



# CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

Member Municipalities: Brookfield • Danbury • New Fairfield • New Milford • Sherman

PO BOX 37 • SHERMAN, CT 06784 • P (860) 354-6928 • F (860) 350-5611

## Minutes of Regular Meeting

August 12, 2020, 7:30PM

via ZOOM due to COVID-19

### Attending:

P. Schaer Sherman (*joined 7:43pm*)  
J. Main New Fairfield

M. Gaffey Brookfield  
J. Murphy Brookfield  
W. Lohan Brookfield

C. Robinson Danbury  
E. Siergiej Danbury  
D. Rosemark Danbury

S. Kluge New Milford  
M. Toussaint New Milford  
J. Wodarski New Milford

M. Howarth, Executive Director  
J. Neil Stalter, Director of Ecology and Environmental Education  
J. Usher, CLA Administrative Coordinator  
R. Barnard, Chief, Candlewood Lake Authority Marine Patrol

Recorder: J. Usher

Guests: 2

Vice Chairman, Mark Toussaint called the regular meeting of the Candlewood Lake Authority to order at 7:38pm. This meeting took place via Zoom video conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Public Comment:

Khris Hall spoke about the CLA's efforts with the recent issues regarding the islands.

### Consent Agenda

Dan Rosemark made a motion to accept the reports on the consent agenda, seconded by Marianne Gaffey with voting all in favor.

### Absent:

D. Cushnie Sherman

J. Archer New Fairfield  
B. Licht New Fairfield

*Marianne Gaffey made a motion to add the following item to the agenda: form a task force to present the towns early next year with an entire plan for what the CLA needs to operate appropriately. This motion was seconded by Jeff Main with all voting in favor.*

Phyllis Schaer, appreciated preliminary work done on this topic by delegates Marianne Gaffey and Joan Archer. She noted the Executive Committee had been canceled due to the recent tropical storm and the CLA needed to address concerns discussed by Municipal Leaders at recent ZOOM meeting: expanded patrol coverage requirements as well as the urgent need for additional staff and equipment to meet appropriate public safety needs.

*Ms. Schaer made a motion to form an Ad Hoc "Strategic Planning Committee" to develop CLA Master Operations Plan which would be presented to the 5 towns; specifically to address what the CLA needs to operate effectively. The motion was seconded by Mr. Main with all voting in favor. Ms. Schaer appointed Marianne Gaffey and Joan Archer as members of this Committee.*

Ms. Gaffey and Joan Archer have begun working on an outline as discussed.

### **CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY MARINE PATROL**

CLAMP Chief Ron Barnard provided an update to the board. He added extra patrol on Saturdays and Sundays. The new recruit class will now have their training with DEEP in the spring instead of the fall. A boating accident took place last weekend.

There is a new police reform bill which will take effect June 2021. If it applies to CLAMP, Chief Barnard will update the delegates. One of the requirements of the reform bill will be body cameras.

There are still people gathering at the islands despite the closure.

### **Chairman's Report:**

Ms. Schaer read the letter from Don Lowe, Selectman of the Town of Sherman addressed to the CLA regarding his concern on noise and requesting assistance of CLA to develop a plan to address noise issues.

### **Vice-Chairman's Report:**

*Mr. Toussaint will cover in Watershed.*

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Bill Lohan informed the delegates that the financials were just completed tonight and will be sent soon. Due to the power outages from the tropical storm on Aug. 4<sup>th</sup>, financial reports were not ready in time for the meeting.

The towns have sent in their appropriations: the City of Danbury sent their first quarter payment and the Town of New Milford, the Town of Sherman, the Town of New Fairfield have paid in full. The Town of Brookfield's check is dated August 11, 2020 and is in the mail.

The total expense for the month of July is \$34,000 which is 6.1 % of budget. There are no items over budget this month.

There was a discussion with auditor Sandra Wellwood. She recommends that we not adjust budget line items to match actuals to allow us to have more details on where we need to modify or adjust our actual yearly budget line item estimates. We are in the process of reviewing the requirements for adjusting the budget and we will have a revised policy at the September 2<sup>nd</sup> Executive meeting.

The audit is underway. We are in the process of gathering information and reports the auditor has requested.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Public Safety Committee:**

Joe Wodarski addressed the delegates with his concerns on the task force and need to be involved in these discussions. Ms. Schaer recommended that Mr. Wodarski reach out to Lake Zoar and Lake Lillinoah for information on their patrol management structure.

### **Equipment/Facilities Committee:**

Doug Cushnie was not present. Mark Howarth reported that the Steiger is officially out of the water. It is out of commission. There are reliability concerns with the motor on the Ark which needs to be further assessed, prior to fall buoy-removal. Both of these boats are the non-patrol, staff work boats. The other boats are in good working order and have received their mid-season maintenance. Ms. Schaer offered her pontoon boat and suggested possibly renting a boat for staff use.

### **Public Awareness Committee:**

Ms. Gaffey reported that the Not Wanted Campaign is ready to be pushed out, which will be included in the next newsletter. The fundraising plan to help with purchase for a new boat has been set aside. Ms. Gaffey reported that there was a lively discussion on whether the CLA should be more present on additional social media platforms for public awareness to engage more of the younger population. Jeannine Usher offered her expertise and assistance with social media.

### **Watershed Management Committee:**

Mr. Toussaint noted that much of Watershed was covered in Neil Stalter's monthly report. There was a discussion on the probe failure. Mr. Stalter contacted Eureka, the manufacturer of the probe and after some troubleshooting, it seems as if there is some corrosion on the probe. We are evaluating whether the probe needs to be sent out for repair. In the meantime, the CLA can borrow AER's probe until ours is repaired with no interruption and minimal cost.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Schaer reported that she did not receive the necessary information in time to proceed with applying for the Neighborhood Grant by the July 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. This is an ongoing Grant Program and we plan to apply next year with back up documentation requirements. The island closures

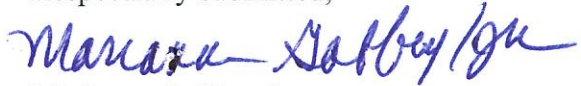
were discussed in marine patrol. There are no new FERC notices, except for an announcement that a deep drawdown was approved.

**ADJOURN**

*Ms. Gaffey made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Lohan with all voting in favor.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marianne Gaffey/gu".

Marianne Gaffey, Secretary  
Jeannine Usher, Administrative Coordinator  
r/b/mh/ps

*These minutes are not considered official until they have been approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Candlewood Lake Authority.*



# CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

Member Municipalities: Brookfield • Danbury • New Fairfield • New Milford • Sherman

PO BOX 37 • SHERMAN, CT 06784 • P (860) 354-6928 • F (860) 350-5611

**August 12, 2020**  
**Executive Director**  
**Mark Howarth**

## Monthly Report

### **COVID-19**

I continue to work remotely while also spending some time at the Sherman Base/on the water.

### **2020 Lake Usage**

This summer has been a very busy summer on Candlewood Lake, one in which we have seen heavy lake usage on weekdays in addition to weekends. This usage has not only been evident in the boating traffic, but also on the frequent use of the islands by boaters.

The islands that have seen the heaviest use have been Blueberry Island and neighboring Button Island, Sand Island and City Island, with other islands and public areas seeing significant use as well. The crowds on the islands have at times been very large, while also leaving behind trash, either scattered about the islands or in large piles.

Our concerns over the changing lake usage this season prompted us to arrange a meeting between the CLA, our municipal leaders, the CT DEEP EnCon Police, CT DEEP Boating Division and FirstLight. Our initial meeting allowed all present to gain an understanding of the conditions on the water and islands, as well as the roles, responsibilities, capabilities and restrictions of all involved.

Two weeks later, the follow up meeting was focused on solutions for this season. Out of concern over the impact these large crowds could have on COVID in their towns, municipal leaders asked FirstLight to temporarily close the islands to visitors. FirstLight then issued the below statement.

*FirstLight Power to Temporarily Close Candlewood Lake Islands Due to Covid-19 Concerns*

*New Milford, Connecticut, July 29, 2020 – At the request of local public officials FirstLight will temporarily close access to all islands owned by the company on Candlewood Lake, effective August 1, 2020, to ensure social distancing and prevent the spread of COVID-19. This necessary action follows reports of gatherings of large groups of people, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, without proper social distancing and other precautions taken to stop the spread of COVID-19. FirstLight will reopen the islands for public access as soon as it is safe to do. We regret this inconvenience, but we are committed to keeping lake visitors safe and to supporting all of Connecticut's efforts to reverse the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*The islands that will be temporarily closed include Sand Island, Blueberry Island, Skeleton Island, Skull Island, Oak Island, Green Island, Deer Island, Cedar Island, City Island, and 2 unnamed islands off of Dike Point Park.*

The CLA worked to get the message out to the public through our electronic channels and connected with municipal Park and Rec departments and the CT DEEP, as well as the marinas, to request their help in informing boaters launching from their ramps or leaving from their docks of the closure.

FirstLight has since posted their islands with signage that informs boaters that the islands are temporarily closed due to COVID-19 concerns.

We continue to work with the municipalities, CT DEEP and FirstLight to address the various challenges that we are seeing due to increased recreational use of the lake this year.

Additionally, given the changing recreational use and new challenges we are observing on the lake we are actively assessing our anticipated Public Safety needs for next year and into the future. We will look for solutions to provide for and promote safe recreation by the public on Candlewood Lake.

### **August 4<sup>th</sup> Storm**

- The storm last week that caused many power outages and a lot of damage in the area affected the Sherman base as well. Several large trees came down, one of which did some damage to the roof there and took down utility lines. Thankfully, most of the falling trees and limbs did not do much damage.
- Our boats all made it through the storm without any major problems.
- I went out on the lake to assess the impact and check on our buoys.
- We are working to get the Sherman Base fully cleaned up.



# CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

Member Municipalities: *Brookfield • Danbury • New Fairfield • New Milford • Sherman*

PO BOX 37 • SHERMAN, CT 06784 • P (860) 354-6928 • F (860) 350-5611

**J. Neil Stalter**

**Director of Ecology and Environmental Education**

**Candlewood Lake Authority**

**Re:** August Meeting: Monthly Report

**Date:** 8/12/2020

- I am still working almost entirely remotely due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and am focusing on tasks that I can accomplish from home.
- Updates Following Zebra Mussel Discovery in May:
  - I have delivered water samples to Dr. Wong at Westconn to test for Zebra Mussel DNA. Unfortunately, the primers he had to test with were likely past their useful date. He's trying another batch, but we might have to purchase another batch of primers to test the water for DNA.
  - On July 24<sup>th</sup>, I captained the Steiger for Carl and Dave of C & D Maintenance as they conducted a dive in three locations looking for zebra mussels. Thankfully, none were found. I will work with them about potentially scheduling one more dive to look in September, but we thank them for volunteering their time! We will be including this in a newsletter to be sent early this week.
  - We currently have 26 citizen scientists with DIY Zebra Mussel monitoring stations in the lake. We have gotten multiple reports of no mussels, and I will be sending out another reminder email to our volunteers soon. Thankfully, all looks promising on this front as well.
  - We recently got a credible report of a sunken boat with attached mussels, but I was able to identify them as Banded Mystery Snails, so thankfully it was a false alarm.
- Water Quality monitoring continued in July, and we are awaiting the lab results. We had very high water clarity in July, with a high of 3.95 in New Fairfield.
  - I also wrote and sent summaries of the Water Quality findings from May and June to the board. Once we receive the July lab results, I will be writing a summary of the findings from July.

- Unfortunately, after a normal monitoring of Squantz, we discovered technical issues with our probe. I spend a while on the phone with Eureka, the manufacturer, to troubleshoot the issue, and we think we've figured out the problem. Unfortunately, it will likely require a repair, so I am working with Steve to establish exactly what kind of fix we will need. Thankfully, Larry from AER was generous enough to loan us his probe, so there was no interruption in monitoring, but his probe does not have the same chl-a sensor that ours does.
- I had a meeting with Larry and Mark from AER to assist us in creating a thorough nutrient budget for Candlewood Lake to inform the Lake Management Plan. They are working on a proposal and a list of additional things we can monitor to help create that nutrient budget.
  - I have also scheduled a meeting with the LMP stakeholders for Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am to discuss erosion on the lake, which will be a substantial topic in the plan.
- Weekly, I receive and send the E. coli monitoring results to the town Public Health Departments.
  - I also go up to Sherman to collect the Sawmill Brook sample, as it's difficult for the senior volunteers to reach the sample location.
- Weekly I post the results of Dr. Wong's microcystin (blue-green algae toxin) monitoring at the town beaches on our Facebook. Thus far, we have not had any samples come close to the threshold for a beach closure.
  - I also post the weekend weather forecast on the Facebook Page.
- The "Not Wanted Campaign" is on its final version. All three posters (Hydrilla, Water Chestnut, and Zebra Mussel) are complete, and some small text updates are being made. We are hoping to have these rolled out in a Newsletter we send out early this week.
- I met with an Eagle Scout candidate in Sherman who is very interested in pursuing our Invasive Species Disposal Station project as his Eagle Scout project. I am in contact with them as we plan and iron out the details.
- I am helping to conduct some research about how similar lake patrols are run to help us increase the abilities of our own patrol.
- I have contacted the Town Parks & Rec departments from each of the towns regarding our proposed boat inspection pilot program.
  - Most were immediately excited, and some are pursuing approval at the next meeting. I'll be following up with them this week.
  - I am also in contact with a local temp agency to get some details about pricing and logistics for using that service to hire boat inspectors.



- I am still trying to get through to DEEP to pursue approval.
- I am contacting local car washes to establish potential locations where people could wash their boats.
- Due to the current landscape of the launches around the lake due to COVID, and the delays in getting approvals, the pilot program might have to be created with an eye to having it up and running for day one of the 2021 boating season, rather than a shorter stint this year.