

Wixom Lake Improvement Board (WLIB)
Meeting Minutes April 7, 2022

Meeting called to order by Joe Sova at 6:02 pm, and Introductions were made.

Board Members Present: Carol Ayers, Joe Sova, Robert Kelley, Jeanette Snyder, Don Zackett, Karen Moore (phone in), Terry Walters, Larry Woodard

Board Members Absent: Ray Drumright

Others in Attendance: Norma Stuart from Midland County Drain Commission, Lucy Zeestraten from Gladwin County Drain Commission, Terry Mester – Billings Township Supervisor, Dave Rothman – President of Four Lakes Task Force and approx. 30 members of the public.

Pledge of Allegiance was done.

Joe Sova read an email from Ray Drumright stating that he would not be able to attend the meeting. So Midland County would serve as Secretary for the meeting and take notes.

Terry Walters made a motion to approve the minutes of March 16, 2022. Carol Ayers seconded the motion. Jeanette Snyder mentioned a misspelling of her name. It will be corrected.

Motion carried.

Joe Sova explained that the purpose of the meeting was for deciding on proceeding to procure a permit for treatment of the terrestrial weeds and trees on the lake bottom.

Joe Sova stressed that a plan needs to be developed for the treatment of the weeds on the main lake, but should also contain plans for treatment of the canals.

Don Zackett explained different ways to treat the woody debris on the lakes. He spoke of the 16' (Cottonwood and Willow) trees growing in the Huron Cove area and other areas of the lake. He then spoke of ariel spraying. Helicopter is the most economical to use. It has a 38" spray boom and can come within 40' from the shore. It lays down a ribbon of chemical and does not have fine particle drift, so it can come within 40' of the shore and flies about 10' above the vegetation. Using a fixed wing plane, is the most economical but it has drift and would have to fly out several 100' from shore, so that it does not drift onto shore. He explained that the FLTF cannot address the terrestrial weed issue, they are working on restoring the dams. Two permits have to be obtained to spray and the best time to spray is when leaves are on the trees, and it takes 3-4 months to get the permit. September would be best to treat according to the chemical (triclopyr) manufacturer. Corteva has offered to donate the chemical to be sprayed. If the trees are not dealt with they will be 25' tall when the lakes come back and will make boating impossible on the lake. The trees need to be dealt with now, when it is easier and cheaper to mow them. There is no timber value on these type trees, and therefore would be more expensive to remove 4-5 years from now. The permit cost is approximately \$5,000.00 per lake.

Don Zackett explained the roll of Paul Hausler from Progressive AE for the Lake Improvement Board and that PLM did the spraying of the lake with the directions from Progressive AE. Don explained the wonderful job that Progressive AE and PLM have done in the past.

Joe Sova spoke of the different ways to treat lake. He thinks that we need to know what the lake bottom should look like just before the water is to come back; currently estimated to be the year 2026. That would allow a plan of methods and frequency of those methods to make sure the lake bottom is ready for the return of the water. He spoke of a combination of treatment types. The fixed wing plane (most economical) to be used on the main part of the lake, then a helicopter or drone to get closer to the shore. Mowing is another option and will need to be done regardless of spraying is done.

Joe Sova then explained that the purpose to this meeting is to approve the procurement of the NPDES permit. Robert Kelley asked how long the NPDES permit was good for. Paul Hausler explained that the NPDES permit is good for 5 years but that the ANC is a multiyear permit but you must pay the fee each year. Robert would like to see a chemical treatment, but wants to make sure it is done during the correct time of the year. He wonders if we should wait until January to apply for the permit.

Don Zackett explained that manufacturer of the herbicide said the best times to apply is early spring or late summer/early fall.

Don Zackett also explained that mowing has been done twice in places on Wixom Lake and that the plants/trees come back. Some places cannot be mowed because of stumps or rocks and those areas will continue to grow unless they are sprayed. He explained that a combination of spray and mowing is needed to control the weeds and brush.

Brian Matthias lives on a canal that you cannot traverse.

Dirk Meister - Vice President of the Wixom Lake Association and the founder the Wixom Lake Social Group. He has organized about 10 lake bottom cleanups. He wants to see something done, it has been 23 months and no set decisions have been made, it's time to do something. Wants to see the permit applied for. The longer we wait, the harder it is to get people out there to help clear the lake of the trees.

Mike Kramer - 5371 M-30, lives near Don Zackett and his area is a virtual forest of trees. The trees are so thick that you cannot just cut them down. He is in favor of chemical treatment.

Phillip Tenant – trees are 14-16' now, trunks are getting so big now that you cannot use a weed whacker.

Don Zackett said that with a heavy duty weed whacker he can do 1,500-3,000 sq. ft. in an hour. A skid steer can do 1-1/2 acres per hour. This past winter a mower with a drum type mulcher was used and it did well in the canals, it could do about 6,000 sq. ft. an hr. Wixom Lake Association was looking into purchasing one.

Rita Goul – Hope Township Supervisor would like to know the cost of the chemicals vs mowing. Joe Sova explained that that the spray is cheaper than the cost of mowing.

Don Zackett explained that approx. 800 acres of vegetated bottomlands would be treated by helicopter aerial spray at a cost of \$100/acre. If a fixed wing plane is used only 500 acres can be sprayed, and if you fill in what area the fixed wing plane cannot spray by using a drone, it would most likely exceed the cost of using the helicopter to spray.

Dennis Goul – wants to know the total cost.

Don Zackett replied that the cost of the helicopter spray for 800 acres, it would be about \$80,000.00 assuming that the herbicide is donated.

Keith Popour – has been spraying Shoreclear in the canal area. It is available at Tractor Supply. It worked great in the areas where they could apply it to.

Don Zackett explained the FLTF was not involved with the clearing/dredging of the canals. Landowners would have to apply for a permit from EGLE and the other issue is where to place the dredged materials.

Rick Traub – A majority of the people want something done, so when is the permit going to be applied for and when is something going to be done.

Don Zackett made a motion to apply for the appropriate permits needed to do spray. Carol Ayers seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Jeanette Snyder asked about the cost of the permit. Paul Hausler explained that the NPDES permit cost \$5,000.00 and is good for 5 years. The ANC permit is \$1,600.00 each year that you treat, but is included in the first-year application.

Terry Walters made a motion to hire Progressive AE to apply for the permits needed. Larry Woodard seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Don Zackett inquired about the website that was maintained by Progressive AE. Jeanette Snyder replied that we have it on the Sanford Lake Association and the Drain Commission website, so paying for a third site was not needed because at that time a decision of what to do with the lakes was not known.

Monty Wiseman – Wants to know the frequency of spraying. Don Zackett responded that hopefully once for spray and then to follow with a mowing, but cannot confirm the number of times it will need to be treated, it depends on Mother Nature.

Monty Wiseman – remarked that the \$300,000.00 funds still available would cover the permits, spray application and then leave \$200,000.00 for mowing. Joe Sova explained that if the funding is expended and work still needed to be done before the lakes come back in 2026 that an assessment would need to be levied to cover any additional costs.

Jeanette Snyder asked if treatment and mowing in the canals is included. Joe Sova responded that that would need to be looked at. The mowing in the canals would have to be done in the winter.

Joe Sova said a meeting would be held in May to start working on the plan for what is to be done. Jeanette wants to make sure all the funds are not expended without treating/mowing the canals.

Brian Matthias wants to know what is preventing an assessment from being levied as had been before to pay for the aquatic weeds. It was explained to Brian that a public hearing would be needed to start the assessment again. Brian wants the assessment to start back up again.

Kris Rogers asked about the cattails, she wants to get a permit for dredging since chemicals won't kill the cattails.

Don Zackett has bids from PLM to obtain the permit.

Don Zackett asked those that cleared the canals in the winter how it went.

The Financial Report was presented. The balance is \$335,410.82. Terry Walters made a motion to accept and file the report. Larry Woodard seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Terrance Hall – Edenville Township Supervisor appreciates having the meeting. He asked if there was a representative from Edenville Township. He was told by Robert Kelley that Ray Drumright is a representative.

Terrance Hall said that John Marsh did mowing in the Edenville area and did a wonderful job.

There was no other public comment.

Carol Ayers made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Robert Kelley. Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe Sova
Chairman

Wixom Lake Improvement Board

Thursday, April 7, 2022

6:00 p.m.

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