



BELMONT LAKE COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JULY 15, 2023

9:30AM

MINUTES (UNAPPROVED) – DRAFT 2 6/16 10:04AM

Opening remarks from Peter White, BLCA President: Peter introduced Havelock-Belmont-Methuen (HBM) Mayor Jim Martin and Deputy Mayor Hart Webb, as well as the BLCA Board Members.

Regrets: BLCA Board member Erin Dixon

Motion 23-01 to approve Minutes of the 2022 BLCA AGM (Peter White / Greg Alexander). Carried.

Noted that the meeting agenda, financial reports, and BLCA Board nominations can be found at:
<https://blca.ca/board-documents/>

President's Report – Peter White:

Each board member will present a summary of their areas of focus since our last meeting. If a board member was not able to make today's meeting, I will cover their presentation.

The golf tournament is on once again on the August 19, a little earlier than in past years. Chris Wiggins has taken over the organizing this event. You can register now by emailing Chris Wiggins or by calling him directly. Get the information you need in our newsletter.

And speaking of our newsletter, John Dixon will be providing an update on putting the newsletter together. Erin Dixon did an amazing job with the newsletter design and layout.

A special thank you to Lisa Levy and Uta Peikert who did a fine job once again on our beautiful calendar

Crowe Valley conservation Authority:

- o We have been very pleased with water levels over the past year. CVCA was able to restore normal water levels within several days despite heavy rains last year and in the spring of this year.
- o We are reminded that the work on the Belmont dam that we helped get started a few years has been a prime factor in CVCA having the tools they need to keep water levels as stable as possible

HBM Lake Association:

- o After a two year pause due to COVID, we recently held a Lakes Association meeting in late June
- o Chris Wiggins and I attended to represent our lake. We provided a brief update on our key activities and were happy to hear what other lakes have planned for this year
- o We agreed we would schedule a meeting with township council in the near future to reopen communications lines and continue our productive relationship with that group.

BLCA Board Changes:

- o Evan Meyers and Erin Dixon are not standing for re-election to the board
- o Evan will continue in his role of organizing road rep, and critical function for our organization. The efforts of Evan and his Road Rep team have led to nearly a doubling in the membership count.
- o Erin Dixon is stepping down from the board after once again producing an amazing newsletter. The board will have to review the process of putting the newsletter together.
- o Peter announced he will be stepping down as president after this meeting. After 10 years in this position, it is time to bring new leadership to the association. He noted his time been a very productive and satisfying run, with increases in membership, resolution of some important member concerns and an increase in social events and participation in those events. Peter thanked the membership for their support over the 10 years. Let's continue to make our Belmont Lake experience a good one.

Havelock Belmont Methuen Township Update (Mayor Jim Martin)

Mayor Martin thanked the BLCA for invite to the BLCA AGM and presented the following update from HBM:

- The overall HBM Budget has seen a 3.9% increase in costs.
- HBM community survey had 187 replies: Top items were roads, outdoor facilities and trails
- Key budget items affecting the BLCA – website updates to better support for seasonal residents, council grant including for environmental programs. Council is working on details for private road grant.

Question: Is it possible for roads to get a discounted rate for gravel from Drain Bros? Reply – has been discussed with drain but the logistics of individuals roads mean that the cost savings hard to realize despite the volume.

- HBM is testing new asphalt on Round Lake Road – ultra-thin asphalt – extra cost but township is hoping the extra lifespan on the road will make it worthwhile.
- Burnt Dam bridge repair: The bridge was owned by the county but has been transferred to the township as part of the repair process.

Deputy Mayor Hart Webb provided an update on the Matheson Property:

- new trails and signage installed, 3km of new trails.
- Trails are not 100% accessible yet, and designed to discourage motorized vehicles.
- Grand opening planned for the conservation area in fall of 2023.

- The new Havelock Splash Pad is open and has been well used so far.

- The HBM Building Inspector retired but has now returned to work 3 days / week. Process for dealing with building permits is moving to an online platform. All townships are experiencing challenges retaining building department staff.

- Administrative Monetary Penalty is now in place. AMP was put in place in 2022 which will allow HBM to ticket for bylaw infractions, for example Mile of Memories parking issues.
- Economic Development – working on communications via social media. Shari Gottschalk is driving this program.
- Long Term Care: The project is moving along but there is still work to be done before the project can proceed.

Peter encouraged BLCA members to sign up for the HBM meeting notices. Visit the HBM website for signup information.

Question: Is there a move to change ward election process? Reply - Hart Webb – Council is working on various options which will eventually result in series of public meetings.

Question: Has HBM taken a position on additional regulation of AirBnb rentals? Reply - Review pending in the fall of 2023.

Comment regarding organics (food) composting program; could HBM look at providing access to desktop / countertop composting systems?

Bev Meyers: How to notify regarding Fire Ban and enforcement: BLCA board comment that we notify via road rep signs (BLCA action) and rely on social media posts from HBM that we recycle into our social media feeds.

Comment from Larry Ellis regarding AirBnb: Other townships utilize idea that it is a business and permit required.

Peter thanked the council members for attending and commented that in general the working relationship is positive. Chris Wiggins will be joining Peter in future Havelock-Belmont-Methuen Lakes Association (HBMLA) activities and meetings with council.

Financial Report – Valerie Marshall (Treasurer)

General comments from the Treasurer:

- Angela McCurdy taking care of advertising for the newsletter
- Interac E-transfers are working well for membership payments, but difficult to manage when insufficient information is provided in the transfer notes

The BLCA is reporting 313 members as of the AGM.

Other notes and comments to the Financial Statements:

- FOCA - \$1500, this will increase as going forward will need to pay HST
- Stewardship – water testing cost will increase but no final figures
- Large jump in newsletter costs (30%) cost and a small increase in calendar. Some of the additional cost in 2023 is due to directory printing

- Signage – new road rep signs on six roads. The new signs are more durable
- Sign at 6th and County Road #48 has moved to marina
- Belmont Expedition is running for 2023 but unsure if it will proceed in 2024. Participation in the event is stable but we do not have many new participants. The event will remain in budget for 2024.

There were no questions from the floor.

Comment from Peter White that the BLCA will continue to slowly wind down the surplus until it gets to a level more appropriate level.

Motion 23-02 to accept the Financial Report as presented (Valerie Marshall /John Dixon). Carried.

Winners of the early membership draw (Evan Meyers)

Evan acknowledged the work done by Valerie Marshall on the new road signs and how useful they will be to the BLCA.

Evan reported that for the membership draw, there were approximately \$1000 worth of draw prizes. For 2023 there 285 names in the draw, down slightly from 290 in 2021. BLCA membership has grown from approximately 1/3 to 2/3 of the lake population, and how the road rep process came to be and the importance of personal interaction to growing the BLCA membership and community. There are now 41 Road Reps, many who have been involved from the start of the Road Rep system. Noted that the list of Membership Draw winners is posted in the hall.

Evan thanked the board members and in particular Peter White as he steps away from the role of President. Evan discussed the development of the process of documenting the history of the lake, started by Donna Peeling and taken over by Ellen Walsh.

Finally, he reported he will be resigning from the Board of Directors this year but continue with his duties on the Road Rep and Membership fronts.

Evan provided a written report which was made available on the BLCA website prior to the meeting and is captured here in the minutes:

Two words sum up my experience on the BLCA Board..... Pretty Gratifying

Many years ago, too many to count, when I joined the Board, the BLCA had 157 stalwart members and dues of \$40 a year, yet the lake had over 500 cottages. Only 31% were members. Today we have solid support from about 350 members and dues of \$30 which include a wonderful calendar and directory. If there are 525 cottages on the lake, this represents 66% of the lake which is a bit above average for cottage associations in Ontario. More than double where we started.

To say I am proud of this accomplishment is an understatement. I am ecstatic! Gratified. The support the Board has received over the years from cottagers has been phenomenal. Thank you one and all.

I thought the idea of hand delivering newsletters was a great idea but overwhelming. We decided to try anyway. I quickly realized that I enjoyed knocking on doors and meeting people and that the effort was building membership and friends. Recruiting road reps as I traveled. That turned out to be the easiest part of the job. People voluntarily took stacks of newsletters and offered to deliver them. Many of those early road reps are still with us. Too many to mention but you know who you are. You are the true lake pioneers. We have 41 Road Reps today with very little turnover. These are the people that have created our wonderful lake community. A recent new arrival to our lake, one who had been on a couple of lakes previously, commented on how friendly Belmont cottagers were. That comment warmed my heart and made it all worthwhile. That was the goal. A lake community.

The BLCA Board to has been stable over this period with change coming only gradually, as it should. BLCA Board members who generously shared their valuable time for the good of the lake. They too know who they are and know that their efforts were instrumental in achieving our current level of success.

Peter White has been an outstanding President and wonderful human in his own right. Greg Alexander has been on the Board most of his life, it seems, and a very integral part of our lake community. Too many propeller repairs to count have been avoided because of him. It is a wonder Campbell's Belmont Marina don't have a hit out on him. One accomplishment we don't laud enough is the information we have been able to collect on the history of the lake. Donna Peeling spearheaded this but now is most capably followed by Ellen Walsh. The history articles, prepared by individual cottagers sharing their own histories, happened spontaneously. This has added to our treasure trove. I hope this all continues so that someday we can produce a book on the history of the lake. The Board you currently have is a great group of well-meaning and capable people. I know you appreciate them.

So, this is not goodbye, it is just the natural progression of things. Making way for new people and new ideas on the Board.

In retirement, with BLCA membership always top of mind, my plan is to create a gismo that will identify where the rocks are. Provide this only to members. If I were to be successful, I suspect our membership would skyrocket to over 90%!

Seriously, I have very much enjoyed my time on the Board; mostly because of all the wonderful people I met and worked with. Together, we all created an amazing lake community.

Just wish I had a glass of wine to make a toast.... To Belmont Lake. I love this place.

- Evan Meyers

Water Testing – Wendy Vuyk

Wendy reported that our water quality tests results continue to be positive. The Highest 2022 ecoli counts at the North River (11 in summer, dropping to 0 in the fall). The 2023 preliminary results look good with a highest ecoli count of 3 and total coliform of 18. For reference a beach closure would occur with ecoli >100 and total coliform >1000

Question: Track water temperature – could we track from cottagers history and cottage notes?
Comment from the floor that Donna Peeling and Richard Wood might be candidates for historical data.

Question: Blue-green algae status in the lake? None observed to date.

Question: Is the BLCA tracking invasive species? We applied to a FOCA program but was not accepted.
Comment from Katherine Deas that FOCA has many programs in place and we do share these to social media.

Peter White notes that water quality is still key to all cottagers and to date we appear to be maintaining a stable and healthy lake.

John Dixon – Newsletter & By-Law Revisions

John reported that the newsletter has maxed out in size at 64 pages. John acknowledged Erin Dixon's effort in the layout work but also in helping the advertisers clean up their image files.

- Advertising revenue is up again this year.
- Deadlines for articles moved up by a month for 2023 which helped the overall production process.
- John encouraged the members to consider providing articles for the newsletter, in particular in the area lake and lake family history.

By-Laws: Work in earnest has begun on the required by-law changes that are needed due to new Ontario legislation. This will be a large undertaking and is driven by changes to Ontario law that govern not-for-profit corporations.

Peter White extended a thank-you to Erin Dixon for all her work on the newsletter, and noted that the new board will have to work on a plan to cover this role for 2023.

Katherine Deas – Regatta / Social / FOCA

Katherine updated the membership on a number of event and social media items:

- Fireworks: Possible delay. It may not be possible to re-schedule but work with with Bob Prins' and team as they attempt to identify a new date
- FOCA Fall Meeting: Katherine attended the meeting and reviewed some of the material presented to the the membership.
- Noted that we still have a large following on our Facebook feed, and that we use it to promote our events. We also re-post items of interest, such as FOCA and township updates.
- The Regatta has a high participation level in 2022 and also a large volunteer group.
- BLCA Clothing on hiatus
- Noted that we do get negative feedback occasional regarding fireworks

Question regarding how we monitor non-member participation in the Regatta? Reply: Non-members are allowed to participate but are not eligible for prizes. We do not have an effective way of regulating non-member participation.

Question: What about parking and boat parking. Reply: This remains an issue with no easy solution.

Question: Crowd size is an issue particularly for younger participants, can anything be done? Reply: As a public space we have few options to regulate access.

Greg Alexander – Rock Marking and Regatta.

Greg thanked the many Regatta volunteers for making the Regatta Weekend a success.

Rock markers: Siblings Jillian Valentine and Aaron Valentine have taken over job of rock marking on Belmont Lake. As always concerns about the placement of markers can be sent to rockhead@blca.ca

Lake History – Ellen Walsh

Acknowledged Donne Peeling for all of her work on Lake History in the past. Ellen discussed the process to interview people for lake history items and the editing process that results. Also noted that Ellen will provide support for people who wish to write history articles for the newsletter.

Ellen discussed The Land Between organization and the services this organization can provide to lake associations.

Other Business

Question: Is there an opportunity to share the clubhouse at Round Lake? Comment we have used the clubhouse at Round Lake periodically; and it is possible we could use this for new BLCA events.

Eileen Chivers commented on the high quality the newsletter this year, and also thanked Val Marshall for the packaging that was done for the newsletter as it makes the Road Rep job easier.

Comment that BLCA members are encouraged to check out the work done at Campbell's Belmont Lake Marina. Brent has put in a lot of time and money to re-vamp the marina basin and working spaces at the marina.

Question: Relationship and responsiveness of FOCA? Reply that FOCA continues to provide great support to Lake Associations

Nominations for the Board of Directors (Peter White)

No new nominations were received from the floor.

Election of Board of Directors – Peter White

The following individuals have agreed to stand for election to the board of directors:

Greg Alexander

Katherine Deas

John Dixon

Valerie Marshall

Wendy Vuyk

Ellen Walsh

Peter White

Chris Wiggins

Motion 23-03 accept the roster for the BLC A Board, as presented (Peter White / Kent Young). Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 AM