

**Minutes of the
Lake Waramaug Association Annual Meeting
June 10, 2012 at the Lake Waramaug Country Club**

Paul Frank called the meeting to order, noting that this was the Association's 96th Annual Meeting, and that the Association will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2016. Paul opened with a memorial to Peter Mullen, who died this past year. The Association has "lost a very important person," Paul said. Peter was a member of the Board of Directors for many decades, and was President of the Association from 1980 through 1994. Paul noted that "Peter led or was involved in a meaningful way with every significant event affecting the lake in recent memory. This lake would be a far different place if Peter had not been here." Paul then asked Tom McGowan, Executive Director of the Lake Waramaug Task Force, who worked closely with Peter over many years, to speak about Peter's role in the protection and preservation of Lake Waramaug.



Peter Mullen

IN MEMORIAM: Peter Mullen by Tom McGowan

Peter was a "special person to the Lake," Tom said. As a resident, he took responsibility for contributing to the health and preservation of the Lake, and raised a family committed to the same work. As Paul had pointed out, Peter was involved with every major event affecting the Lake for decades, and Tom told us that Peter always had the best advice to offer for the solution of complex problems.

One of the efforts in which Peter was very much involved was the solution to the problem of the old Casino property at 47 West Shore Road, once the site of a controversial roadhouse and marina, which had gone downhill over the years. Peter and George Bates spearheaded the creation of Ice House Properties, a group of concerned Lake residents who purchased the property. They later resold it with deed restrictions and easements in place that would preclude another marina, which could have been allowed as a pre-existing non-conforming use. The deed also allowed the Lake Waramaug Task Force to rework and improve the 600-foot shoreline, including the

installation of buffer plantings, creating what Tom called a "model for how a shoreline should be configured and planted."

Another major accomplishment that Peter was instrumental in achieving was the purchase of the old mill property at the foot of the Lake, which included the water rights to the adjoining dam that controls the amount of water flowing out of the Lake into the East Aspetuck River. Peter then stripped off the dam rights and donated them to the town of Washington before reselling the property, so that the public would now regulate the water, not a private individual.

One of the first Lake issues in which Peter was involved arose when a developer purchased Arrow Point in the early 1970s. The original plan called for 50 lots, which of course would have required 50 septic systems. There was a tremendous concern about all those septic systems, and Peter went to Hartford to testify before the newly formed State Department of Environmental Protection. Due to his efforts, the DEP levied a first-of-its-kind order to the developer to cut the number of proposed homes in half, and to install the best possible septic systems. The revised subdivision plan designated one and a quarter acres at the tip of the point as open space, an area that was subsequently purchased by the Task Force for the creation of the first pumping station to clean and aerate water from the lake, now the Frost site. Tom announced that the land itself is going to be named for Peter, as a memorial to his long and outstanding service to the Lake.

TREASURER'S REPORT, Paul Frank for John Santoleri

Paul reported that as of the fiscal year ending April 30, 2012, the Association had total revenues of \$37,500 and expenditures of \$27,500, leaving a balance of just under \$10,000. Contributions were up slightly in 2012, but we sold fewer books, so overall our income was somewhat less. Expenses were in line with 2011, and we contributed \$5,000 to the Task Force, as we did in 2011. We currently have about \$123,000 in total assets, and no liabilities.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE, Betty Sutter

The Association has fifteen Board members, who serve staggered three-year terms. Board members with terms expiring at this time are Paul Frank, Susan Payne, Rod Funston, Joe Rowan, and Sally Paynter. Rod, Sally, and Joe are not standing for re-election, although they will remain active in the work of the Association. There is also a vacancy created by the death of Peter Mullen, who had two years left on his term.

Paul Frank and Susan Payne were nominated for re-election; Christine Adams Beckett, Rudy Montgelas, and Scott Weaver were nominated to serve three-year terms; and Elaine Mullen Peer was nominated to serve the balance remaining in her father's term. All of the members present voted in favor of electing this slate to serve until April 30, 2015 (April 30, 2014 for Elaine Peer), or until their successors are elected and shall qualify.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS, Paul Frank

Paul began by telling us that there had been a notice in the newspaper recently that the State was about to complete the establishment of a 56-boat launch and marina at the old Beverly's site on Bantam Lake, which had been purchased by the State for such purpose. He noted that Lake Waramaug could have suffered a similar fate, distorting the balanced recreational use of the lake, were it not for the efforts of the towns, the Association, the Task Force, and many interested citizens in reaching an agreement with the State in 2004 providing that the sole public motorboat access would be through the Washington Boat Ramp, and permitting a much more limited number of boats than had been proposed by the State for our Lake.

Letter from the DOT: Paul then referred to the letter that the DOT had sent to property owners around the Lake, advising them that the Lake road - State Route 478 - is "unbounded," and that the State has an easement over these properties for "highway purposes." Consequently, proposed improvements in the highway easement require prior approval from the DOT. Paul said he wasn't sure what had precipitated this letter - possibly the construction of walls within the easement area. It is also unclear what exactly constitutes the easement area, and if it is the same for all properties. Paul had contacted the DOT for further information about this, but had not yet received a call back.

Invasive Weeds Boat Inspection Program: Paul reminded us that all boats with motors must be inspected, and stickered to evidence having passed the inspection, before entering the Lake. The State has now put up a sign at the State Park to advise motor boaters of this regulation, and to direct them to Dowler's Garage in New Preston for inspection should the launch at the Washington Beach be closed. Paul noted that Dowler's has already performed 10 such inspections this season. A handout has also been prepared to educate boaters at the State Park about the reasons for and importance of the inspection, which Board member Howard Wellings has volunteered to distribute at the cartop-boat launch at the park.

Roads and Traffic: Last fall, Association member Craig Bibb, concerned about the problem of speeding on the Lake roads, had solicited a proposal from a traffic engineer for a traffic volume/speed study, at a cost of about \$8,000. Association Board members met with this engineer in October. The engineer, having driven around the Lake roads for the first time just prior to the meeting, said that the "geometry" of the roads essentially made them "self-regulating," but that he would propose possible short- and long-term improvements. No such proposal was received. After further discussion this spring, the consensus among Board members was that the best, if not only, solution to the problem of speeding is for the Association to hire a police officer for special overtime patrols, the cost of each being about \$300 for a minimum time of four hours. This patrol would be a "wise move," Paul said, and would serve as part of an educational as well as an enforcement process. The officer can move around or stay in one spot, and can issue warnings and/or tickets to people who are speeding.

Special Problems in the State Park Arm of the Lake: There is a growing number of canoes and kayaks on the Lake, and they are especially concentrated in this arm of the Lake, along with motor boats, many of them towing either skiers or children on large rafts. The density of boats of various types, combined with the speed of the motor boats and the wakes they create that can be hazardous to canoes and kayaks, has created a significant safety concern. Washington Resident State Trooper Stephen Sordi has called this situation "an accident waiting to happen." Trooper Sordi and the Lake Waramaug Authority are in discussion with the Boating Division of the State DEEP to see what might be done to increase safety in this area of the Lake and avoid potential accidents.

Regulations on Docks and Inflatable Floats: The towns of Washington and Warren both have regulations setting the maximum size of docks to 360 square feet over the water, and of floats to 100 square feet over the water. Warren has also amended its regulations to include so-called inflatable water toys larger than 30 square feet, which cannot exceed 120 square feet over the water or 4 feet in height. Paul noted that he feels that it would have been better to have kept inflatable floats within the 100-square-foot limit for other types of floats.

Domestic Geese on West Shore Road: Paul reported that the domestic geese that have taken up residence on the shore have become aggressive to passers by, and might well cause a traffic accident if allowed to remain. The geese were lured into a trapping device so that they could be relocated to a pond on a large tract of land in Warren, but unfortunately the sides of the trap were let down, causing distress to the geese and a number of calls about cruelty to animals. The trap is now gone, and Paul

has contacted the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy in Litchfield for their advice on capturing and relocating the geese.

FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS AND FLARES, Rod Funston

The annual Fourth of July fireworks display will take place this year on Wednesday, July 4, with a rain date of the following day. The fireworks begin at 9:30 p.m., and as in past years, the Lake will be rimmed with flares beforehand. Rod demonstrated how to use the flares, which can be purchased at The Hopkins Inn, County Wines, and 9 Main in New Preston.

THE LAKE WARAMAUG TASK FORCE, Linda Frank, Chair

Linda showed us one of the caps that the Task Force is selling (available at The Hopkins Vineyard and 9 Main) and also spoke about a DVD called "Saving Lake Waramaug" that has been produced by Task Force Board member Jim Hicks. The DVD covers the history of the Lake from the time of the Native peoples here up to the present, as well as the work of the Task Force in restoring and preserving the health and ecology of the Lake. Linda noted that the DVD is especially helpful in understanding the science behind preservation efforts. The DVD will be available at local libraries.

THE STATE OF THE LAKE, Tom McGowan

"I have good news," Tom told us. "Things have turned around more than expected since the damaging weather events of last year, and the water clarity in the Lake is currently "terrific."

Invasive Species: The Task Force received a "terrific report" from the annual close inspection of the whole shoreline for invasive weeds, enhanced this year by the clarity of the water. There were only six locations of curlyleaf pondweed, with very few plants in each location. The procedures in place for monitoring and removing invasive weeds have been working well, Tom said, and have been worth the expense. Two college interns will continue to take water-clarity readings and monitor the Lake for invasive weeds throughout the summer.

Tom noted that there has been a proliferation of zebra mussels in Connecticut, and that they have been migrating down the Housatonic River. Fortunately, however, the Lake is not susceptible to the mussels because of its PH levels.

Phosphorus: The phosphorus entering the Lake comes from many sources, but the biggest is the Tanner dairy farm. A mature Holstein milking cow generates 10,000

pounds of waste a year, and because dairy farming is now more concentrated, so is the waste. Although the waste lagoon has been very helpful, it is not enough; it was overwhelmed during the intense winter of 2010-2011, and overflowed into Sucker Brook, sending a great deal of phosphorus into the Lake.

Terry Tanner lost a good number of cows to disease and accidents last year, and had been thinking about not replacing them, in order to reduce the size of his herd. The Task Force encouraged such reduction by offering Terry a modest addition to the current sale price in exchange for an agreement that the milking herd, which for years had been at 150 cows, would not exceed 100. He sold 50 head, and currently has 80 milkers. The result is that there has been a huge reduction in the volume of animal waste at the Tanner Farm, which is a major benefit to the water quality in Sucker Brook and the Lake. Because he now has fewer cows, he plans to convert some of his cornfields to hay. Cornfields are highly erosive, so having more acreage in hay will reduce run-off from the farm as well.

In another attempt to reduce phosphorus in the Lake, this year the Task Force, at the suggestion of Dr. Kortmann, installed and in March turned on new diffuser valves along the compressor line to the in-lake aeration systems. This helped maintain a cooler water temperature in the Lake during the spring. This cooler water prolongs the life of the single-celled algae called diatoms that live under the ice in the winter, and stay alive as long as the water stays cool. When the diatoms die, they take phosphorus with them to the lake bottom, and so keeping them alive longer will lengthen the clear-water period until later in the spring; they were kept alive until early June this year. This also delays the onset of the blue-green algae, which don't get started until the Lake warms up after the diatoms die off.

New Legislation: Tom also told us about a bill (sponsored by the Task Force and supported by the Association) that was recently passed in Connecticut that will ban phosphorus almost completely in fertilizers for established lawns; a small percentage (.67) will be allowed, since manufacturers of compost cannot extract this naturally-occurring amount of phosphorus from their products. Established lawns are a big part of the landscape, especially in urban and suburban areas, so this bill will be a big help in reducing the phosphorus in the State's lakes and other watercourses.

Sucker Brook Delta: The build-up of the Sucker Brook delta continues to be one of the Lake's most pressing problems. There are 27 major erosion sites along Sucker Brook, which currently pours a great deal of sediment and phosphorus into the Lake. Part of this erosion is natural, because Sucker Brook is a high-gradient stream with erosive soil. But human activities along the brook, as well as natural events like downed trees, have

greatly increased the amount of erosion, as well as the amount of phosphorus in the sediment. The Task Force is thinking about various possible solutions to this problem, including channelization of the delta and the creation of a large sediment basin upstream on land that the Task Force would purchase; it would also maintain the basin. Any solution will be very expensive, and the Task Force wants to be sure that it is going to work before making the investment.

Land Preservation in the Lake Waramaug Watershed: The Lake has a fourteen-square-mile watershed, mostly in Warren. Tom displayed a large map that shows the preserved land in the watershed, including Above All State Park in Warren and Mount Bushnell State Park in Washington; much of the Washington side of the Pinnacle has also been protected. The Task Force is thinking about creating a closer collaboration with the Warren Land Trust and other local preservation organizations, with the hope that if these organizations act together, more can be achieved than if they all act separately. One specific goal that Tom mentioned is to make preservation in the East and West Aspetuck River watersheds a priority.

A question was asked about the proliferation of shoreline weeds, and Tom told us that rooted vegetation will prosper with greater water clarity. Some people would like to remove the weeds from around their docks and swimming areas, and Tom told us that, if properly done, clearing out weeds along the shoreline is not harmful to the Lake.

In the absence of further questions or comments, Paul Frank adjourned the meeting, announcing that our next meeting will take place on Sunday, September 9, at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

- Heather Allen, Recording Secretary