

Lake Mitchell Property Owners Association

2026 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes

Saturday, June 27, 2026, v3 Final

Meeting call to order: 10:02 a.m.

Location: Camp Torenta dining hall

Board member attendance: Gary Huyge, Hank Risley, Hugh Hufnagel

Property owner attendance: 74 people signed the meeting attendance form

Property owner issues: Property owners who signed the meeting attendance form were asked to list their top two Lake Mitchell issues. Results were as follows:

- Lake levels (including lake health, flooding, rocks) = 20
- Weeds = 19
- Sewer = 12
- Short-term rentals = 6
- Other = 9 (Torenta area canal = 4, roads = 3, fishing = 1, communication = 1)

1. Welcome:

- Board member introductions: Hugh Hufnagel, President; Gary Huyge, Vice President, Treasurer: Hank Risley, Secretary
- LMPOA mission: Hugh noted that the LMPOA mission is (1) to educate and inform members on issues and actions affecting the quality and use of Lake Mitchell, and (2) to represent and protect property owner interests to enhance the enjoyment of our shared lake.
- Observations: Hugh noted that the work of the LMPOA has been difficult and still is. Several organizations collectively determine our enjoyment of the lake: the State of Michigan, Wexford County, Cherry Grove, Selma and Clam Lake Townships, the Lake Mitchell Improvement Board (LMIB), the Lake Mitchell Sewer Authority (LMSA), and a variety of other non-governmental organizations. We (property owners) need to stay connected to these organizations to advocate for our interests and prevent action that would impact on us negatively.

Complicating things further, we property owners have multiple competing perspectives. We often disagree about weed treatment methods, water levels, lake assessments, sewer services and costs, short-term rental policies and many other issues. These disagreements are sometimes strong. Read the results of our past property owner surveys on our website and see how strong some of these disagreements can be.

The LMPOA is at a crossroads now. We currently have three board members and we should have five. We need help from new LMPOA board members and other volunteers to attend community meetings, help with our communication efforts, monitor lake levels and serve on other boards that make decisions that impact life on our lake. Three or even five board members cannot do this work all by ourselves. Our accomplishments (listed immediately below) are achieved by our board members and other involved property owners like you.

- Remembering Dave Stinger: Hugh reported that Dave Stinger, a co-founder and president of the LMPOA when it was reconstituted in 2018, died in April. Dave devoted many hours to reorganizing the LMPOA and leading the board in fulfilling its mission. He led efforts to advocate for proper lake levels, to upgrade the sewer authority (LMSA) board to include property owners, and he recruited several of us to serve on the board. His knowledge, experience, and willingness to get personally involved lake issues will be missed. He was a model board member and president for all of us.

2. LMPOA 2025-26 accomplishments: Hugh briefly highlighted the following items.

- Advocated for property owners at LMSA and LMIB board meetings.
- Advocated for property owners at Selma and Cherry Grove Township board meetings.
- Advocated for issues identified in the 2024 LMPOA member survey (see website).
- Communicated with members via LMPOA website, Facebook page and member emails.
- Distributed LMPOA annual meeting notice and membership flyers at each lake property.
- See LMPOA website for 2025-2026 board meeting minutes for details.

3. LMPOA business

- Membership and financial update: Gary provided an overview, including details relating to the # of currently paying members.
- Board Member changes: Hugh reported changes in the LMPOA Board that had occurred in the prior year. This included the departure of Jackie Erway and Greg Wahl.
- Facebook policy disagreement: Hugh I noted that the active Facebook page that had previously been managed as a source of communication by the LMPOA was no longer under the management of the LMPOA. Former Board Member Jackie Erway has renamed the Facebook group and restricted activity from the FB Board. The LMPOA has only recently been able to post selected information and messages on the site.
- Board Member Recruitment: Hugh noted the fact that per the bylaws the board should consist of five members but was currently only three. He asked anyone interested in assisting on the board to speak with any of the board members following the meeting. Several meeting participants later expressed interest.
- Election of board members: Hugh indicated that the three existing board members were willing to be re-elected and asked the property owner members in attendance to vote to re-elect them for another term. A motion was made, seconded and Hugh, Gary and Hank were unanimously re-elected to the board.

4. Other issues

- Flood-related road repairs: Hugh reported that he recently talked with Karl Hansen, director of the Wexford County Road Commission. He explained the difference in repair activity as it related to “primary” and “local” roads. Short-term, temporary fixes (recycled asphalt patches) have been completed on the local roads around the lake. The Road Commission is “cautiously optimistic” that flood-related emergency federal funding will be available to permanently fix the flood-damaged primary roads and culverts around the lake. In the

short-term primary roads will be partially prepared for permanent repaving that will hopefully happen before the winter snowplowing season. If emergency federal is not available, then the primary roads will need to be repaired using budgeted funds set aside for other road improvements. Karl Hansen also asked us to let all property owners know that sandbags used for flood control should NOT be emptied into low levels near roads because they could lead to future flooding problems.

- Short-term rental (STR) ordinances update: Hugh led discussion on STR rental ordinances, including their administration and enforcement. Presently there are 31 STRs around Lake Mitchell (17 in Cherry Grove Township and 14 in Selma Township). He noted that the primary goal of the ordinances was to balance the competing commercial interests of STR owners and the residential interests of their neighbors who want to preserve the essential residential nature of lake living. (Note: Except for a small strip of land immediately adjacent to M-115 on the southeast side of the lake, all non-government-owned land around the lake is currently zoned "residential.") This is a growing issue as local real estate agents report that many inquires for lakefront homes/cottages listed for sale on the market are coming from buyers who want to purchase them for commercial use as income-generating businesses.

Both Cherry Grove and Selma townships have recently passed STR ordinances, with the Cherry Grove ordinance amended this past year and the Selma Township Ordinance under current review. Management and enforcement of the ordinances have been inconsistent. Both townships currently have several STRs operating in violation of their respective ordinances.

The STR discussion included questions from members at large and input from several individuals. Questions were posed that were specific to the individual township ordinances. Hank noted that he owns both a Selma Township cottage that he operates as an STR and he lives in another Selma Township home, less than ½ mile from his STR cottage. As a result of his activity and interest in STR management he had engaged at length with Selma Township officials regarding the STR ordinance, including providing input on ordinance language to be considered by the township board.

5. Lake health: Mike Soloman, Chairperson, LMIB

- Mike Solomon described how he manages lake water levels. Discussion included an overview of the factors that contributed to the remarkable April flooding. The substantial snowmelt of this past winter contributed to excess water in the wetlands surrounding the lake. Extreme levels of snow/snowmelt and rain in early April also elevated the lake, compounded by the wetland situation, to create the massive flooding we experienced in April. It was reported that the dam into the Clam River was currently fully open and likely to be adjusted in mid-July.
- Mike Solomon spoke regarding weed levels and treatment in the lake. It was reported that the April flooding had contributed to excess weed growth, as high water levels increased the nutrient levels in the lakes.
- He also discussed water testing on the lake. An MSU extension service team is testing and monitoring it for e coli levels. The tests can vary dramatically, depending on recent

waterfowl activity and other items. It was noted that there was a single report on Lake Cadillac that exhibited some concern. When re-tested immediately the following day there was not a significant issue.

6. Fishing update: Dave Foley, local outdoors writer, retired coach and long-time resident provided commentary on fishing in the lakes. Input included recommendations on when to fish and what areas are likely to provide improved success. Various lures were shown, including discussion regarding how to modify and use them to have fewer issues snagging weeds.
7. Sewer report: Dave Kuyers, Chair LMSA Board, provided detail regarding the status of the sewer system refurbishment project. He noted that construction is complete on the first 3 contracts leaving an estimated \$16 million of additional work to complete what is required by the Administrative Consent Order with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE). LMSA has received grants of over \$3.9 million dollars leaving \$12 million of funding that is still required to be secured. LMSA has applied for a loan to fund the remaining amount. Unless other grant funds are provided significant additional increases in user sewer rates are to be expected. They are actively pursuing additional grants from both the Federal and State governments. The rate for the coming year will be adjusted from \$154 to \$175 per month.
8. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.
 - Board members available to individually answer questions
 - Hugh Hufnagel, 616-430-1419
 - Gary Huyge, 616-550-9846
 - Hank Risley, 616-485-3897