

Summary of the LMPC Annual Zoom Meeting of November 1, 2023

As has been done for the past few years, LMPC held a Zoom meeting with Chuck Poole, Wicomico County Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, on Wednesday, November 1, 2023. Those attending in addition to Chuck Poole: John Rue (Danwood Estates), Ray Brodie (Holly Estates), Bill and Cindy Nelson (Williams Mill Pond), Mark Haverland (Chestnut Hill), Chris Murphy (Chestnut Hill), and Marilyn Booth (Pine Knoll II).

Chuck gave an upbeat assessment of where we are heading as the New Year approaches. First, he has been successful in bringing his crew up to speed with new hires. This means that a survey of weed infestation will be done in the spring of 2024, with anticipated spraying for hydrilla in June and surface weed in August. He also indicated that extra product will be available, given the unchecked growth over the past two summers, and that Parks and Recreation will have all of the environmental permits.

In addition, Chuck announced that a capital budget item for the current year includes a project to install a weir breaker at the sluice gates of the dam adjacent to the County Tourist Center. The weir would forestall large objects such as logs from getting stuck in the gates and cause an unwarranted drawdown. He indicated he would give us an update as to the status of the project when a County budget decision is to be voted on.

Thirdly, as had been previously sent to LMPC owners, no one came forth to claim the floating dock that was found unattached on the pond. Mark Haverland and Randy Bennett helped to tow the dock which had been attached temporarily to Chris Murphy's dock and fastened it to the launch site adjacent to the Tourist Center. Chuck indicated that as no one has claimed the dock, Parks and Recreation may repurpose the dock for community use once repairs are undertaken.

In the following Q and A session, John Rue raised the question of whether anyone is responsible for regulating tree and bush cover on properties' edge buffer. This was brought up in that some recent owners have undertaken clearing up to the pond edge, thereby exposing the land to potential erosion and affecting the natural scenic landscape. Chuck indicated that Parks and Recreation do not have jurisdiction of land use regulation but the this would ordinarily come under the Maryland Department of the Environment. In the subsequent discussion, it was noted that the MDE did nothing to stop ground clearing when the Ponds Edge II housing project was undertaken and during which several mud plume event took place in the past two years. Jon also asked whether permission would be needed to start a pilot program to plant bald cypress trees to help preserve the natural shoreline and to foster cleaner water in the pond.

Looking forward, John suggested that a working group be formed to request a hearing before the Wicomico County Council to determine to what extent the County can and is willing to assume regulatory responsibility for preserving the natural shoreline of the pond. John has agreed to organize periodic meetings to anticipate a meeting before the County Council.

The remainder of the LMPC meeting addressed the status of finances and the designation of representatives. Current treasurer Marilyn Booth, of Pine Knoll II, indicated that current balance of funds stands at \$9,290.26. These funds were originally raised by voluntary self- assessment contributions by pond property owners when the County would not commit to periodic treatment of hydrilla and surface weeds in the pond. Following an organized protest by LMPC property owners to oppose a planned expansion of the State truck weigh station, the County agreed to underwrite the annual costs of pond treatment, and this agreement has been in force ever since.

In terms of representatives, Marilyn Booth was voted to continue serving as treasurer of LMPC funds, and Phillip LeBel of Chestnut Hill agree to serve another year as volunteer coordinator. As volunteer coordinator, information regarding activities and decisions are posted on a website of interest to community members at:

<https://msuweb.montclair.edu/%7elebelp/LeonardMillPondCollaborative.html>

Given the challenge of balancing various interests of property owners - nature conservation, fishing, and boating and kayaking, it is important that members of the community take an interest to participate not just in the annual meeting, but also in Jon Rue's initiatives put forth at this year's meeting. If there are those who do not receive copies of these minutes by email, I ask that they kindly share their email address with me as I continue to try to expand communication on matters of common concern.

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