Wiberg, invasive species commission rep. The group also has speakers who present on pertinent issues. Lastly the group has taken action recently it wrote a letter to the US Forest Service expressing opposition to renewing sulfide mining leases. Tim Nelson of Cook County will be the next speaker to clarify buffer zone regulations. After Irene's report discussion arose about buffer zones and firewise tree removal. Bill Lane of Cook County has previously clarified that the buffer zone between a cabin and the lake can't be significantly altered. The shoreline must be protected. Owners are allowed to remove crowded balsams for fire protection. The county can rule that trees be replanted if land has been recently cleared causing significant changes.

D. Water Quality Report by Larry Mullen - Larry monitors the lake for water quality 4x/ year at 5 places around the lake. He checks for phosphorous, chlorophyll, Oxygen and clarity. Levels continue to be at or better than the goals set 8 years ago when water of Caribou Lake had reached a critical low quality level. Larry also monitored for spiny water flea; he did not find any. There are lakes in Cook County with this invasive harmful water creature. It has spikes which are harmful to fish when eaten and it competes for plankton that fish eat.

Water Quality report by Bob Reid - Bob spoke of what a good job Caribou has done by meeting the goals set 8 years ago to improve water quality. However, constant

attention is needed to maintain this quality. We also need to protect the shoreline from encroachment (ie maintain proper buffer zones) for not only water quality but to preserve the wilderness feel that all enjoy while boating on the lake. Our role as the CLPOA Board is to protect the water and shoreline integrity. The CLPOA Board is Vigilant in working with the County to voice our concerns, being sensitive to the rights of owners, while protecting the lake. As part of our community of Caribou lake. We strive for consistent policy and clarity of rules from the County Board and Commissioner. The Board feels a variance request should not be a "given", but the property owner must go through the process, for example, to have a plan to plant trees to maintain the buffer zone, or provide a plan for runoff, etc. Otherwise the County gets into a pattern of granting all variances, and the shoreline gets what is termed "variance creep", with a potential to harm water quality and reduce buffers. Again, The Board will work with property owners to find solutions to ameliorate the situation by plantings or run-off accommodation, or improving buffer zones. Caribou Lake is known county wide for improving our water quality. We are a success story. Our efforts pay off.

E. County update by Commissioner Ginny Storlie- The County has formed a new Department of Land Services under Tim Nelson. This will increase efficiency when issues including parks and trails are being addressed. A 1/2 % sales tax dedicated to transportation is being discussed. Meetings have been held for public comment. There will be discussion through September, then after 3 months it will take effect in January of 2017. No sunset date has been put on the tax. Cook county has many gravel roads which require much more maintenance than hard surface roads. It is predicted 70% of revenues will come from tourism. Some discussion followed on the 25% county property tax increase proposed for next year. Commissioner Storlie believes this will be reduced. A bed tax is currently in place. Commissioner Storlie welcomes any further concerns and/or comments.

F. Firewise report by Todd Armbruster - Caribou Lake is becoming a Firewise Community. Todd is working on the assessment and report. Recommendations will be made to improve fire conditions. All are voluntary. Hours of labor by property owners to clear slash, weed and mow should be reported to Fred Morris, as well as expenses if someone is hired. These hours can be used by Firewise to obtain grants and to pay our Firewise dues. This year's slash pick up will be September 26. Notice must be given to Fred Morris (caribouowl@aol.com) by September 20 if brush is to be picked up. Reimbursement for sprinkler systems for use during wildfires is not available currently. Homeowners are encouraged to remove trees 30 feet from homes, and thin 30 to 100 feet from home, especially Balsam and moose maple. Also, thin trees to 20 feet between trees. Prune branches 6 feet from the ground. Leave the layer of overstory trees. However, NO cutting is allowed 50 feet from the shore. If contractors are hired, property owners are cautioned to mark trees or be on site, so more trees than anticipated are not cleared.

G.Nominating Committee report by Julie Bittinger- Karl Karst and Tom Rider are nominated and Bob Reid, who currently serves on the Board, is nominated for

another term. Bob Hewitt is leaving the Board after many years. No nominations made from the floor. A motion is made to approve all 3 nominees. Brief discussion on qualifications. Motion is seconded. Motion passes.

II. Guest Speaker

Chel Anderson was introduced by Bob Hewitt. Chel is co author of “North Shore” a recently published reference book on the environmental history of the Lake Superior Watershed. Chel delivered a very informative and interesting presentation on the “Highlands” section of the North Shore where Caribou Lake is nestled in the Maple forest. She emphasized we need to be good stewards of this remarkable and unique area we live in.

III. Issues from the floor

1. A motion was made to split our donation, amount to be determined by the board, between the Lutsen Fire Department and the Emergency Medical Service responders. Seconded and passed.
2. Discussion on drones appearing over the lake and homes. Perhaps a speaker can present on this topic in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm
Respectfully submitted,
Julie Bittinger
Secretary