



**SLPID Meeting Minutes
Malta Town Hall
June 15, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.**

Call to Order: Chair Kathy Simmonds, 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call Commissioners present: Simmonds, Borisenok, Scalici, Baker, Mazzotti.

Staff present: Lonnie Van Buren Harvesting, Cristina Connolly Lake District Administrator, Dean Long Consultant

PRESENTATIONS:

Secretary Report (SLPID Chair)

***Present May and June 1, 2023, minutes.**

No Comments.

Motion to accept May 2023 minutes.

First: Baker Second: Simmonds All Commissioners present voted: YEAH

Motion to accept June 1, 2023, minutes.

First: Mazzotti Second: Simmonds All Commissioners present voted: YEAH

Treasurer report (Commissioner Mazzotti)

Financial Report: Year-to-date income is \$465,207.57. Total cash is \$555,489.59, of which \$485,576.07 is in the checking, and the balance is in two certificates of deposits. Assets as of the end of May are \$1,270,870.85.

Discussion: Commissioner Scalici asked how long the two certificates of deposits are for. They are for six months.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report

First: Baker Second: Borisenok All Commissioners present voted: YEAH

Motion to accept the paid bills. Invoices were emailed to the commissioners.

First: Simmonds Second: Mazzotti All Commissioners present voted: YEAH.

***Lake Administrator Report: (Cristina Connolly)**

Discussion: Cristina passed around photos from a property owner, James Koval, who lives on Shore Avenue. Mr. Koval brought photos of his property's shoreline. Photos show the erosion over the years of his property and the plants from the "Buffer in a Bag" planted to help prevent more erosion.

Cristina reported that the Lake Steward program is one extreme to the other—too many bad weather days and then great weather days bringing many boaters. Included this year are angler and walk-up surveys in the data.

Cristina has been concentrating with the stewards on approaching the public and talking to people at the launch about aquatic invasive species spread and prevention.

South Shore Marina has been quiet. They are doing limited launches this year, with primarily the same people launching. It is better time spent having a Lake Steward presence at the City Waterfront Park.

Many more boats are requesting washes early on and several repeat washes, even though they only launch at Saratoga. Cristina commented that is proof the message and program are working. The Lake Stewards strongly suggest, even to only Saratoga Lake users, that they can still stop the spread within this lake by washing. People are patient and stop for inspections. Fragments of curly-leaf pondweed are coming through, with no complaints from boaters about weeds yet.

Fishing tournament schedules are Saturdays out of the State launch, Tuesdays from Lees, and Thursday evenings at the South Shore. When available, a steward is at the tournaments.

The stormwater meeting minutes were drafted and sent to the SLPID commissioners.

The bottom line is that all four municipalities have agreed to begin with a uniform set of guidelines on best management practices for stormwater and erosion control. This will be in a packet of information and a digital version for anyone within the District inquiring about a project or applying for a permit. The towns would pass these out and strongly suggest that the property owner or contractor contact SLPID for more information.

This information is widely available through the MS4 program, the Vegetative Buffer Book, and other materials everyone uses. We need to organize it and brand it. Tracey will put the information together in a Google Doc for all the planners to make the process go along quicker and get down to business without holding meetings. She will have that together by the end of June.

Once that is completed, we will assess where we are with time and the money left; if allowable, work on a couple of YouTube informational videos for all municipalities, including SLPID, on their

websites. Then SLPID can work off that material and further promote the “Take the Pledge” and property assessments.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked if people do not follow the guidelines, then what. Cristina said property owners will be strongly encouraged to follow the guidelines. A lot of education and outreach first is the message from planners.

Cristina continued that the message from the planners is that the first step should be outreach and educating people on the importance of best management practices to protect the lake and why. The planners agreed that you cannot expect the public to understand why new regulations are being adopted without educating them on it first. This is what we are hearing from the towns.

Cristina said this is a positive step forward and believes education and outreach are imperative to create a positive change in community engagement and the lake’s health.

SLPID has already been on that path this year, with dates scheduled for two HOA meetings, one at Riley Cove and the other at Commissioner Scalici’s at Lake Side Acres on July 1.

We have two educational paddles planned with Saratoga Plan, DEC, and Lake Champlain Basin for June 22 and July 10. There is the June 25th event at Browns Beach. Cristina will be with the County table at the fair in July for a few days representing SLPID and, previously mentioned, the Expo in September at the State Park.

Lake Stewards will provide door-to-door information for property owners as time allows.

Commissioner Borisenok said it would be good to put a little color around how the stormwater meeting went. All the planners attended and went around the room. Lindsay with Stillwater spoke first, and everyone opposed the draft for a whole list of reasons. First, they already have things in place with no one to police them.

Commissioner Scalici commented, and that’s the problem, no enforcement.

Commissioner Borisenok said the thresholds needed to be bigger. Basically, there was no support for the draft. Then you have duplication with other groups, County Soil and Water and Storm Water.

Dean Long said – yes, that’s their job if the property owner calls them first.

Commissioner Borisenok said correct. The regular homeowner doesn’t even know that County Soil and Water exists.

Commissioner Borisenok said he thought, at least, they would go for the revised plan. If they don’t go for it, let’s try to get a win, this is a win. All we do is spin our wheels and not go anywhere.

Commissioner Mazzotti said he read the minutes, and, unfortunately, they can't come up with some basic understanding. Guidelines are great, but people won't follow them.

Commissioner Borisenok said the first step, let's get everyone comfortable with what was agreed upon. It is a minor miracle to get the four municipalities to agree, and if you were there, you could read the room. The town of Saratoga does not even have a professional planner or reason to justify one. We could have ended up with zero. We at least have something. Let everyone get comfortable and move from there.

Commissioner Mazzotti said education, outreach, and guidelines are all great stuff. Look, ten years down the road, we will have more issues. Maybe look at Blue Lakes and irrigation. Maybe municipalities will step up for that.

Cristina said we can't shove it down their throats, or we won't get anywhere. We must do what we can collectively and do the best we can. We now have a supportive SLPID board for education, outreach, and lake quality. The towns and city support SLPID as much as possible and refer property owners to SLPID. They agreed it is a good idea to send any property owner inquiry or permit to SLPID for more information and work together closer to get people to understand there is a SLPID for anything lake related.

Commissioner Baker asked, isn't DEC one of our enforcers? Cristina said no, not for under one acre.

Dean said below the mean high-water level.

Cristina said if there were local regulations regardless of below or above the mean high-water level, local law trumps DEC.

Commissioner Mazzotti said the SLPID legislation says to manage, control and supervise the lake. Yet, the supervisors can vote us out if they don't like what we do.

Commissioner Borisenok said that is a valid point; you can do certain things, and you are voted out the door when people are unhappy. There are all kinds of dynamics.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked Dean, what do you think of Blue Lakes?

Dean said whether or not we need to do that to change nutrient levels later in the year would be part of a subsequent analysis. Whether or not aeration is the best approach or alum or better ways to figure it out, we would need to figure it out. There are means out there to decrease the internal load. It is under our purview and not DEC's purview.

Commissioner Simmonds said to let Cristina finish her report first; maybe we will hear more information.

Cristina continued that once all the stormwater guidelines are together, SLPID can push "Take the Pledge" property assessments and go from there with closer collaboration with the municipalities and planners.

A "Lake Protector" flyer for volunteers has been posted once and received some interest, and we will build on that as time allows.

FACEBOOK -for the last 28 days, about 2000 people saw the SLPID posts, and about 400 people engaged with the posts, with twelve new followers. Cristina has been aiming for at least 2-3 new posts weekly, posting something every few days.

Currently, no complaints of weeds. Around the Memorial weekend, as the weather warmed up, filamentous algae mixed in with the cottonwood and pollen, scaring people that it was a HAB, and all the boat traffic and significant wave action cut up the pond weed floating around.

Searching for a boat, South Shore has a rental, 22-foot Bennington with a Yamaha 115, no trailer, asking \$16,000. A single-axle trailer will cost another \$3,000. It is nice, but not exactly what we need. She wants to wait and see what else comes up. The marina is still using this boat as a rental.

Commissioner Baker said rentals do get beat up fast.

At the last meeting, seeking an opinion on the lake's quality and moving forward was discussed. Cristina has been in contact with SUNY Oneonta, inquiring if there are students who would want to do their Master's thesis on Saratoga Lake or other research work along with SLPID.

Dean and Dan Buckley gave Cristina a few suggestions of ecologists and limnologists to reach out to. She spoke with Dave Matthews from Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI). They are a group of scientists that evaluate lake management actions, water quality modeling, monitoring, underwater optics, data analysis, etc. are also the lab that the CSLAP samples go to and a certified HAB testing lab.

Dave will review the data and reports SLPID has and write up a proposal with recommendations. He advised me to hold off on further water testing for now besides CSLAP.

As far as HAB testing with UFI, there are three steps to one sample. The first is to determine how many cyanobacteria there are, and if the value is high, then proceed to the second step, under the microscope, to evaluate it. The third step is to count the cyanobacteria concentration. If all three were done with one sample, the cost would be around \$300.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked how quick the turnaround is.

Cristina said a few days to one week. If it looks like a HAB or questionable, the protocol is to avoid it. Typically, large HABS have been at the end of the season when there is less recreational activity on the lake; the mantra is to avoid it, whether it is known as microcystic or not, and report it. Going by previous years, I would say 1-3 samples we could do if it is a typical year; you can't predict.

Cristina said then there is the BloomTex microscope that Dean discussed. That costs \$3,550 plus shipping and, after that, a \$1500 yearly subscription. The microscope is quick at determining what type of cyanobacteria exists. The one price is for as many samples as possible, but it will not identify if they produce toxins. So, it is limited.

Her recommendation, for now, is not to purchase the microscope at this time. Have HAB bottles on hand. She can grab a sample and mail it to the lab at the \$300 cost if there is a significant bloom. The \$3500 may be more beneficial to save the dollars to hire UFI or save for something else with lake quality and, in the meantime, see what UFI comes up with. The price of the microscope may go down, or alternatives may come up that are less expensive. \$300 for a sample that will tell us everything is very reasonable and practical.

Email and phone calls were made to Solitude Lake management about what to do with the harvesting BioBase data. We are still waiting to hear back. It appears there is no one within the organization to handle it.

Cristina also contacted Rick, who does the mapping for SLPID and forwarded him the BioBase info to see what he can do with the stored data. He was unsure on the phone; the link had been down for the past few days as they experienced an IT security breach.

The Fish Creek water chestnut pull with Capital Mohawk PRISM is planned for August 1 and July 27.

Water Quality Thermistor Profile (Dean Long)

Dean said he brought a copy for everyone of a confusing drawing showing yellow with black dots of the SLPID 5-MPH zone buoys. What they delineate and show is the 5-MPH zone by the town and city. 1200 feet on either side of the 9p bridge and an intermediate buoy to remind people of what they should be doing. This also shows the 200 ft 5-MPH zone, an NYS Park recreational navigation 5-MPH zone set in the state statute. This is the arrangement of buoys and zones, etc. I just wanted everyone to have it because it ends up being confusing. The other thing I gave everyone is the [2022 Land to Lakes Executive Summary](#) which identified issues and things that SLPID agreed to think about and stay on top of etc. it is a good background on what we are doing next, like the HABS, water chestnuts, Weedoo, etc. all those efforts and things to

keep track of are somewhat covered in this. Of course, there are another 100-odd pages of the entire plan.

Commissioner Simmonds pointed out that the whole document is on the website.

Dean continued by saying we have been trying to do things we are trying to work through and check off, so we need to be diligent with that.

The struggle for stormwater rules began after Carrie Woerner had called, advocating for SLPID to get complete control over the lake with zoning and subdivision rules. That is where we began, and the towns went crazy when they thought SLPID would tell them what to do and have greater control. Then we talked to the town and straightened it out with the levels of confusion. That is where it all started, and basically, a grant was available, awarded and administered by Malta last fall.

Throughout these discussions, it has been absolutely clear that we were going to have a rule that covered under 1-acre lots with lake protection wide starting a 1000 sq. ft. from what the town of Saratoga said. Would I like 500? Yes, that would be better. The process went on, and unfortunately, because we were advocating for the lake and trying to fix the problems as the communities would bring them up, the communities were not into fixing the problems. They are afraid of the workload. The towns gave us all of their permits for 2022. Malta had thirteen, Stillwater a total of twelve, with six in Stillwater involved in building renovations. Seven in Malta were building and renovations. We had yet to learn of the size of the structure or if the proposed 1000 sq ft. fit within the threshold, but they were all deathly afraid of work and consummate bureaucrats as far as trying to avoid work. Every time we tried to solve a problem for them, they would not listen and were afraid of work and doing something positive for the lake. We are left where we are left, and guidelines are something we need to make work. We need to be creative and think, if someone does a good project, will we give them a \$500 reward? Are we going to say we will pay for it or give them something back?

Commissioner Mazzotti commented that you want to give them something to do the right thing. The definition of a guideline is a rule.

Commissioner Scalici asked are you saying that with building permits, they don't have to specify how big?

Dean responded that they did not give us that number, and again we are only talking about six or seven permits in the two biggest towns. Granted, they may have some work elsewhere, do not want further work, and just spun themselves and us in the circle. They kept saying they have to be engineered plans. They don't have to be because engineered plans don't work on the shoreline. That is why we were putting out simple things, good grass, good turf, landscape solutions, etc. They are deathly afraid of work or more workload.

Commissioner Borisenok said we can sit here and talk about it over and over.

Commissioner Simmonds, it is what it is.

Commissioner Borisenok said we need a win and a bit of credibility. Because if we start to come up with another crazy idea here, they are going to say, here comes SLPID with another crazy idea, and Dean, the reality is we don't live in a vacuum. They don't want it. Lindsay Buck started, and everyone else went around the room. Ultimately, if we come up with guidelines for every building permit or project on their radar, we have guidelines and direction, and at least we have something going. Dustin pushed back with how do you know what properties are doing as we have a 200-mile watershed. How do we know if we are even making a difference?

Dean said that is why I gave you a copy of the Watershed Plan. The important part to think about is how we push it.

Commissioner Simmonds said, first, we put the guidelines in place, give the towns some time to settle in, and that they are not obtrusive as they think, and a year from now maybe not that big of a deal, and what was proposed is not that obtrusive.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked whether the municipalities want SLPID.

Cristina said very much so. The towns look to SLPID as the municipality of the lake, water quality, and all the programs and issues.

Commissioner Borisenok said this is a bigger discussion. The towns have holes with what they cover, and nothing in the towns cover the lake and the water itself; they are land use. SLPID is the actual water and looks after the lake.

Cristina said we need to focus moving forward on lake quality issues, have more data on the lake and people involved.

Commissioner Mazzotti said that with all of this and 200-plus stormwater management if we don't address that as a whole.

Commissioner Borisenok said that is for MS4 stormwater management.

Dean said that one of the things we will have to do is give awards for pretty statues that may get more cooperation and enthusiasm. When people follow the rules, provide a blue heron carving, which people love.

Commissioner Mazzotti said we should reward people for doing what is right.

Cristina said SLPID has support from the towns and now the commissioners for what we should do. We must push the information to the properties; one person starts, and their neighbors will follow.

Dean said when people see their neighbors are doing this or that, they want it.

Dean continued that the thermistors are fully deployed and in place now. We will pull them again in July because the data gets too unwieldy with a full summer's worth.

Dean will do a report showing what happened over the winter. There was a period in November where the 3–5-meter depth went to zero, which could happen in the summer but not at that time of year, so it is something he will need to figure out.

Weed Harvesting (Lonnie)

Discussion: Lonnie began by saying the cutting season started on May 1 with two employees. The harvesters went in the water on May 17. The 5-MPH and water testing buoys are in. No new anchors this year, but we have had problems with Saratoga Rowing Association moving our buoys for regattas. There is nothing we can do.

Commissioner Simmonds asked whether we need to move it before they do.

Lonnie said it is a racecourse all underwater with underwater cables to move. That is a big monstrous job. Just accept it. Just in the wrong spot.

Lonnie said our buoys were lost.

Cristina said one buoy had been found. Eric is away right now. When he returns, he will ask his team and try to find the other. Next year, they will give SLPID advance notice so she can pick the buoys up immediately before they have time to disappear.

Lonnie said he did have to order parts in early spring, so new bearings and seals were rebuilt everything is working out well.

The fire extinguishers have been replaced by vandalism last year. I did invest in new tools this year a 20-ton press, a large vice welding cart, and a cordless grinder. We are good with tools.

I also talked to Steve (Alpha Boats). An interesting fact, we paid \$268,000 for a new one (harvester) he is claiming about \$400,000 for a new one now.

We have had some problems with people using the ramp at Fitch Road. I have the conveyor parked there now.

Old business: None.

New business: 2024 Draft Budget discussion:

BioBase - we hope to have an answer soon on what to do with the data and if there is a need for continued use.

Shoreline survey map – remove.

Education - bring back up to \$6000.

Law enforcement – commissioner Simmonds said she is happy to see them out on the lake.

Commissioner Borisenok asked why we needed to pay them.

Commissioner Mazzotti said they could only budget so much time, and this would be for overtime to keep them on the lake longer and for holidays when needed most.

Commissioner Borisenok said that on Memorial weekend, they were all out at the same time at the same spot right in front of 550. We don't need three guys on a boat sitting. We don't need Park Police, Encon, and the Sheriff at the same time parked in the same spot.

Commissioner Scalici said I understand why they are at the bridge. However, there are problems at the south end too.

Cristina said she was told that Marine Patrol is very understaffed. The other boat is at Sacandaga Lake, and one jet ski is down. Last year they did not use the budgeted money at all. Sergeant Gurney is looking at using the money on overtime for the holiday weekend and writing something up this year.

Commissioner Borisenok said to tell them don't do Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday when no one is on the lake to save money.

Cristina said that she would relay that message and that they are not solely Marine Patrol, and if there is an emergency on the roads or something comes up more critical, that is their priority.

Commissioner Scalici asked if they have a dedicated marine patrol.

Cristina said yes. However, those same Deputies are also road patrols and anything else that is needed.

Commissioner Simmonds instructed Cristina to leave the law enforcement line item until she spoke to them further.

Commissioner Baker said to tell them we don't want you here on Monday and Tuesday.

Riley Cove – keep.

Commissioner Scalici said to Cristina when you come to our HOA meeting, let's float the idea of using our ramp.

Lonnie said that the one gravel ramp, we have used it before with smaller equipment, and I spoke with someone last year. The biggest problem is that it could be used, and you will have nonstop truck traffic offloading the weeds.

Commissioner Scalici said he thought they just needed the ramp to launch.

Lonnie said It could be used, but the docks are inside, and with heavy wind, there is not much room to maneuver, so it's not the best situation. The boats and jet skis there would have to be removed.

Commissioner Simmonds continued with the budget line items.

Boat maintenance - last year \$14,000 was in boat maintenance.

Cristina said previous years, vehicle and boat repair were combined. She suggested separating the two to easily look back on what was spent.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked whether we get fuel from the municipalities. Yes, the town of Malta.

Fuel - commissioner Simmonds asked if we are comfortable with fuel at \$15,000 next year.

Commissioners replied, yes.

Insurance - commissioner Simmonds said all of her insurance had gone up significantly.

Cristina said she is securing quotes for insurance and payroll taxes. These are placeholders for now.

Advertising and Promotional - are for advertising meetings and mailing notices for herbicide treatments.

Commissioner Borisenok suggested changing the name to advertising.

Commissioner Simmonds said we could also use it to promote education.

Commissioner Borisenok said yes, for some promotion, we are spending money on other things, and we need to be mission critical and spend money on promoting and free PR. We need to get it out there that SLPID is the agency expert go-to for comments and visibility.

Cristina said promoting education was coming out of the education budget.

Audit – commissioner Simmonds said next year is the three-year mark and to put \$5000 back in.

Cristina asked whether the commissioners would like an AUP or an AUDIT next year.

Commissioner Mazzotti said an AUP is enough.

Office expense – commissioner Simmonds asked Cristina if we are getting a projector and equipment for next Sunday. Yes.

Independent contractors – Commissioner Simmonds asked Is everyone ok with \$40,000? Should Mapping go under independent contractors?

Cristina said we separated that last year to quickly look back to see how much in mapping is spent. In 2021 it was over \$2,000. The \$4,000 was extra for BioBase mapping this year.

Commissioner Baker said we were \$20,000 in previous years; do we need to have \$40,000 with independent contractors?

Dean said what had happened before was that dollars were being borrowed from other line items.

Cristina asked if they would like to bring down the independent contractor line item and add more in lake quality for herbicide treatments.

Commissioner Simmonds said to bump up lake quality, taking dollars out of independent contractors.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked whether we are looking into other independent contractors.

Cristina said she did request a quote from Upstate Freshwater Institute.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked do they do more than water testing analysis. Yes, much more.

Commissioner Mazzotti said to keep independent contractors the same then.

Legal fees- commissioner Simmonds said to keep.

Commissioner Borisenok asked what reasons we have used the lawyer.

Cristina said that a few years ago, the attorney was coming to meetings and writing letters to SLPID commissioners, not following SLPID being a government agency, the legislation, their role, or the role of employees vs. contactor. Since then, just a few questions here and there.

Commissioner Borisenok commented that \$4000 should be plenty.

Dean said that she would end up looking into Fitch Road.

Commissioner Borisenok said no, use the town of Saratoga attorney.

Bookkeeping - commissioner Simmonds said last year, \$33,500 for bookkeeping because the old CPA was under that line item, and then it dropped to \$9,950.

Harvester employee wages – change to \$110,000. We did go over in 2022, so we should allocate \$110,000.

Lake Stewards – commissioner Simmonds asked Cristina if that was good.

Cristina responded that there is a good handle on the program and the schedule being organized. Yes, \$40,000 is safe.

Weather station – commissioner Scalici asked why we are using it.

Cristina asked what do you want to do. Commissioners all agreed to remove it from the line item and try to sell it.

Commissioner Simmonds said everything else was good.

Cristina said this draft is keeping the budget under \$462,000, and any leftover goes into surplus for savings and emergency expenses.

Commissioner Borisenok said yes, mission-critical, so we build a surplus to have money to address an emergency.

Commissioner Simmonds said we had a large surplus and purchased a new harvester, conveyor, and two trucks for the weed harvesting department, bringing it way down. Now we are building it back up. \$16,000 is in the surplus for board-designated funds for 2023.

Dean said it has always been \$60,000 for emergency AIS response.

Commissioner Simmonds motioned to set the next SLPID regular meeting on July 20, from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Malta town hall.

First: Simmonds Second: Mazzotti All Commissioners present voted: YEAH.

Commissioner Simmonds made a Motion to suspend the meeting at 4:12 p.m. to go into executive session to discuss a legal matter.

First: Simmonds Second: Scalici All Commissioners present voted: YEAH

Commissioner Simmonds motioned to reenter the public meeting and adjourn the public meeting at 3:50 p.m.

First: Simmonds Second: Mazzotti All Commissioners present voted: YEAH.