

March 26, 2015

[Minutes of Meeting of the Membership](#)

LAKE HARDING LEASEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

A meeting of the membership of Lake Harding Leaseholders Association, Inc. was held on Thursday, March 26, 2015, at 7:00 PM at the Georgia Power Company Land Office Warehouse. President Elaine Smith called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence in honor and memory of Jay Syfrett. She also thanked Georgia Power and the Land Department staff for their participating partnership, the use of their facility and the wonderful meal they provided for the membership cooked by Shoreline Grill in Valley. Elaine then turned the meeting over to Dawson Ingram.

Dawson welcomed everyone and then introduced Richard Willis of their Parks Department, Andrew Dudley in charge of Shoreline Management on the Georgia side and Ricky Stearns on the Alabama side. He also introduced Tony Dodd, Warren Wagner, Mike Barnett, Kyle Kinman, Marie Lee and Robin Gibson.

Dawson then asked Andrew Dudley to start everything off with a safety briefing. Andrew pointed out all the exits and noted we had several well-trained EMTs in the building, along with fire extinguishers all through-out the building. He noted if we have bad weather we should all remain inside the building.

Dawson took the floor again and stated the Federal Energy Relicensing Commission (FERC) relicensing project had been completed and approved. He noted the process had been about a seven year process, but with it had brought about some very positive things which included Georgia Power committing to additional funding for improvements on Lake Harding. As a result of this we should begin to start seeing things like an extra area for over flow parking at Idle Hour Park; additional landings at Blanton Creek and Valley Park; and we will see comfort stations and lighting being added at some parks.

He also noted he had been working with Neil Block and a potential new owner for Jay's Marina and they are hoping to have something up and running for gas on the Georgia side in time for the season.

He said Georgia Power holds an annual debris clean-up in the fall where they bring in equipment which can be used to haul off large downed trees, broken down boats, jet skis, old docks, etc. If you have these types of things you need hauled off and can hold on to them until their clean-up, they can arrange to get them from you this fall.

Another positive thing which came out of the Federal Energy Re-licensing Commission (FERC) Relicensing being approved is they have been given additional funds by their corporate office. This has allowed them to obtain additional staff and to set up new programs to help with controlling the Hydrilla. He said that last year they had operated in a re-active mode and this year they have adopted a new program which will have them working more pro-actively. They have learned a lot over the last three years. Hydrilla is so invasive and aggressive. There are different types of Hydrilla. The kind we have is more hardy and can withstand winter, and the density of the plants also helps make it more difficult to kill.

They have a new weed treatment program this year which involves starting earlier in the year with treatment, trying to treat larger areas and be more aggressive. They have learned that not only the dose but the technique used can alter the effectiveness of the treatment. For instance, in Wisconsin they decided to try a herbicide used in Florida and it worked better in Wisconsin than it had in Florida.

In addition to the increased funding the company has compiled a group of dedicated contractors to use in combatting the Hydrilla. They have also put together an advisory panel to help steer the path the company takes going forward.

Warren Wagner then took the floor to re-iterate their goal to be more pro-active and to start in April by monitoring and mapping areas around the lake for Hydrilla growth. Then they will follow a continuous cycle of monitoring, mapping and treating.

The question was posed if there was something which can be used which will not kill the fish. Warren responded by saying killing the fish was avoided a lot in the way treatment is done and the amount used in each treatment. For instance, they do not try to kill a large area all at once. They also stay in communication with the fisheries at Georgia Power.

He was also asked if there was Hydrilla in Lakes Sinclair, Jackson and Aconnee. He stated they had had Hydrilla starting in 1996 but it had died out during a drought. He said they had seen it show up in some of their Georgia Power plants. He also noted it was now gone from Lake Juliette, but they had no idea what sends it to a dormant state.

In response to a question about bringing in grass carp like Lake Martin had done to get rid of theirs, Tony Dodd stepped in to respond. He noted grass carp can be very effective in killing Hydrilla, however once the Hydrilla is gone the carp turn to desirable plants. What makes this extra bad is the carp can live for many years. They have found them living for 15 – 20 years. In Florida you can find grass carp living in all the canals. The State of Georgia will not permit grass carp to be put in open lakes like ours.

When asked if there was a tentative schedule or what dictates the schedule for treatment he stated that once they begin looking in April, they will map it and decide where to start at that point.

Dawson stepped in and said they would start treating it as soon as they begin seeing any. Since it is a contact herbicide they have to see the growth for the treatment to be effective.

The question was asked about whether Georgia Power would be doing any treatment in Osanippa Creek since they have a real big problem there. Dawson stated they will monitor and evaluate all portions of the lake including Osanippa. He also noted they still have their homeowner program was still in place and to call the Land Office for information.

Dawson stated there will not be a draw down in 2015 and the next one is scheduled for fall of 2016. He then introduced Jeremy Bolen with the Georgia DNR.

Jeremy noted we had a very successful 2014 summer with no accidents and very few BUIs.

At this point Elaine Smith returned to the floor. She noted that copies of the minutes had been provided prior to the meeting and asked for a motion to approve them. One was made, seconded and approved.

She noted the board had recently made the decision to have our books reviewed prior to the meeting and the review had not yet been completed. However, we should have a completed financial report ready within the week. The current balance in the checkbook is \$25,388.31.

Jim Duncan stood and pointed out we have also been in the middle of changing our PayPal account over to a corporate type to better accommodate people paying their dues or joining on-line. He noted we had been trying to get processes automated and get our new web site finalized next month. Susan will begin working on a new member directory and dues need to be current for the book. He also reminded everyone that in March 2009 we had voted to start charging an annual membership fee. And that as a result of this it had afforded us the opportunity to give more funds back to the community and in turn benefit each of us.

Elaine then presented the nominees for Board Members commencing for the year 2015:

ALABAMA GEORGIA

Elaine Smith Susan Tompkins

Jim Duncan Tommy McKenzie

Ron Durham David Hawkins

Bubba Roberts Todd Wood

Cathy Hilley

Elaine noted we were one person short for the Alabama side and asked for volunteers. She also noted we needed someone to step up and take over the duties of the Treasurer. It was suggested that Richard Young be nominated and he graciously agreed to take the position.

Elaine then presented the slate of officers to serve for 2015:

Elaine Smith, President

Susan Tompkins, Secretary

Richard Young, Treasurer

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved that the slate of nominees proposed by the Board be accepted.

Elaine then asked if there was any old business and there being none, she proceeded with new business by mentioning Roger Martin was unable to attend as he had to have surgery today but he had sent in some updates for the members. She then read the following from Roger:

“I am sorry that I cannot be in attendance at the LHA meeting tonight that is being hosted by Georgia Power due to having surgery this morning. Our organization greatly appreciates the support of the LHA and its members. I would quickly like to update you on several issues that Riverwarden has been working on since the last meeting in September.

In December of 2014 FERC granted a new 30 year license for the operations of Bartlett’s Ferry Dam and Lake Harding. The new license includes 16 improvements that will be made by Georgia Power for the lake over the next several years. One of the most important to the homeowners is that the operational lake levels will continue as they have during the last 30 years. The attempted water grab from upstream did not work. Thanks to all who participated in public meetings and wrote letters to FERC as you made a real difference.

In late 2014 the US Coast Guard announced they would be closing the Coast Guard station on Lake George in Eufaula and removing channel buoys from Columbus, Georgia to Apalachicola, Florida. On March 24, 2015 US House of Representative Roby read a letter from the US Coast Guard which stated:

“I am directing that ANT Eufaula remain open and continue to maintain the federal aids to navigation throughout the ACF system until such time when the aids are no longer necessary for safe navigation or can be divested to state, local or private entities,” the letter from Zukunft states.

The decision follows numerous letters from stakeholders, local elected officials and state and federal representatives from both sides of the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint waterway; all asking that the station remain open in Eufaula. It was slated for closure in the 2015 fiscal year federal budget.

Roby also thanked Alabama U S Senators Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions, Georgia U S Representative Sanford Bishop, Eufaula Mayor Jack Tibbs, Billy Houston and the many groups and individuals who wrote letters of support for the Coast Guard.

Please remember, we have almost lost three locks on the Chattahoochee River and the channel buoys in the last three years. The number of lockage through on the Chattahoochee River has decreased from almost 1000 in 2005 to less than 300 in 2015. Let’s start using the river from Columbus south to insure the locks and buoys are not lost to federal budget cuts.

I am sure Dawson, Tony and other members of the Georgia Power team have already discussed Hydrilla. I think Tim Chitwood in the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer summed it up best by stating, “It is going to take a village to manage.” I believe it will take education, homeowners and Georgia Power to manage the issue. I believe we will see a more aggressive and earlier start to treatment but Georgia Power must also have support from homeowners on treating around their docks through the Georgia Power aquatic weeds permitting process.

I have been contacted by several homeowners regarding the potential placement of lighted buoys on Lake Harding. I have researched the issue and found two lakes in our area – West Point and Lake Lanier – that have lighted buoys. Both were paid for and Maintained by the Lake Home Owner’s Association.

Again, I am sorry I could not be in attendance with you tonight. Have a great meeting! Roger Martin, Executive Director, Chattahoochee RiverWarden”

Elaine then introduced Eric Reutebuch with the Alabama Water Watch (AWW) group who began by stating he had been in the business for 22 years. He opened a water quality monitoring kit and showed some of the items it contained and spoke of the importance of knowing what the quality of water is where we live and play. For instance, geese being fed in swim areas can cause E. coli which can be life threatening. The kits cost approximately \$300 and to re-stock them each year cost about \$80 for supplies. He asked if the LHA would consider helping purchase some of these kits.

The AWW offers free classes and workshops which teach people how to do water monitoring and biological testing with the next class dates being April 10 and 11. He keeps Susan notified of up-coming classes so she can let you know future dates. You can also check out their web site for classes and also to sign up.

AWW also has a new web site and mobile app called 'Swim Guide' that hosts testing data for over 6,000 swim beaches, informing the public if a beach is safe or not. This data is currently out there for the U.S., Canada and now northern Mexico. They encourage any monitor who is testing for E. coli on a lake or stream to consider putting their results into Swim Guide. You can check out their site at: www.theswimguide.org.

Elaine thanked Eric and asked if anyone in the audience was interested in becoming a trained water monitor. When no one raised a hand in interest she introduced David Hawkins. David spoke of the importance of having a Neighborhood Watch group for safety purposes. We need volunteers for street captains from Alabama and Georgia so we can start a grass roots campaign. It also offers an opportunity to meet your neighbors and gain valuable information which helps us all. He will get Susan some information together to send out in an email.

Elaine thanked David and introduced Tommy McKenzie to speak on behalf of the Antioch Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD). Tommy introduced officers Bob Kemberley and Matt McCall. Tommy began by stressing the importance of having lighted numbers at your drive in case of fire or medical emergency. He stated these numbers can be purchased at AVFD. They also have weather emergency alarms for sale for \$35 and \$40. These can be programmed to your zip code and work extremely well in notifying you of approaching bad weather which many of us have experienced first-hand over the last few years. Several tornados have made their path right across the lake. He also advised of a new product being sold called 'Strike Master'. This is installed inside each door for a very reasonable cost and prevents doors from being kicked in. Elaine then introduced Assistant Fire Chief Joseph Murray with the Beulah Fire Department (BFD) and Houston Black of Clearwater Solutions. Chief Murray stated he had worked for the Opelika Fire Department for 12 years and had served as Captain, Sgt. and a medic. BFD has a combination department comprised of both staff and volunteers. Their staff consists of a chief, assistant chief, three shift captains and 20 volunteers. They offer 24 X 7, coverage with six registered paramedics. They have five stations and ten engines and a marine attack and rescue boat at Station 4 on Lee Road 379.

They are recognized through-out the State of Alabama as being the Fire Department which conducts the most training classes. They charge a \$16 per month Fire Protection Fee to help cover the cost of offering around-the-clock EMS and fire protection services. They also offer fire prevention classes and will come to your home for a free inspection and offer suggestions for improving your safety and will give you free smoke detectors and install them for you. They also sell lighted house number signs for your home for \$25 each. These can be purchased at their station on Lee Road 370. He suggested everyone call the 911 center to make sure EMT has your exact address because Google is not accurate around the lake.

A member asked about how often Google is updated because his address does not show up at all. He stated it is updated very regularly.

Chief Murray said they currently have an ISO rating of 6.9, but they are scheduled to be re-graded to a target of 4 which will make a significant difference in your insurance premium. In response to the question of if the BFD assists Georgia in fighting fires with their water boat, he responded they are not currently doing this but it is in the works.

He then introduced Houston Black who is a project manager with Clearwater Solutions who is working to improve the water quality. His office is located next to Fire Station 1. His company is located throughout the southeast. They have 100 employees after eight years in business and are rapidly growing. They began working with the BFD after Beulah brought water back into their community. They are in the process of re-doing a 1.7 million gallon tank and have plans to install a transmission line from the tank to the lake to improve water pressure. They are also looking into possibly installing more tanks. These improvements will help give stronger water pressure which also helps in obtaining a better ISO rating.

Elaine thanked all of our guests and asked if anyone had any questions they would like to ask. Charlie Hudson stood and said he wanted to make sure everyone realized we were coming up on the 30 year anniversary of when the Lake Harding Association had formed and wanted to recognize the growth which had taken place in working with Georgia Power. He told everyone he and some others had been working with Georgia Power recently to re-claim some of the islands and asked the association to consider covering a portion of what he had spent. Elaine asked him to get his bills together and give them to the board.

Muffett Ball and Chuck Connally raised their hands and asked Eric how much time was involved

in becoming and being a water monitor. Eric stated the bacterial monitoring class took about three hours and the water quality monitoring class took about six hours. Once trained, you do a water test once a month and it takes about 25 – 30 minutes if you complete the test at your dock. They both stated they wanted to become volunteer monitors. Elaine told them to get with Susan after the meeting and she would get them the information to get started. Elaine took the floor and announced the proposed amounts for donations. The following donation amounts were proposed, approved & seconded:

\$ 5,000 – Antioch Volunteer Fire Department
\$ 5,000 – Beulah Volunteer Fire Department
\$ 2,000 – Rumble on the River Fireworks
\$ 1,000 – Chattahoochee RiverWarden
\$ 1,000 – The Cross Committee
\$ 600 – Alabama Water Watch

Elaine then introduced Greg Carter with The Lake House. Greg informed everyone he had recently taken over the ownership and management of the restaurant, and the gas pumps and store called Bobbers. He had started Tri City Water Sports last year. Greg said he wanted everyone to know they had new menus, new attitudes, new hours and they wanted to hear from everyone about what they want to have and experience when visiting. He noted they already offer raw oysters and are open 11 – 9 Sunday – Thursday and 11 – 2 Friday and Saturday. Happy Hour is from 4 – 7. They recently had the J Hinkle Band performing. They are a non-smoking facility with a pet area for people coming by boat. They are also considering offering breakfast. He invited everyone to come out and join them for some good food and fun times.

Elaine took the floor back to make the following announcements. We are working on a new directory and if you have had changes in your contact information you should get them to Susan. Also annual membership fees are now due. Church Services at Two Tree Island go from the first Sunday in June through the last Sunday in August. The annual BBQ will be in September with the date and location to be announced later in the summer. Monica Young is here and has LHA flags, caps and koozees for sale. She then asked Tommy McKenzie to help her in giving out door prizes. She thanked Georgia Power and the AVFD for the nice gifts they had provided and asked if anyone else had any comments. With that Tommy Wages stood and asked for the mic.

Tommy walked to the podium, turned and looked out towards where he had been sitting and said, “I just wanted to ask Joyce if she would marry me.” Everyone erupted into applause as Joyce approached Tommy while grinning from ear-to-ear to face the mic and say, “I just want to know what took him so long!” With that they hugged and kissed to the crowds delight.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the same was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Tompkins, Secretary