



## Minutes

Spring 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Owners' and Residents' Association of Lac Bernard  
Wednesday, May 8, 2024  
7:30 pm (zoom)

1. Kevin Radford, President of the Owners and Residents Association of Lac Bernard (ORALB) introduced the members of the 2023-24 executive. He also thanked Paul Saunders and Brad Sweeney, who are leaving the Board this year for their service to the lake association.
2. Colleen Forer, Vice President, undertook the indigenous land acknowledgement, noting that lac Bernard is on the unceded territory of the Anishnaabeg inhabitants.
3. Jeff Stubbins undertook the in-memoriam announcement for Tony Blair, long time cottager on Lac Bernard, and urged any members who were aware of the passing of any other lac Bernard residents to come forward with names.
4. Graham Longhair outlined how the technicalities of the zoom meeting would unfold including the items where votes would be taken.
5. Pam Ross, councillor for the La Pêche ward serving lac Bernard offered comments as follows:
  - She appreciates the invitation to speak at the General Meeting of the Association
  - She noted that the lights have been changed to LEDs in the two light standards, serving the lake including the one at the junction of Regatta Baie Road which had been out for some time
  - La Pêche electoral district has been changed from 7 to 6 wards. There will be an upcoming meeting at the municipality concerning this change. She confirmed that she will continue to be the councillor for Lac Bernard.

### Q and A Councillor Ross

Q1 Any news on the extension of Hwy 5?

- A. The extension of highway 5 is under the jurisdiction of the province but Pam Ross understands it is still in the plans, though no timeframe has been announced.

Q2. What can we do about uneven or non-existent garbage pickup and why can't we have secured containers?

- A. Councillor Ross explained that the containers cannot be secured by residents as the garbage collection system includes mechanized bin handling. No workers actually touch the bin. She urged people that are having difficulty with garbage collection to email her at [p.ross@villelapeche.ca](mailto:p.ross@villelapeche.ca)

Q3. Why can't residents of Lac Bernard utilize the hazardous waste depot on chemin Raphael for items relating to their residences on Lac Bernard– speaker indicated that she had been refused access and was told she must be a permanent resident of Quebec to use the depot.

- A. Councillor Ross took the email address of the inquirer and will get back to her.

#### 6. Treasurer's Report – Part 1: Presentation of the Financial Statements of 2023

Don McLean Treasurer of the Lake Association presented the financial statements for 2023 and noted the following:

- Don acknowledged the excellent support and professionalism provided by Jane Barton and Brenda Paterson as scrutineers. Their oversight and comments were instrumental in strengthening the 2024 Financial Statement presentation to the Members.
- The financial statements and the budget were sent out to ORALB members on April 23 so everyone has had a chance to review them
- The statements show that the association ended 2023 with a surplus of \$6,193, a vast improvement over previous years of negative results.
- Membership was stable at 246 members in 2023
- Regatta profits were up tenfold to \$4,200
- We managed discretionary expenses high
- No new initiatives in the environment area this year
- Treasurer's note gives more information: we need to manage our long term assets to ensure that are all in high-yielding low risk investment vehicles
- Financial statement scrutineers Brenda Paterson and Jane Barton indicate it would be desirable to allocate our funds to specific initiatives such as environment, security on the lake etc. Don indicated that it is difficult to do this as issues arise during the year. The scrutineers also suggested that we need to consider whether we should dispute the assessment on the regatta bay property as the increases will have an impact on the tax cost to the association. Don indicated that an order of business for the executive in 2024 is to reply to the scrutineers on their observations.

Motion: To accept the financial statements for 2023 (Don McLean). Seconded by Jeff Stubbins.

Discussion

Q1: (Jake Blair) Why did the membership numbers drop?

A: (Don McLean) Membership numbers have moved up and down over the past few years – we had a peak with the issues surrounding the regatta lands and clubhouse but since then we have returned to historical levels. We want it to be higher and have plans on how to increase numbers which will be addressed in the President’s report.

Q2: (Jake Blair) What about the logo merchandise for Lac Bernard?

A: (Don McLean) We are exploring options for logo merchandise. In the past ORALB carried a lot of inventory and we are seeking a more “just in time” approach to delivery of items for sale. Don thanked John and Sue Timmons for the job that did in the past with merchandise.

Vote to accept the Financial Statements for 2023 result: The membership approved the financial statements for 2023

## 7. President’s Report

He reported on 2023 priorities:

- Regatta: The regatta started again on the Regatta Baie site with the full support of the neighbours. He noted that it takes many volunteers to make a successful day and asked any members with ideas on improvements to be in touch.
- Website: The Lac Bernard website has been renewed. There are still elements to be improved
- Environment: The association submitted a grant application to the federal government for an experiment in laying commercial burlap to control milfoil. This request was unsuccessful and we will reach out to determine more clearly the reasons why.
- Financial stability – this has been achieved through careful stewardship
- Solid membership: The base is now stabilized at about 240 members
- Adherence to Bylaws: The association is gaining experience in working with the new bylaws
- Decision-Making: pleased with the hearty but respectful dialogue at the Board and commitment to reaching consensus when appropriate

2024:

The President outlined that the work of the executive depends on the work of the committees, and he urged members to become involved in any committee where they would like to make a contribution.

- Environment: The executive and membership will over the next while need to develop a perspective on the level of investment we would like to make as a community on environmental initiatives

- Regatta – we can always make this better and again we will be looking for many volunteers to help out with making the day a success
- Membership – one way of enhancing membership would be to designate membership leaders for areas of the lakes where the leaders would explain the positive role of the association to their neighbours and try to encourage lake association membership
- History: we now have a history sub-committee of the lake association and it will be stepping up its work in gathering materials and publishing them on the website. It will also focus on exploring the First Nations experience in Lac Bernard.
- Merchandise: we would like to renew logo merchandise for Lac Bernard and the executive is looking for new leadership. We are looking for a supplier that will provide a 2% credit to the Kitigan Zibi First Nation and provide us with items just in time.
- Website and communications: we would like to make the website more user friendly for purchasing memberships and we are introducing social media linked to the site.

## 8. Committee Reports

- a) Environment (Paul Saunders) Paul directed members to refer to the presentation on various issues related to the environment that was made in November 2023. He indicated water quality testing has shown positive ratings except for an increase in phosphorus. Paul urged people to keep the trees and shrubs near the shoreline as they help to clean any runoff from properties and help keep phosphorus levels under control. Paul indicated that the province of Quebec has offered to test oxygen levels in the lake. Higher levels of oxygen in water bodies are associated with healthy ecosystems. Paul also pointed to the role of outlet in maintaining water levels in the lake and indicated that we are looking into the feasibility of installing water level markers to allow the association to better track what is occurring with water levels throughout the season, and trends from year to year. On the inlets, Fish Creek and Motherwell creek, Paul indicated that in 2023 waterflow from Fish creek was blocked by beaver dams. We are now working with the MRC to find long term solutions, including exploring the feasibility of a culvert from Lac Notre Dame. The milfoil problem on Lac Bernard is accelerating as it is in other lakes both in Ontario and Quebec. Milfoil will grow to depths of 4 metres and much of Lac Bernard is shallow enough to be covered with milfoil. Paul noted that boats are the main reason for the spread of milfoil through cuttings. Paul thanked the yellow buoy volunteers who have helped to place yellow buoys noting the areas with significant milfoil exists so that boaters can avoid these areas. Finally, on milfoil, Paul noted that a new herbicide Procellacor has been approved recently by Health Canada to control invasive plant species. It is early days on this herbicide and more research needs to be done to determine its cost and its safety.
- b) Website (Brad Sweeney) Brad highlighted the presence of the new association website. He noted that it is based on a Wordpress platform and that there are still a few glitches particularly with the section that allows members to purchase their memberships. He indicated that minutes are now posted on the website up to end April. He further noted

that we are looking for a web savvy volunteer to take over his role spearheading the improvements needed to the site.

- c) History Committee (Charles Topp) Charles outlined his concept and plans for the renewal of the history committee. He will be collecting stories from individuals who have a legacy on the lake. He noted that he will be working with Colleen Forer to use social media to give visibility to the stories about people on the lake that he will be collecting. He is actively seeking photos and stories and urged the membership to be in touch with him with any materials.

#### 9. Budget for 2024 (Don McLean)

Don noted that the draft budget had been sent out to the membership on April 24 2024 so that members would have had a chance to review it in advance of this meeting. He indicated that the net surplus on the operating budget is projected to be \$3,500 but as a non-for-profit organization this is acceptable as we seek financial stability over time. Don pointed out a few items that are noted as potential expenditures on the budget namely,

- a) History committee - \$500 for scanning items
- b) Aqueduct - \$5000 for an aqueduct to Lac Notre Dame
- c) Shed for regatta site - \$5,000
- d) Pending litigation - \$3,500 relating to an unpaid invoice to build a clubhouse on the Regatta Baie road property – the claimant has submitted at Small Claims court in Quebec.

Motion: Don moved that the Budget for 2024 be accepted. Jeff Stubbins seconded the motion.

#### Discussion

Q. What is the issue we are being sued for (Wendy Blair)?

A. Kevin and Don: The matter relates to the Board receiving notification that Rick Soderstrom has submitted a claim against the association for payment of the fees for an appraisal and drawings for a new clubhouse on the Regatta Bay property. In the interests of closing the matter quickly the association offered Mr. Soderstrom \$1,500 in settlement. This was refused. They further explained that the suit was for non-payment of an invoice. The basis of the association's defense was that Mr. Soderstrom offered at the AGM in May 2021 to donate the funds for the drawings when he was challenged by the membership on several aspects of the initiative, including the use of association funds for clubhouse-related expenses and the lack of consultation prior to initiating the expense. It was noted that Mr. Soderstrom did not submit his invoices for reimbursement.

(In zoom chat): Jake Blair moved that the association pay the amount in the claim against the association in full; and Janet Bax (in chat) said do not pay it

Gerry Yemensky noted the opposing views on whether or not the association should pay the claim or proceed with the court defence. After weighing the pros and cons, he spoke in favour of paying the claim. He noted that this issue is not about whether we approve of the purchase of the plans but rather about the claim itself. He noted that the previous Board of the association in 2021 approved \$4000 for these expenses and \$517 had been paid out leaving a potential authorization of \$3483.00. He noted that courts are inherently unpredictable and that taking the matter through the courts will be stressful for the individuals involved and that an outcome in favour of the association is not guaranteed. It is a relatively small amount of money and is not worth the effort of contesting it.

The room agreed to separate the two issues and have a separate vote on the budget and the settlement of the lawsuit to Rick Soderstrom

Motion: (Kevin Radford) that the association be provided with the authority to settle the lawsuit with Mr. Soderstrom for \$3,482.71

Vote: 38 in favour; 12 against; 4 abstentions. CARRIED

Motion (Kevin Radford) To approve the 2024 Budget as presented by the Treasurer.

Vote: 50 in favour; 1 against; 3 abstentions CARRIED

Don noted that he had not indicated in his presentation that Brenda Patterson and Jane Barton had agreed to act as scrutineers of the Financial Statements for 2024.

#### 10. Open discussion.

- a) Ray Boomgardt indicated that he hoped in paying the claim that the executive would interpret the mandate from the members broadly enough to be able to pay any ancillary costs involved in settling the case.
- b) Michelle Comeau indicated that a website search on Google came up with lake Bernard Property Owners in another area of Canada. She suggested that the web administrator have a look at that .
- c) Jake Blair asked Paul Saunders to explain the viaduct idea. Paul indicated that it would be a culvert for water to flow from Lac Notre Dame but indicated that the municipality would be involved, and it is simply a proposal at this time.
- d) Don McLean noted that Jane Barton and Brenda Chambers had agreed to act as scrutineers of the 2024 financial statements and to review the proposed budget of the association for 2025. He thanked them for their diligent work and assistance in 2024.

Kevin Radford adjourned the meeting at 9:45 pm

