



BELMONT LAKE COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JULY 20, 2019

MINUTES (UNAPPROVED)

Opening remarks from Peter White, BLCA President: Welcome to the members, members of council (Mayor Jim Martin, David Gerow, Larry Ellis) and introduction of the Board: Fred Bennett, Brian Deas, Donna Peeling, Wendy Vuyk, Greg Alexander, Evan Meyers (absent), Katherine Deas (absent).

Motion 19-01 to approve Minutes of the 2018 BLCA AGM (Peter White, Greg Alexander). Carried.

President's Report – Peter White:

Peter discussed Crowe Valley Conservation Authority (CVCA) and the important work that CVCA does on behalf of lake residents. Noted that CVCA did an excellent job managing water levels through the a very difficult 2019 freshet (spring runoff). CVCA funding continues to be an area of concern for the BLCA.

HBMLA

- General discussion regarding HBMLA and role with township
- Focus for 2018 was to encourage seasonal resident participation in the municipal election. Township voting rates did not increase by a significant amount; HBMLA will need to review why we were unable to increase this by much.
- HBMLA has arranged a meeting with council on July 22. The agenda for this meeting is extensive with a focus on re-engaging in the budget cycle and HBM support for CVCA. Download the HBMLA / HBM agenda.

In closing Peter reviewed the roles of the board members and thanked all of the many volunteers who help the BLCA achieve the goals of the organization. Peter noted that we need to look for a new and particularly younger group of volunteers for the BLCA as a means to ensure our success moving forward.

Peter's full report as submitted at the meeting:

1. *Water levels: The CVCA has done a good job of managing water levels in the system*
 - *actions taken in prior years to reduce the leakage of the Belmont dam and log management have been very successful*
 - *The spring freshet saw lake levels rise to flood levels, even higher than the levels of 2014. This caused some damage around the lake, but other valleys in eastern and more northern Ontario and Quebec suffered much more*
 - *Belmont Lake level is 23cm over summer set level as of last week*
2. *The HBM Lakes Association (HBMLA) were involved in several areas over the year.*

- The main focus over the last year was to encourage members to vote in the municipal election. We asked each candidate to answer specific questions related to lake property owners, organized all candidate meetings and communicated the feedback from the candidates to our members. We chose not to endorse candidates, although we did point out that both Larry Ellis and Hart Webb were BLCA members.

Results of the election were

- O Mayor Jim Martin*
- o Deputy Mayor David Gerow*
- o Councillors Larry Ellis, Hart Webb, Barry Pomeroy*

- We have scheduled a special meeting with council next Monday, July 22 at 8:30 to open communications on issues of importance to the lakes such as:

- Planning,*
- Township budget reviews,*
- support for the CVCA,*
- how to work productively with all levels of government*

- Glen MacDonald organized a very productive road maintenance summit in June. We had over 50 attendees, and an excellent exchange of ideas and approaches to private road maintenance

- Little progress has been made on a septic inspection program. We will work with the new council to make progress in this area

3. BLCA runs on volunteers. Our agenda today covers most of the key areas that contribute to our enjoyment of the lake.

- Fred Bennett keeps track of membership and our finances and will provide an update on our financial situation and forecast for the future.*
- In Evan Meyers' absence, Fred will also give us a summary of road representative successes, along with an update on calendars and the draw for members who renewed their membership early.*
- Donna Peeling and Wendy Vuyk will update you on our program for water testing and some early test results for 2019*
- Brian Deas will provide Katherine Deas' update on our social media, BLCA clothing, fireworks and the regatta*
- Brian Deas will provide an update on the BLCA Golf Tournament, Signage and the Parade of Lights*
- Greg Alexander will provide an update on Marker Buoys*

4. I would like to thank the members of the board and all our volunteers for their hard work and significant achievements over the year. In addition to hard work, we have a lot of fun and we get to meet some very interesting and lively cottagers along the way.

5. We are interested in keeping the momentum of accomplishments over the past several years. To that end, it would be very beneficial to have several younger members join the board. Please give some thought to standing for election to the board this year or next.

Report from HMB Council – Mayor Jim Martin

Mayor Martin reported that they were successful in applying for grant money for work in the township, including \$1.5M for sewer upgrades in the town. Peterborough County will be upgrading work on County Rd. #48 later this year with a budget of \$2M.

The Long Term Care facility construction work should move ahead early in 2020, as it is too late to begin work in 2019. LTC will include assisted housing “quads” on site, and construction of these should begin this year.

Other items reported on include:

- Clear bag program for household waste in the works
- Working with MNR re camping on crown land
- Parking on Mile of Memories and enforcement challenges discussed
- CVCA: HBM visited MNR and representatives of the Ontario Government and to discuss the ongoing funding challenges with the CVCA.
- There were 430 calls to Fire Dep’t last year, primarily medical assistance calls.
- 294 Building Permits for 2018 and likely to increase for 2019.
- The township has provided assistance to some building owners in town to improve the overall look of the town and the health of buildings and storefronts
- Renewed focus on communications: Print newsletters, improvement to the website and Twitter feed

Questions:

Do the budget cuts affect the current management of water levels, perceived that water levels have varied considerably this season. Reply: Budget issues would not affect water levels this year. Discussion followed regarding water levels, volatility and winter freeze levels.

Dave Gerow comments regarding the importance of water level management. Noted that MNR is quite active in the area including fish management and sampling in the watershed.

Larry Ellis comments that communication to CVCA is important and that there are many factors and many lakes that influence how CVCA operates.

Floor: Thank you the HBM FD for the upgrade / tanker certification

Comment and thank-you to HBM council for the ease of internet voting in 2018 and encouragement for others to use this service.

Financial Report – Fred Bennett

Peter reported that the Association was in good financial shape as shown in the BLCA Fiscal Report presented on the reverse of the Agenda. Original projection called for a small budget loss, however grants and slightly increased income resulted in a small surplus.

Fred noted that e-transfer usage has increased from 16% to over 20%, and this greatly simplifies his work. Also noted that there are approximately 500 cottages, of which we have email contact with 400. We have 13 cottages with no contact information at all.

Fred's written report, as submitted:

Our goal is to decrease our surplus by running a small annual deficit.

Last year lost \$362. Would have been more except:

- *gov't grant \$650, next time 2023*
- *interest rate on GICs went from .5 to 1.75 and 1.95*
- *eTransfers now 21% up from 16% the previous year*
- *this year 15% of those say they will eTransfer but have not yet sent fees*

Membership data base

- *495 properties between the bridges*
- *another 35-40 properties in the data base beyond the bridges most without lake access*
- *100 properties no email*
- *13 properties with no information*
- *noticeable decrease in land lines*

Comparison: 2018 2019

Cash 66% 62%

Cheque 18% 17%

eTransfer 16% 21%

Question (Bracht): Audit vs review (Reply: BLCA's books are reviewed, not audited).

Motion 19-02: It was moved and seconded that the financial statements for 2018, and the budget for 2018 and 2019 be accepted as presented (Bennett, White). Carried.

Road Reps, Newsletter, Membership Draw – Evan Meyers

We now have 41 road reps. We are looking for help on a number of roads, including Bowen Rd. and Hatchery Rd. A full list of the Road Reps is available on our website.

We have three new Road Reps:

- FR 33.....Jill Hutcheon taking over from Debbie Thorne
- FR 11.....Vicki King
- Bowen Rd.....Nellie Dinis

We would still like help on

- FR15
- FR19
- Bowen Rd

- FR 18 (Fish Hatchery)
- FR7/7A

Membership Draw results we reviewed and the process for selecting winners for the draw was explained.

Peter White reviewed the genesis of the Road Rep idea and thanked Evan and Mary-Ellen Meyers for the important and on-going work that they do to support the Road Rep program and the event that they host for volunteers each year in September.

Water Quality and Testing – Wendy Vuyk

Wendy described the current process with the Caduceon Lab. Noted that the results continue to show higher levels of Total Coliform at the exit of the Deer (Crowe) river as well as higher E coli levels.

Donna Peeling reported that water clarity (Secchi Disk) results show an improvement in clarity from the spring of this year, however we await the analysis on our year-over-year results.

Discussion regarding filamentous algae (“Elephant Snot”) and observations regarding observations regarding algae in the lake. Action for Greg to post documents prepared for the Kawartha Lakes Stewards Association regarding algae and lake health and aquatic health management.

Social Media & Fireworks – Brian Deas on behalf of Katherine Deas

Brian Deas read Katherine’s report, noting that our Facebook page continues to be an important tool for connecting cottagers. This spring’s runoff resulted in a number of items being posted as “lost and found” to Facebook. Commenting in 2018 related to boat speed and noise resulted discussion that was “unhealthy” and therefore commenting was disabled for the balance of the season. Comments were re-enabled in 2019 with no issues.

Brian reviewed fireworks and the continuing policy that BLCA would encourage members to attend fireworks established events rather than setting of their own firework displays.

Katherine ran the Regatta in 2018 and thanked the many OSSD hours volunteers who stepped up to help in 2018.

Katherine’s full written report can be found at the end of the meeting minutes.

Golf Tournament, BLCA signs, Fireworks, Ridesharing – Brian Deas

Golf – Debbie Howe is running the Golf Tournament this year, registrations are open. Greg Clements is at the meeting and will accept registration fees. BLCA will add this to facebook “events” in the coming weeks.

Fireworks: Thanks again to Bob Prins, Bryon Backus and John Tsalkos. Brian noted that Bob and the team has agreed to do the fireworks again in 2020 (July 1).

Ridesharing: Discussion re: general interest in ridesharing programs. Noted that there were potential liability issues related to running our own ridesharing program. Greg Alexander report that he has signed up for two of the existing programs (Kanagaride, Ridesharing.com) but has yet to try them out.

Rock Markers – Greg Alexander

The board thanked Greg Clements for his work on the markers this season. For 2019 the replacement program for the markers continues, noting that high expenditures in the last couple of years reflect this investment. Please report any missing or moved markers to Greg Alexander 705-778-1870, Greg Clements, or email to rockhead@blca.ca

Follow-up discussion regarding regatta: Volunteers (OSSD) needed and a discussion regarding membership and event (Regatta) participation.

Other Business

Kathy McBey discussed the Cordova Library and provided some small information cards that members can take and post in the cottage, showing the hours and services provided by the library.

Kathy also discussed FOCA, in particular discounts and services that FOCA provides to members. FOCA has also begun supporting the distribution of Naloxone kits. Kathy showed the kit contents.

Ticks: Discussion regarding the prevalence of ticks in the area. Noted that the assumption now is that any tick will be infected and treatment will be needed.

Snorkel masks: Comment that the new full-face masks are excellent and particularly useful for new cottage guest:

Wayne Alexander provided a reminder about the Sailboat Race and that the format has changed to allow for two “classes”, one for those who have won in previous years and one for rookies.

Election of Board of Directors – Peter White

Peter announced that all eight members of the Board have volunteered to stand for re-election. The floor was then opened for nomination of other candidates. As a result of no other names being brought forward, the nominations were closed and the current Board was acclaimed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Written Reports (as submitted by board members who were unable to attend):

Katherine Deas:

Hi everyone. I apologize for not being there today and want everyone to know that I am available for questions or comments at any time via email at katsdeas@gmail.com

I am covering four topics today: social media, clothing, fireworks and the regatta.

Firstly, for social media, let's start with the numbers:

We have 557 page likes on our Facebook. Considering the size of our lake and membership, I consider this to be a strong representative sample of our group so that even if someone is not following us online, chances are their neighbour is, so, we have a pretty good reach.

Every time we post something, we reach an average of 250 – 350 people. Our most engaging posts are usually regarding community events. People like to know what is going on in the community outside of the BLCA, so we have become a good source of information for local events.

Our analytics reveal that we are improving in every aspect of our Facebook page, such as: post engagement, page views and responsiveness.

Our site is used for a variety of purposes, including: sharing BLCA and other events, political and cottage-related updates (such as from FOCA and local conservation authorities), acting as a lost and found resource – we have reunited many docks and floating objects with their owners – and a place to post pictures and videos and share memories.

Last summer, wake boats and boat racing were hot topics around the lake. This translated into the social media universe. Unfortunately, the banter wasn't always friendly. In fact, opposing viewpoints were expressed by some in a manner that became quite rude and hostile. We posted objective information from Transport Canada about speed limits and wake restrictions and stated our stance was simply to stand behind current laws but, some users took their comments too far. So, instead of blocking people, we disabled all comments. When we finally decided to re-enable commenting, we provided a disclaimer warning users that only friendly, non-derogatory discussion would be permitted. We also stated that any future negativity could result in individual users being temporarily or permanently blocked from the site. So far, we have had no further issues. There is an upside to the negativity we witnessed last summer and that is that not only are people passionate about lake issues and willing to share their opinions but, our Facebook page has become a forum in which we are able to debate. This gives board members a great opportunity to gain insight into what people think about hot button issues.

Moving on to Instagram, we have noticed an increase in people following our account. As users know, this site is for pictures only. We have been able to make good use of our Instagram account in two important ways: firstly, we always have an abundance of pictures sent to us for the calendar. So, I decided to collect some of the pictures that didn't make it to the calendar and use them to post online, while giving credit to the person who submitted it. Secondly, in an effort to increase youth engagement, I put out a call on Facebook for a student to help manage the Instagram account. One young lady volunteered and she has been doing a great job posting the pictures from our archive, adding a brief description, hashtags and even linking to the account of the person who submitted the photo. She will be receiving OSSD hours for her work.

All in all, social media has improved significantly over the past few years, with people becoming more engaged, submitting more information more often and using the site in more ways than ever before. So, we look forward to another exciting year.

Some people asked about creating a “social media corner” on our website so I will ask Greg Alexander to speak to that if anyone has any questions.

Next – clothing for the BLCA was a bit of a hit and miss. We distributed shirts to the road reps last year and will, at some point, create a new, error-free version to pass along again. Last summer, I designed two shirts for sale to the public. We offered two separate designs in four colours. We offered the shirts for sale at the regatta and other events. Sales did quite well and we received very positive feedback. We still have some stock leftover from last year. Instead of ordering more just yet, we heard that a family was designing their own shirts, and we have seen others around the lake wearing them and, you can buy Belmont Lake shirts at Sam’s Place so, we decided to see what demand is like this summer for our current inventory and how well sales do with the clothing being offered by various places around the lake before placing a new order for our own styles. So, expect sometime in 2020 to have more shirts available directly from the BLCA.

If anyone is interested in purchasing a BLCA shirt, please see Brian Deas or contact Katherine at katsdeas@gmail.com

On to fireworks now. As you may know, in addition to the BLCA, there are quite a few displays offered around the lake. BLCA puts on a show every year on the lake with the help of private donors and organizers. Cordova Mines has an annual display and so does Havelock. They all take place on the Canada Day weekend. We try to coordinate so that they are all held on different nights but sometimes there is a bit of overlap. The lake display is really special because people attend in boats and, for those who live near the south end, also watch from shore. Cordova Mines is a long-standing tradition because just before the show begins, everyone sings O’Canada and there is more opportunity to socialize because everyone is gathered together in one place. The next time that the first of July falls on the long weekend, we will be eligible for funding from the Government of Canada through the Celebrate Canada program, which we have received in recent years. And, as usual, we ask that people refrain from putting on their own personal displays as the loud noises scare pets so we really encourage folks to come out to one of the many local fireworks events held around the lake.

Lastly, I will briefly talk about the regatta. Greg Alexander usually manages the activities but as he was away last summer, I volunteered to take his place. So, firstly, I want to thank everyone that helped and volunteered because it is really a big team effort and I think the day was a great success. Last year, we had more student volunteers than ever before!! We offer OSSD hours towards it and word has really spread about the need for people to help so that many youth volunteers contacted me before the big day to offer assistance. Everyone, youth and adults, was really flexible about helping with whatever was needed so we are heading in a positive direction in terms of becoming more inclusive for people of all ages.

Last year, we were fortunate for Mary Ellen Myers volunteering to take pictures of the day with a real camera so of you can visit our Facebook page and find a huge selection of professional quality pictures capturing the entire day.

The trivia contest was also a great success. We had a 2018 winner and a 2019 winner, pictures posted on our Facebook. The trivia is local knowledge and a great way to provide entertainment for those folks attending the regatta but not inclined to participate in other events. We are still looking for people to takeover some of the BBQ duties at the regatta, everything other than the actual cooking, if interested or know someone who might be, please contact any board member.

Looking forward to another great year and thanks again to everyone for their participation.