

Lake Raponda Association

DRAFT Minutes of the August 10, 2019, Annual Meeting

Will Melton, the president, called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m. and thanked Beth and Bob Brody for hosting the meeting at their home at 294 Lake Raponda Road. There were 42 in attendance. Will began by asking everyone to say their names and where they lived on the lake.

Clerk's report. The clerk's report of the July 14 Stated Meeting was accepted with corrections by John Meyer.

Treasurer's report. Michaelanne Widness reported that as of today, the Association has \$15,372 in its bank account. Income for the past year has been \$2,600 (\$2,597.53), mainly in dues, with expenses of \$1,200 (\$1,216.48), for a net income figure of \$1,381.05. Reimbursements were mainly for refreshments for LRA meetings, dues to organizations, and meeting registrations. Those figures would indicate a gain of \$1,400, but the Association has yet to make its annual contributions to local organizations (\$300) and its share (\$2,100) of the Greeter program for 2019. **If you have not yet paid your dues, please do so.**

Will remarked that the Association is heavily dependent on dues for funds for its activities. Michaelanne and webmaster Alan Baker, working with the town's tax list, have discovered about 50 people, not members, who would qualify as such under the bylaws. Will added that next year we may wish to increase our definition of "membership" to include all those who live within the watershed of Lake Raponda. It is not a large area, but enlisting property owners as members would assist our efforts to protect the lands that water the lake

The trustees have decided, as in past years, to make donations of \$100 each to the following organizations: Deerfield Valley Rescue, Deerfield Valley Health Center, Pettee Memorial Library.

Old Home Week in Wilmington, dates to 1890. The 2020 dates are Jul 30 to Aug 2, 2020, with the parade on Saturday, Aug 1. The parade is a big event, closing route 9 for two hours. We are looking for a liaison person to work with the town committee, headed by Nicki Steele. Carol Grant spoke of the LRA 2010 parade entry, a float designed as a canoe and built in the Watsons' garage, which won second place. Nicki added that the historical display on Lake Raponda was also of interest. Betty Zito set up a video of the 2010 parade, with accompanying materials, for people to see. Will Melton noted that it was important to maintain a connection with the town, especially as we are now working with it on the Greeter Program and other initiatives. Beth Brody and Marti Watson are planning a meeting before Labor Day; they will send information via Signup Genius.

Fish and Game Committee. Randy Knaggs was absent and there was no report.

Roads and Property. Ben Schlatka reported that he will be meeting with Bill Hunt, the town road commissioner, next week. Email any concerns you may have to Ben.

Social and Welfare. Beth Brody talked about Signup Genius and how well it has worked as a tool for informing members of events and for determining numbers attending. If you are having problems using Signup Genius, talk to Beth.

There will be sign-ups for members for the Social Committee and for an Old Home Week committee.

Volunteering to host the meetings in 2020 were Annette Lieber (July) and David Dircks (August). We thank them.

Will Melton's acknowledgment of Alan Baker, our fabulous web master, was followed by a round of applause. Alan also serves as head librarian of the Little Library at the base of Stearns Road and as the organizer of the annual Hogback hike.

Watershed Assessment Ad Hoc Committee. The Windham Watershed District has received a small grant from the state to assess the watershed of Lake Raponda. The purpose of the grant is to assess the environmental status of Lake Raponda and determine how we can enhance further the natural character and biological health of our lake as new homes are added and the number of visitors steadily increases. Jack Widness, who is chairing our participation in the grant, reminded members that our lake is the perfect culture media for Eurasian milfoil, a most serious aquatic invasive species that is found in nearby Vermont lakes and can be imported on boats and the trailers.

This year we are gathering data

--Watershed Assessment questionnaire. If you have not already done so, please fill out and return the questionnaire. It was emailed to members at the beginning of the season, copies also available at this meeting. We want to know what members most value about the lake and what concerns they have about its future.

--iNaturalist. Volunteers have been trained in the use of the web platform iNaturalist to inventory the plants and animals of the watershed, and in charting the effectiveness of road and stream culverts in slowing harmful erosion and run-off into the lake.

--John Meyer reported on the morning's grant activity, a "paddle" with ten participants to survey culvert outlets to the lake. John Meyer found it fun and encouraged members to get involved.

--On Aug 23 at 3 pm Mike Clough, director of the Southern VT Natural History Museum, will be talking about the watershed at the town beach. Mike is very knowledgeable about the natural world; we encourage everyone to come. Bring children.

--On Aug 30, 9 am, there will be a naturalist-led paddle to train members in the identification of aquatic invasive species.

--Lake Wise evaluations of member properties to help control erosion and runoff are ongoing. Will noted that this summer 8 more homes were evaluated; 9 homes on the lake have received the Lake Wise award.

Holly Fortner, an environmental lawyer, said that it was important to preserve the resource of the lake so it will be available to all, not just to those who have the good fortune to own lakefront properties. She encouraged the Association to find interesting ways for non-residents to enjoy the lake

Lake Raponda Environmental Foundation (LREF). John Meyer updated us on this effort, reminding members that the foundation is in its organizational phase; it has received tax-free and charitable deduction status for all contributions. He has been talking to people, getting ideas on efforts we could be pushing for. We want to be prepared for “what if” eventualities that threaten the lake. Contact John if you have an interest in working on this project. Bob Brody remarked that local people use the lake a lot; they might be interested in having input, too, and in making a contribution.

Greeter Program. Bob Bois reported that the Greeter Program is now in its third year. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers Bob Brody, Tom Grant, and Craig Llewellyn, and two greeters paid for by a state grant, town appropriations, and Association contributions, the lake has coverage on weekends and several weekdays. Alan Taylor has been a greeter for 3 years; Joanne Fowler is new this year. Bob presented gift certificates from Bartleby’s as thanks to Alan and Joanne. Bob reiterated the need for volunteers for the Greeters Program. Training is not difficult: if any plant is found on a boat, the boat must be washed before it is allowed in the lake.

Will commented on the number of people involved in supporting the lake, suggesting a goal of 10 volunteer hours per person per year. Nicki Steele gave a shout out to the sixth-grade girls from the Dover school who volunteered to build the fishing line disposal container installed at the boat launch to honor the loon, known as “Fishline,” that became ensnared in discarded fishing line last summer.

Nominating Committee. Carol Bois reported for the committee (formed of Carol, Tom Grant, Craig Llewellyn), saying at the moment we have a cohesive slate of officers in place: Will Melton as president, Bob Bois as vice president, Michaelanne Widness as treasurer, Eliza Childs as clerk, and the current committee chairs, Beth and Bob Brody (Social and Welfare co-chairs), Randy Knaggs (Fish and Game), John Meyer (Water and Boating), Ben Schlatka (Roads and Property). The clerk would like some assistance. A committee is not just one person; all the committees would benefit from additional people being on them, and with an “understudy” working with each chair so as to succeed to the role when the incumbent steps down. A motion was made by Carol, seconded by Craig, passed by the membership to accept the slate of officers.

Water and Boating. Will Melton asked John Meyer, head of Water and Boating, to co-lead the discussion on boating on the lake. In his opening remarks, Will noted that half of the responses to the assessment survey listed motorboat activity on the lake as a major concern. In researching the issue, Will found a list of LRA boat safety and courtesy guidelines distributed in the 1970s, which have not been updated in spite of ever more powerful motors and larger towed equipment; he proposed forming a committee to update these guidelines.

In the past few years, at least one wave-surfing boat has appeared for 3 weeks each summer. John talked to these boaters this year; they told him no one had talked to them previously.

comments by others:

--How do people know about counterclockwise rotation? Other boaters tell them.

--Who sets the rules of the road? The state controls the lake, but we may have significant influence, if we choose to exercise it. Craig Llewellyn proposed people on the lake talk to boaters, share information, give them background.

--Holly Fortner suggested placing a few rules on a signboard at the boat launch. She offered to post a sign on their lake-facing property.

--Carol Bois suggested remanding the issue to committee.

--Meg Streeter contributed that it was posted that personal water craft (jet skis) were not allowed. Todd Watson noted that they are making "jet skis" that are longer, and because of added length they are considered a boat.

--Debbie Steckler reminded members that swimmers often feel that boats make it dangerous to swim in the lake.

--How much authority does LRA have? It's a complicated process for a lake to institute restrictions, but it can be done. Because such a process can involve a petition to the state legislature, our goal should be to work together as a community to achieve a better balance in sharing the lake.

--Will proposed developing recommendations with increased communications about sharing the lake courteously and thoughtfully. He has spoken to John Meyer, Randy Knaggs, and Jocelyn Merrick about enlarging John's committee to review the issues and to make recommendations at the July 2020 stated meeting, with a final vote scheduled for the August annual meeting. Todd Watson also volunteered to serve.

Other issues, old and new

--Burned-down house. Will has written the town health and zoning officer about our concerns about the rubble.

--Light pollution. Will directed members to a website, Darksky.org, for information on light pollution. Read in particular the section "My Neighbor's Lighting."

--Ben shared that recently he saw a large female bear with cubs on W. Lake Road. Vinny and Betty Zito had a bear in their garden on Stearns Road. Be alert with your pets. Do not compost food scraps unless the container is bear-proof.

--Will presented a gift to Beth and Bob Brody from their committee colleagues in thanks for hosting our meeting. Traditionally the Association has also presented a gift. This year we are instead We instituted a new tradition: to make a gift to the local charity selected by our hosts. Bob and Beth will be the first so honored. Marti Watson and Kathy Jones were thanked for their help in preparing for the meeting and meal.

--Lake Raponda history books on sale for \$15. Contact Carol Grant.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm

Respectfully submitted
Eliza Childs, Clerk
[draft of 8/12/19]

2020 meeting dates

Sunday, July 12, Annette Lieber, Island Road

Saturday, August 8, David and Donna Dircks, 426 Lake Raponda Road

NOTE: Moosestock IV happens on August 24, at Holly at Joe Fortner's, 220 Lake Raponda Road, 7 pm. Come by water or road.