



**SLPID Meeting Minutes
Malta Town Hall
August 17, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.**

Call to Order: Chair Kathy Simmonds, 3:06 p.m.

Roll Call Commissioners present: Simmonds (via Zoom), Scalici, Baker, Mazzotti.

Excused: Borisenok

Staff present: Cristina Connolly, Lake District Administrator.

Excused: Lonnie Van Buren, Harvesting

Public present: Hub Miller, John Cashin

Hub Miller -Last time I was here, I talked about working on the strategic plan. I was really blunt, saying that I have never been involved in a volunteer organization. I learned how hard it is to do this and do something like what we are undertaking with our strategic plan, trying to figure out where we are going as an organization and sorting out our role and how it relates to SLPID. The good news is that we did finish the plan, and I believe Cristina passed that on to the board. We had good communication, and we are adamant about finding a way for us to really work together. The thought is to sit down and meet over the strategic plan. It is detailed and based a lot on SLPID and interviewed 15 -16 stakeholders on the lake. These are people who run businesses, are members of our organization, and responded to our survey. We did a good job at defining our priorities; the highest among them is that it has to be a partnership with SLPID.

Cristina is always so busy, especially this time of year; it is very clear I don't know how she does it, but at some point, we will sit down to discuss this. I studied her yearly proposed plan and the Land to Lakes Perspective assessment. I know that each year, you pick the things from your yearly plan, and considering that you can only do so much at once, you have a good understanding of what I am saying and your priorities, and we look forward to that meeting.

John Cashin- I am also a member of the SLA group.

Hub Miller- One of the things you will see on that plan is that during COVID, we used to have a number of functioning committees, and one is outreach. John is the chair of the outreach committee to communicate with SLPID and the towns and is an important person in this partnership.

PRESENTATIONS:

Secretary Report (SLPID Chair)

***Present July 20, 2023, meeting minutes.**

Discussion: No Comments.

Motion to accept July 20, 2023, minutes.

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

Treasurer report (Commissioner Mazzotti)

***Present July 2023 Financial Report:** Year-to-date income is \$465,224.59. Which includes \$462,154.40 from the tax levies, \$3,000.00 from the Global Foundries grant, and \$90.19 from interest income. Year-to-date expenses total \$170,626.09. The remaining budget for expenses is \$275,573.90. This includes \$474,298.72 in the bank accounts, two certificates of deposits, and the checking account. Additionally, the budgeted surplus for the year is \$16,320.61.

Discussion: None

Motion to accept the July 2023 Treasurer's Report

First: Scalici Second: Baker All Commissioners present voted: YEAH.

Motion to accept the July 2023 paid bills. Invoices were emailed to the commissioners.

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

Weed Harvesting (Cristina on behalf of Lonnie)

Discussion: The year-to-date loads are 263, which is lower than in previous years. They are primarily healthy, native weeds.

Today, one truck was serviced with four new tires. Two harvesters had new fuel tanks placed. The crew is cutting and collecting differently than what you have seen this year, with the machines operating in tandem through the zones to work together and collect any loose weeds. This is at the request to prevent as many weeds as possible from floating away from the harvester. There has been positive public comment on this. However, It is hard to judge if it is working as there are fewer weeds to cut. It is a very strange year overall with the weather.

Commissioner Mazzotti, any comments on HABs?

Cristina said yes, in her report.

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

Discussion: The Lake Steward program has not had many working hours this year with the weather, and very few boats on bad weather days. Since the track began, nice weather days have been quiet. Cristina said she has noticed many people are taking their boats out early with increasing boat washes. Her impressions have been people are more comfortable and beginning to participate in other activities besides boating, such as social events and travel after COVID.

She conducted both the moving boat count on Sunday, July 23, and the standing boat count was completed. However, the numbers still need to be compiled. At first glance, the number of boats appears consistent.

Following up on the last meeting on the heavy rainstorms and complaints of clogged culverts and streams. The new DOT engineer for the Saratoga Lake area called and met Cristina at the lake. DOT surveyed their lands on the lake, widened swales, added new vegetation, and checked all culverts and streams. Everything was in good working order, and nothing was clogged. There were no signs of illegal tree cutting, trees in culverts, or blaming uphill construction or tree cutting for stormwater.

The engineer relayed many issues with properties claiming DOT land, adding stone and drainage pipes to culverts, using and building on DOT land, and right of ways on the lakeside. Standing with him, he pointed out several encroachments on DOT land lakeside.

You can see clearly that when heavy rain comes down, much of the stormwater runoff is from individual properties with driveways, walkways, and no vegetation on the property to capture the water. It runs and washes everything into 9p, the lake, or neighboring properties.

This brings us to finishing up the Stormwater standards. We hope to have them wrapped up soon with approvals from the planners and Supervisors. Today, a few comments came in that the illustrations and explanations are good. One commented that as a layperson, it may still be overwhelming to calculate the depth and size of a rain garden, but hopefully, that is when they will reach out for assistance and recommendations. Once finalized, the digital materials can be distributed on municipality, county, and SLPID websites. It would be a part of the SLPID "Take the Pledge" and property analysis programs. Hard copies will be available in the municipality offices, at any SLPID educational and tabling events, and go to all the HOAs around the lake, real estate offices, social media, press releases, etc. The comments that came back so far are all good. Much work is still needed, but we are on the home stretch with everyone in agreement.

At the last meeting, it was mentioned that Solitude was contacted to come for half a day to survey the weed beds where milfoil was seen and help determine if we should proceed with a spot treatment next year. They are too busy and understaffed and suggested I contact Ezra at Adirondack Research. Ezra gave a proposal of \$16,000. Some of the proposal was redundant to what Larry does with his survey. We can revisit using Adirondack Research for the lake survey next year. Larry will be conducting his survey at some point within the next few weeks.

On Monday, SLPID purchased a new boat; I have used it every day this week. There is a vast difference between the ease and speed of work on the lake and safety. It is easy and quick to go along and monitor lake quality and algae.

Yesterday, Cristina asked Dean to come up. They went out and were able to go along and survey the entire lake. The clarity was excellent. Most of the vegetation in the lake is healthy, native plants. There is a moderate bed of milfoil along the east shore, south of Snake Hill, which was expected. The weed bed is measurable enough for treatment. Dean noted and mapped it to send to Solitude to give a proposal.

While out, Dean mentioned with the new boat, an underwater camera would be a good idea to make it easier for her to monitor the plants and help to see underwater. If something is seen as strange or unidentifiable, she can snap a photo and send it to Larry. The cost for a simple underwater go-pro is approximately \$400 and goes higher the more advanced you go. Cristina said that it was on her list to investigate. Commissioners replied that it sounded like a perfect idea.

Dean had a copy of the 1999 Saratoga Lake map and showed how it is outdated and could be updated with the current weed beds, add the Take the Pledge, some property owner guidance, and direct people to the website. The sale of the maps would pay the cost back. Cristina asked Sarah to investigate pricing with vendors that she works with.

The new boat also makes it easy to run around and survey for any algae. Sarah made the HAB alert link on the website active. The link reads- *Currently, there are no known HABs on Saratoga Lake*. This can be updated simply if there is a HAB that day and a location for people to view.

Cristina is looking forward to resuming floating classrooms next season. Capital Mohawk Prism and the Lake Champlain Basin have a few ideas on education and collaboration.

Commissioner Scalici asked if the SLPID name was on the boat.

Cristina replied, no, not yet; she needs to get pricing. She did remember that she has two waterproof signs with the SLPID logo that she measured and will fit temporarily. We do have 15 life jackets, flares, a flag, anchor, and she needs to purchase zip ties for the signs, a first aid kit, and a patch kit.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked if it was in good working order.

Cristina said yes, it is a strong 115 Yamaha, with 532 hours on it. It was serviced, tuned up, and the water pumps were redone this summer.

The Weedoo came for two full days of work, pulling water chestnuts. Dustin with County Water and Soil took before and after drone photos to map, and Cristina took close-up images to compare previous years. There has been a significant decrease in past years. Assessing them

yesterday, there were very few to be hand-pulled. She has hand-pulling on the agenda for next week to conquer.

This morning, Dean and Cristina had a web meeting with Ezra at Adirondack Research, as they are the experts in bio base data for the state. The Lowrance units SLPID purchased in 2019 were with the idea to GPS the harvesting machines, where they work, and how much they perform.

Ezra said these Lowrance units have significant limitations on a harvester and that a simple GPS unit would work better for that.

Typically, these units and data we are collecting are used to manage invasives such as milfoil and water chestnuts on a boat and not on harvesters. SLPID has done an excellent job managing the invasive species that Saratoga Lake is primarily native plants.

We asked Ezra his thoughts on what to do with the past few years' data, whether it can be helpful in other ways to manage and make decisions on harvester usage and plant density, and if we should continue using the equipment and acquiring data.

Ezra commented that it is not a lost effort now that we have the equipment and a few years of data. Now that we have a boat, we can take one unit off a harvester, place it on the boat, and buy two less expensive units for around \$600 each, so all three harvesters have one to show where they are going. Before harvesting, go out and map the weed bed locations with the pontoon boat; then, after the sections are harvested, go back out with the boat again to map the changes.

Doing this will streamline the data and show the efforts of where exactly the harvesters are cutting. The data can be compared to Larry's vegetation assessment and the noted truckloads to give a refined way of documenting the native plant beds.

Having this info can help to modify the current harvesting practices and determine if specific areas need to be cut or not, modifying the harvesting program for efficiency. With new harvesters running about \$400,000 and primarily native plants in the lake, the data will help to make future decisions on purchases and how much harvesting is needed.

Commissioner Mazzotti said that we have very little invasives compared to other lakes.

Ezra will give us an hourly rate to meet with more ideas on maximizing the use of the bio base equipment and data we have. At the next board meeting, there will be more information for the commissioners to decide on moving forward with this.

Commissioner Mazzotti said we were looking for another opinion and waiting to hear back from someone else.

Cristina said yes, that is for Upstate Freshwater Institute for a proposal on an assessment and recommendations for Saratoga Lake water quality and if further water testing is needed. The

owner said they have priorities until mid-August or so, and then he will have time to review everything.

Cristina continued that the algae bloom article was well received. Many positive comments, comments from other lakes who said it was well written and good information. It was in the newspapers, for sure, the Saratogian and Saratoga Today, and then we had the small plug on channel six news. People have been calling SLPID to get a better understanding and less panic mode.

Commissioner Scalici said that with all the rain, Lonnie said he was having a problem dumping weeds.

Cristina said yes, it was for two days, and it was fine.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked what was going on at the north end with the mini marinas by Fitch Road and the town.

Cristina said that the last time she spoke with Ian, he was concerned and looking into it.

Commissioner Mazzotti said we need to push them and push some dock regulations.

Cristina said dock discussions do come up, and it is up to the town and municipalities to agree. This week, one of the Supervisors reached out to her with questions and requested dock information to review and for her to inform the other supervisors.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked what was going on with the driveway collapse.

Cristina said it appears that they are fixing it.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked if they were cited.

Cristina said she did not think so; there is no reason to cite them, and no permit is needed. It is a private driveway.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked if there was something the town could do to control the number of cars.

Cristina replied no, it is private property and the town's department.

Commissioner Mazzotti said if the towns could at least enforce and look into this, and the docks and boats and enforce dock rentals. Isn't it considered a marina with too many boats?

Cristina said a commercial business, and currently, it is up to the town to cite them if they are in violation.

Commissioner Mazzotti said can we push them? We have to do something because this is crazy with all the docks.

Cristina said that there are a lot of discussions yet to be had- if it is a problem, needed, or wanted. The supervisors and the mayor would need to agree if it was to become lake-wide.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked are you going to go and talk to the town officials?

Cristina said yes, I do regularly. There has been an off-and-on discussion, and recently, a supervisor requested information for her to mention this to the others.

Commissioner Mazzotti asked if, next month, can we get a report.

Cristina said, of course, she will give an update if there is one. Two months ago, commissioners decided on no more dock discussion for now and to finish the stormwater materials, regroup then go from there.

Commissioner Mazzotti said well, isn't the stormwater all complete?

Cristina said no, we are in the final stage of receiving comments and editing the document. There is still work to be completed. Dock discussions are still out there, and it is something that takes time. There is a lot to talk about with it, but first, she needs to speak with each and see if there is serious interest and a need.

Commissioner Mazzotti said well, next month, can we get a report on following up with this?

Cristina said yes.

Commissioner Mazzotti said we could get the town attorneys to send a cease-and-desist letter to these people with mini marinas.

Cristina said again, not SLPID's decision. It is the town's business with the details and the decision on what to do.

New Business: None

Old Business:

Discussion: SLPID 2024 draft budget

Commissioner Simmonds made a Motion to suspend the meeting at 3:41 p.m. to go into executive session to discuss a legal matter.

First: Baker

Second: Scalici

All Commissioners present voted: YEAH.

Hub Miller then said, before you go into executive session, I would like to discuss the issue of the towns enforcing things and point to the capacity of Gil and others. I would be happy to, as SLA, encourage the town and its capacity to enforce items on Saratoga Lake, and I have noticed this around the lake. I think the town of Saratoga is looking at expanding their area in planning, but it may be time to approach them to expand their enforcement.

Commissioner Mazzotti replied yes, we are definitely doing so.

John Cashin said that when we raised the issue of six boats and four jet skis, we were told the property owner owned them, which is hard to believe.

Hub Miller said the limited capacity that Gil has is at the point of being ridiculous. We should together encourage the town for more enforcement.

Commissioner Simmonds motioned to set the next SLPID regular meeting on September 21, 2023, at the Malta town hall.

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

Commissioner Simmonds motioned to reenter the public meeting and adjourn the public meeting at 3:53 p.m.

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