

Minutes of the FTLPOA Annual Meeting

June 13, 2015

Scandia Valley Township Hall

Board Members Present: Chuck Salter, President, Scott Schnuckle, Vice President, Mike Flanagan, Newsletter, George Heroux, Treasurer, Peg Hartung, Peggy Swalm, Paul Baker, Brian Sams, David Thibert, Jim Marsh and Mary Thibert, Secretary.

The meeting began at 9:30 AM.

1. **President's Welcome and Introduction of Guest:** Chuck Salter welcomed the FTLPOA members and introduced the guest speakers: Kevin Maurer, Morrison County Commissioner, Glen Erickson, Morrison County Assessor, Greg Van Eeckhout, MPCA, Ron Kresha, Minnesota Representative-was unable to attend. Amy Kowalzek, Planning and Zoning Administrator-was unable to attend. Sheriff Shawn Larson-was unable to attend. Jeff Halverson, Minnesota DNA-was unable to attend.
2. **Secretary's Report:** The Secretary's report from the FTLPOA Board meeting April 11, 2015 was accepted.
3. **Treasurer's Report:** George Heroux submitted the financial report. The financial report showed that the checking balance is not keeping up with expenses. FTLPOA's greatest expense is postage that is used for the newsletter, which is sent 2 times a year, membership cards and reminders to pay member's dues. There was discussion regarding maintaining the newsletter. FTLPOA Board members had decided last fall to stop mailing the newsletters to non members beginning next year because the postage is so expensive. One member felt that the problem with stopping the newsletter is that non-members won't know where to send the dues if they want to become a member. George reminded us that he sends out reminders to members who have not paid their dues after the annual meeting.

George reported that there has been a decrease in the membership to FTLPOA.

In 2013 there were 213 members.

In 2014, there were 186 members.

As of 6/12/15 there were 86 members.

George expects this year's membership to increase because many members have not paid their dues and wait until the annual meeting to pay the dues. It was suggested that FTLPOA try Automatic Debit or Pay Pal to get membership dues. However, a member stated that both of these payment methods are expensive and would not be cost effective. There was discussion on why there

has been a decrease in membership. One member stated that she had tried to email the board using the Web site and did not get a response. Both Mike Flanagan and Chuck Salter stated that they didn't get an email. Mike stated that he will check into the website to see why it isn't working.

An Association member suggested that we use email. The problem with email is first, FTLPOA does not have very many email addresses and second, it may go to spam. In order to decrease some expenses Connie D made the motion to stop sending out membership cards. Ray B seconded it. The motion carried.

George Heroux also reported that Peg Hartung donated the fee that she received for managing the fishing contest to the Endowment Fund. The Financial Report was accepted.

- 4. Guest Speakers:** Glen Erickson-County Assessor stated that by state regulation he is required to inspect property every 5 years. When a FTLPO is due for an inspection he/she will get a letter from the assessor's office asking them to be present for their inspection. He will try to arrange the inspection around the FTLPO's schedule. Glen stated that property values are going up. However, taxes may not go up because they are primarily based on levies. Properties are classified as Seasonal, Full Time, Residential, Commercial or Agriculture. Property that is classified as Commercial pays the highest taxes. Seasonal property owners pay more taxes than residential due to an additional tax from the State of MN. Glen bases his assessments on trends and adjusts accordingly.

Kevin Maurer, Morrison County Commissioner spoke next. He stated that he has been on Morrison County's Board for 2 years. He grew up in Little Falls and lives in Cushing. He has a degree in Natural Resources and Nursing. His passion is to protect the environment.

In regards to the expansion of the of the Fish Trap Lake Campground he is in favor of it as long as an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is completed and that all permits have been filed. He stated that when a campground has 100 sites or more MN law requires that they get a MPCA permit for their septic system. If there are less than 100 sites the septic system is regulated by the County. FTL Campground was sold 2 ½ years ago to Jeff and Julie Hardy. The Campground was out of compliance at that time with the MPCA. They should have obtained a MPCA permit. Kevin Maurer does not know why FTL Campground did not get the MPCA permit. Right now the MPCA is waiting for new legislation regarding septic systems and

campgrounds. All campground septic systems are on hold until the legislation addresses the issue.

On Tuesday June 9th the Morrison County Board denied the need for an EAW but will put conditions on the variance that will include that all permits need to be filed and completed. Kevin commented that the expansion of the FTL Campground/Scenic View Resort seems inconsistent with the aim of both the Morrison County's Comprehensive Plan and Morrison County's Soil and Water Plan which had input from the LIDs and private citizens. The FTL Campground has 57 acres and pays \$7400 a year for taxes. Brian Sams made the comment that if the Campground meets all the requirements they should be allowed to expand.

Kevin Maurer also reported that the conditional variance approval requires the campground to decrease the number of boats docked by 16 and reduce the dock size in 2016. Morrison County's Planning and Zoning will monitor the Campground and make sure that they are in compliance.

Kevin Maurer was asked why the EAW was not approved. He declined to answer this question. In 2 weeks the Morrison County Board will address the CUP.

Kevin Maurer also spoke about the train noise issue. He stated that he met with Scandia Valley. Burlington Northern wants the Lincoln crossing closed. However, there is opposition from Scandia Valley Fire Chief. Burlington Northern is doing a study and will report its findings at the next Scandia Valley Township meeting. Morrison County has a large investment in the near future with the rail road crossing, which is in need of expensive repairs. Morrison County will continue to work with the local agencies. Morrison County does not want to go against the townships, but the budget impact may require them to reconsider.

In regards to the Camp Ripley bomb noise issue, Kevin Maurer reported that there has been some complaints about when Camp Ripley conducts bomb exercises. Scott, Camp Ripley's Commander, reports to Morrison County Board regarding the Camp's bomb schedule. Chuck Salter stated that he will call Scott to determine if Camp Ripley can place their schedule on the Web site.

Greg Van Eeckhout from the MPCA spoke on water quality. He reported that FTL's water quality is good and is getting better. FTL does not have a lot of

agricultural drainage and benefits from Lake Alex which allows some upstream pollutants to settle out. The MPCA is analyzing water quality from the entire watershed perspective for greater efficiency and understanding. The Watershed Restoration and Improvement Plan that he referenced is geared to protect our waters. Scott Schnuckle commented “that there are a number of different agencies involved in protecting our lakes and rivers and that at this time the coordination appears poor between the agencies.” He feels “we need a workable and enforceable plan to protect our lakes with each agency and our lake association understanding their respective roles.” Greg Van Eeckhout stated that how rules are enforced depends on money and time. Watershed rule making is a huge challenge with multiple stakeholders, e.g. farmers, residents, agriculture, lake home owners and business owner. It is difficult to get the entire group together on issues.

Kevin Maurer stated that we have the current documents that tell us what to do but we need to elect people who will look at them and follow them. In responding to a comment about seasonal owners lacking the ability to vote for Morrison County officials Kevin responded that he believes that the political power is in the Cities, and we can work through our representatives there.

5. Old Business

- a) The Lake Improvement District (LID) has a \$6000 grant for the treatment of Curly Leaf Pondweed. The LID reported that last year 4 acres were treated for Curly Leaf Pondweed. The first year the LID treated 60-70 acres. This year the DNR found 8 spots and really did not want the LID to treat them due to the small volumes in each area. The LID did treat the 8 areas at a cost of \$5000, primarily to remain eligible for future grant money. The LID financial report is good with \$26,000 in their checking account. This past year each FTLPO paid the LID \$40.00. The LID voted to decrease the assessment dues for 2016 to \$10.00/year. Also discussed was that Hennepin County has a signage project for public landings to help decrease the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). The project consists of painting signs on the launch areas with arrows and lanes directing cars with boat trailers to STOP, DRAIN and GO. The LID thought this would be a good idea for the FTL public access. The DNR would work with the FTLPOA. The cost is about \$20,000. There was discussion of initiating this project in stages or possibly using Endowment Funds
- b) Septic Systems Inspections: Amy Kowalzek was to speak on this topic but was not available. In summary: 250 systems were inspected and 64

failed. More information regarding these inspections are available on the website.

- c) Lead Sinkers: Scott Schnuckle spoke about the impact that lead sinkers and lead bullets have had on the State's waterfowl birds and raptors. "We lost 2 eagles on FTL this year: a female and her eaglet nesting on Buzzard's Roost." He stated that we are not yet sure what caused their deaths whether it was Avian Flu, lead poisoning, or natural causes. Loons are also very susceptible to lead poisoning. Steel sinkers are more expensive and are not as heavy or as effective as lead but he suggested that we consider voluntarily eliminating toxic lead sinkers on FTL to protect our loons and eagles. There is more information on the DNR's Web site. FTLPOA could also have signage at the public landing to increase the awareness of this problem and should consider a link on our Web site. Additional ideas included sending letters to bait shop owners, having pamphlets at the public landing and communicating with our elected representatives about this concern. There were free steel sinkers available at the meeting from Mike at Hilltop Sports.
- d) Water Quality: Gary Green spoke for Jim Fogelberg of the results of their 5 test samples that are sent to RMB Labs for analysis. The results are on the Web site. The sample on 5/19/15 showed a Phosphate at 43 and Chl/ AI was not available. Gary also reported on the Seechi test of clarity for FTL. On 5/5/15 it was 25 ft. (Last year at this time it was 9.5 ft). 5/19/15, 28 ft, 6/5/15, 15 ft and 6/12/15 it was 13.5 ft. In summary Jim Fogelberg reports that the water quality is good. The readings of FTL are better than Shamineau. This year ice out was 4/9/15. Last year ice out was 4/28/15. Earliest on record was 3/22/12 and the latest was 5/13/13. The lake level for the fall of 2014 was normal. This spring it was extremely low. Now, in June, it is normal.
- e) Water Levels and Beaver Dams. Brian Sams reported there has been high water and high winds. He stated that FTL Creek has little effect on the lakes water level but he tries to keep it open. There are no beaver dams. When it is hot and dry FTL can decrease 1/8 to 1/4 inches per day. He believes that one rain event a week will keep the lake stable. Last year he removed 1 beaver dam and 1 tree. This year he removed 2 starter dams and 8 beavers were trapped and removed. The beaver dams in the Thorough Fare are gone. We don't know how they disappeared. The DNR would not allow their removal and we would like them there to protect FTL from Eurasian Milfoil present in Lake Alex.
- f) Initiative Fund: Scott Schnuckle reported that a committee was formed. The committee consists of the following people: Julie Novak, Mike

Flanagan, David Thibert, David Ellering and Scott Schnuckle. They chose to use some of the funds to have Blue Water Science analyze the water. Steve McComas will begin his research in July. The cost of this research is approximately \$2200. The results will be posted on the Web site. Scott Schnuckle asked FTLPOA to accept Blue Water Science to do the research. Mary Thibert motioned to accept the recommendation. Laine Ropson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Scott Schnuckle asked the committee and the FTLPOA to start thinking about what we want to do next year with the funding. The Endowment has close to \$30,000 from contributions. FTLPOA can only use the interest from this fund. Scott asked that people volunteer to become a member of the committee. Chris Ziehm and Mike Ropson stated they would like to be on the committee. Brian Sams motioned to approve the new members. Mike Flanagan seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- g) Train Rail Expansion and Train Noise: Paul Baker reported that Burlington Northern Santa Fe is working on our behalf to close the Lincoln crossing. Scott Schnuckle, Chuck Salter and Paul attended a meeting with Burlington Northern to discuss delaying the rail expansion of a double track from Cushing to Randall. There will be no delay and the project should be completed May 2016. Some FTLPO think there might be the possibility of an increased risk for a catastrophic derailment because of this. FTLPOA is working with BNSF to decrease this risk. FTLPOA is also working with BNSF to decrease the train's speed. With the expansion the trains won't stop anymore at Lincoln. As long as there is a crossing present at Lincoln there is an increased risk for a derailment. The Army Corp of Engineers is conducting an EAW regarding this expansion to double tracks. It should be completed in a few weeks. Paul does not think that an EIS will be done. He reported that there are 13.7 wetlands or about 7 miles of wetlands that will be filled in. The Army Corp of Engineers defines wet lands different than the DNR. A request by the FTLPOA for a public hearing was denied. BNSF assured FTLPOA that there will be no increase in the number of trains.
- h) Web Site: Mike Flanagan reported that the Web site is active. During April through June about 300-400 people visited the Website. The Website is receiving support from local advertising. The advertising pays about half of FTLPOA expenses for the Website. Chuck Salter and Mike are the WebSite Managers and provide the updating. A FTLPO suggested that a copy of FTLPOA's Bylaws and Articles of Corporation be placed on the site. A reminder The Website is fishtraplake.com and email address fishtraplake@yahoo.com .

- i) Trash/Recycling:” Mike Flanagan met with the recycling and trash collectors. He found the trash/recycling project would cost the FTLPOA about \$1000. And this does not include any security. There was concern raised by the residential FTLPOs who already pay for trash pickup. They felt that they would be double paying for trash. It was suggested that maybe a youth organization could monitor it and raise funds for themselves. There was a suggestion to charge the FTLPO who use the trash/recycling site. It was mentioned that Scandia Valley already has recycling in the area that take trash and recycling on Wednesday and Sundays. The FTLPOA will continue to look at this project. Gary Green made the motion to table the Trash/Recycling project for now. Ray Barnaglie seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- j) Region Wide Lake Association Update: There is money available from Morrison County and the DNR for Lake Associations to stop the spread of AIS. There was discussion regarding a power wash station which uses high temperatures available at the public landing. It would require a full time employee. A motion was made to continue to work with the Quad Lake Association. Laine Robson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Campground Expansion: Chuck Salter reported that an EAW was not ordered by Morrison County Board before the Fish Trap Lake Campground/Scenic View Resort could expand. He stated that in some circumstances an EAW is mandatory but with this expansion it was not mandatory. FTLPOA obtained the required number of signatures to petition the Environmental Quality Board asking for an EAW to be done before any expansion because we believe that this area is very fragile and sensitive. The FTLPOA board was also concerned with the Campground’s water runoff and the filtration system. Morrison County Board had to make a decision what they believed was best for the county. They looked at this expansion differently than the FTLPOA does. Many individuals felt that the Campground is out of compliance now so how can they be allowed to expand? FTLPOA can appeal Morrison County’s decision to not require an EAW to Morrison County District Court on the grounds that the Morrison County board was Arbitrary and Capricious. The Morrison County Board did not feel that FTL’s soils are sensitive. FTLPOA felt that Morrison County Board could not make a good decision on this expansion without getting some more detailed and scientific information. Some Association members did some research and found that to obtain an attorney for an appeal it could cost \$5000. There

- was some discussion that maybe the Association could find an attorney who would do it “Pro Bono.” There also may be the possibility of a lawsuit against Morrison County. Scandia Valley Township does not have any concerns with the expansion. Gary Ziehmman motioned that the FTLPOA Board’s use their discretion in regards to the expense of an appeal. Matt Kremae seconded the motion. The motion carried by 100 % of the FTPOA.
- b) Fishing Contest: It was decided to suspend the fishing contest at this time. There was discussion on how to promote some community activities which could bring FTLPO together, such as an ice cream social, weekend summer fest, or a project day. This will be revisited.
 - c) Elections of New Board members: Jim Licari, Paul Baker, Joan Russell, George Heroux and Peg Hartung terms end June 2015. Both Jim Licari and Joan Russell have declined to serve another term. Gary Ziehmman and Jon Scott Johnson wanted to serve on the board. Scott Schnuckle made a motion to accept the reelection of Paul Baker, George Heroux and Peg Hartung and new board members Gary Ziehmman and Jon Scott Johnson. Paul Baker seconded the motion. The motion carried.
 - d) Boat Parade: The boat parade will be July 4, 2015 at 12 noon. FTLPOs who want to participate in the parade are to meet in the bay by the campground.
 - e) Door Prizes from Campfire Bay Resort.

7. The FTLPOA meeting was adjourned.

FTLPOA Board meeting followed the meeting.

- a) Leadership for next year: Chuck Salter has been the President for FTLPOA for 8-10 years. He has decided to resign from this position on September 30, 2015 but remain on the board. Scott Schnuckle will be the President of FTLPOA beginning October 1, 2015 and Mike Flanagan will be the Vice President. Both these positions are a 1 year appointment.
- b) The FTLPOA Board decided to look into an appeal of the EAW.
- c) The Fall board meeting will be September 19th at 9:30 am at Scandia Valley Township Hall.

Respectfully submitted by,
Mary B Thibert