

# Lake Mitchell Property Owners Incorporated

## Board meeting Minutes (v2)

January 25, 2022

**Zoom Meeting Attendance:** Dave Stinger, Jackie Erway, Dave Kuyers, Hugh Hufnagel

### 1. Board positions:

- a. Board officers: Following discussion a motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously that the following people shall serve in the officer positions noted. Dave Stinger, President; Jackie Erway, Vice President, Dave Kuyers, Treasurer and Legal; Hugh Hufnagel, Secretary.
- b. Open board position: There is currently one unfilled board position. The following steps will be taken to fill it. (1) An announcement of the board opening will be posted on the LMPOI website, sent by email to all LMPOI members and recent petition signers, and announced on Facebook (by Jackie). (2) Interested people will be told that they must be a dues paying LMPOI member and send a letter of interest. (3) All LMPOI members who submit a letter of interest will be interviewed (by phone) by two LMPOI board members (Dave Stinger and Jackie Erway). (4) Dave and Jackie will recommend one or two people to the full board for consideration and approval. (Note there are a few people who have already verbally expressed interest in joining the board.)

2. **Bylaws change:** There was discussion of changing the membership year to be the calendar year. This would make the annual membership renewal process easier to understand for members. The following motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved: “Resolved, that Article III Section 4 of the LMPOI Bylaws be changed to: The membership year shall be the calendar year, January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> each year.” It was noted that this bylaws change must be approved by the membership at the next membership meeting. The board also decided by consensus that new members who joined the LMPOI as part of the petition-signing process in December 2021 will be considered paid members for calendar year 2022.

3. **Annual meeting date:** The board set the date for the 2022 LMPOI annual membership meeting for Saturday, July 9, 2022, at 10 am at the Cherry Grove Township Hall. It was noted that this will not be the same day as the lake Mitchell Improvement Board (LMIB) annual meeting. We plan to offer a Zoom connection for the July meeting.

4. **Goals & Activities for 2022:** Dave Stinger noted that the core mission of the LMPOI was to address lake issues of interest to Lake Mitchell property owners. He said that he felt that we may have been putting too much emphasis on Lake Mitchell Sewer Authority (LMSA) problems in 2021 at the expense of other lake issues. Other board members generally agreed with his observations. Following lengthy discussion, the board agreed on the following goals and activities for 2022. (Note: The LMPOI website homepage and other pages will be revised to reflect these goals and activities.)

- a. LMSA monitoring: Continue to advocate for much improved sewer system governance, management, operations (maintenance and improvement) and affordability. This work will include advocating for improved:
  - Oversight: Overall governance and management competence is inadequate. For example, there is not (and has never been) sufficient residential sewer customer representation on the

LMSA board. Additionally, LMSA board members should be expected to request, read, and study relevant information with respect to key decisions that it makes – before it makes those decisions.

- **Accountability:** LMSA should operate in a fiduciary manner with respect to its captive customers.
- **Transparency:** LMSA is open to sharing information, answering customer questions and seriously considering customer suggestions. For example, LMSA should request outside independent professional review of some of its most significant analyses and conclusions. Further, LMSA should be putting significant (and costly) contracts up for competitive bidding.

Note: LMPOI will try in 2022 to get more LMPOI members actively involved in LMSA monitoring activities. For example, members should be attending and speaking at LMSA board meetings. Another example: Identify and encourage LMPOI members to run for open township trustee positions. LMSA board members are appointed by the Cherry Grove, Selma and Clam Lake Township boards. These boards have actively discouraged LMPOI efforts to have customers appointed to the LMSA board.

- Lake level monitoring:** LMPOI has been informally involved in monitoring lake levels to help ensure that they are at adequate levels to support summer boating activities. This work will be formalized and upgraded in 2022. In 2021, our recommendations to the drain commissioner led to the dam being closed early to maintain high summer water levels. Additionally, LMPOI recommendations led the drain commissioner to make repairs to the dam.
  - LMIB coordination:** It is believed that there is general confusion among Lake Mitchell property owners about what the LMPOI does (address property owners concerns) and what the LMIB does (address lake weed control). Efforts to coordinate the activities and communication of both groups will be made in 2022. More information on this topic is discussed in another agenda item below.
  - Property owners' social activity in the summer:** The board decided to schedule and conduct an outdoor social gathering of all LMPOI members sometime this coming summer. (Camp Torenta was discussed as a possible location.) The purpose of the event will be to help Lake Mitchell property owners meet and get to know each other to build some friendships and cohesion in the LMPOI. These relationships can also help bring more members into working actively to address issues of concern to all property owners.
  - Fishing experience:** Work with LMPOI members to improve the Lake Mitchell fishing experience. This will be done by working with the Michigan DNR as described in the next section of the minutes.
5. **Department of Natural Resources (DNR) interface:** Fishing is a subject of high interest to many Lake Mitchell property owners. And fishing in the lake is not as satisfying an experience for many as it used to be a few years ago. LMPOI will try to identify members who have a strong interest in fishing and arrange a meeting with the Michigan DNR to talk about the topic of fishing. Questions to be asked include:
- Should there be another formal study of the Lake Mitchell fish population? (The last one was done ten years ago in 2012.)

- What are the fish stocking goals and plans for both Lake Mitchell and Lake Cadillac?
- What are the policies for the fish population in Lake Mitchell?
- Why have the populations of bass, walleyes, blue gills, perch and other species of pan fish been declining in recent years?
- What can be done about it?
- Are fishing tournament policies working to the disadvantage of Lake Mitchell?

**6. Sewer update:**

- a. Member email update: It was decided that an email update should be sent to all LMPOI members/contributors. This update should discuss what has been accomplished (and not accomplished) in the past year and describe how and how much membership dues have been collected and spent. This will also be an opportunity to recruit other members to become more actively involved in efforts to improve LMSA. Past efforts cannot be sustained in the future solely by the five board members who carried them in 2021.
- b. Legal Fund contributor letter: It was also decided that a similar printed letter should be written and sent to those property owners who contributed to the Legal Fund to support LMSA oversight. This letter should also include information about how much money was collected and how it was spent.
- c. Sewage volumes chart: Dave Kuyers distributed and reviewed a chart showing the volumes of Lake Mitchell sewage gallons per resident treated in 2021. The chart also compared Lake Mitchell volumes per resident with Cadillac volumes per resident. The data raises several questions that call into question some of the statements and actions taken by LMSA. Dave Kuyers will talk to his source of this information to see some of the data inconsistencies can be explained.

7. **Lake Mitchell Improvement Board (LMIB) coordination:** In addition to what was already said about this topic above, it was decided to approach Dave Foley (who writes the LMIB newsletter) and discuss the idea of having a joint newsletter for both the LMPOI and the LMIB. Perhaps Dave Foley could write it (he is a good writer and enjoys writing) and the cost could be shared between the two organizations. This arrangement could work well providing that the LMPOI has some control of what is written about LMPOI activities (for purposes of accuracy and subject matter).
8. **Website update:** Hugh Hufnagel responded to Dave Stingers email regarding changes that might be made to the LMPOI website to update and improve it. (His email was sent on 1-18-22.) There was general agreement with the ideas and suggestions he made in the email. The idea of adding a brief and easy-to-understand financial chart was discussed further. This chart would show the income (dues), how it was spent, and the year end fund balance. Dave Kuyers will prepare the chart for inclusion at an appropriate place on the website. (Note: This chart will NOT include the legal fund collections and expenditures, as they were separate from LMPOI dues.)

Another suggestion made at the board meeting was to include information about how members could become more actively involved in LMPOI activities. Examples: (1) Members could attend LMSA

board meetings and represent customer concerns (assisting board members currently doing this activity). (2) Members could help plan the summer social outing. (3) Members could assist in lake level monitoring. (4) Members could assist in fishing improvement efforts.

9. **Potential funding from Covid relief sources:** Dave Stinger noted that there may possibly be some federal money available to help address Lake Mitchell issues. He will explore this idea further and report back to the board.

These minutes were prepared by Hugh Hufnagel on January 27, 2022 and revised with board member input on January 30, 2022.