

**GSLA Annual Meeting**  
**10:30 AM – June 28, 2013**  
**(as approved at the June 28, 2014 Annual Meeting)**

The annual meeting of the Great Sand Lakes Association was held on Saturday, June 28th, 2013, at the Harwich Community center. 42 households were represented.

The Meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM by President Ted Borman.

Ted then reviewed the voting rules – each household is entitled to two votes, even when there is a single owner.

The minutes of the 2012 Annual Meeting, having been posted on the website and distributed at this meeting, were approved unanimously.

Ted introduced Sgt. Bob Brackett from the Harwich Police Department (HPD), representing Chief Mason, who was unable to attend. He commended the GSL Association on banding together and taking positive steps toward keeping the neighborhood a safe and pleasant one in which to live, and for inviting the HPD to be a partner in these efforts. He stated that the HPD is committed to addressing issues with us as they arise. He also informed the audience that HPD has no authority over setting speed limits anywhere in the town – that is in the hands of the state highway department. After a general overview of what the police DO enforce, he then took questions from the audience.

Q: Is there any crime issue in Harwich?

A: Certainly, every city and town has issues with crime. In Harwich, the primary issue is drug and alcohol abuse and the various crimes that arise out of these basic problems, such as larcenies, breaking and entering, and credit card theft. Fully 90% of all motor vehicle 'break-ins' involve cars left unlocked, so citizens can easily help themselves in this area by not leaving their cars unlocked. Addicts in need of money for drugs will walk along, trying every car (even in your driveway), and stealing from those left unlocked. In Harwich, rarely is glass broken or locks jimmied to steal items from locked cars.

Q: What is the status of the condemned home on the corner of Rte 39 and Bucks Pond Road?

A: That is a matter that would have to be taken up with the building department – the police department is not involved in that area.

Q: What can be done about people using our ponds and trespassing on private property to do so?

A: The law is very specific in this area. Unless an HPD officer witnesses someone actually trespassing on private property, they cannot arrest that person. Certainly we can report trespassers to HPD promptly. Summons (by mail) can

be issued on witness testimony, but the police cannot come and 'take them away' unless the violation was witnessed. They are willing to come and talk to the person(s), discuss the legal access points, etc.

Q: What can be done about illegal parking in front of our association beaches?

A: Sgt. Brackett commended the association for the signage and improvements for parking at main association beach, and the use of stickers. However, he stated that that parking is on our property, not the town's, so they cannot enforce violations. At Pleasant Park and Vacation Lane beaches, there is no parking allowed, and since that is on public property (the streets), we should feel free to call when cars park on these streets. Most likely, the responding officer(s) will issue only warnings in these cases. He addressed the whole issue of being a destination town for many tourists, and wanting our visitors to have a great experience. Some of the cars may belong to renters in our neighborhoods. He said the police try to use 'common sense', and ticketing would happen with repeated abuse of the "atmosphere of Cape Cod summertime".

He stressed that the HPD would respond to anything we call about, and then figure out the best course of action. If we have ongoing problems, please be very clear in talking to the dispatcher that you are calling about a repetitive issue. This helps them in determining how to handle an issue.

Q: Once in a while I hear gunshots – should I report these?

A: There is a police firing range off Depot Road not too far from the Route 39 intersection, so you may often hear gunshots from there. Also, there is a range right behind 'Nickerson's Pit', not far from there. There is active hunting in season, and you are all urged to be aware of this, and wear very bright clothing AND put something bright on your dog, if walking in the woods. The primary hunting season is in the fall, but there is a shorter period in the spring. The Hawksnest area is also a favorite of hunters, and hunting is also allowed on Harwich Water Department property which abuts Thompson's Field conservation lands. There is no hunting at all allowed in Thompson's Field. All of these areas are fairly close to GSL. If you think the shots are in your neighborhood, feel free to call about these.

Q: I called to report a car repeatedly coming and parking suspiciously on my street, and I was asked for my social security number. I was left with the impression that there would be no response without it, and I feel very disinclined to report anything again.

A: Everyone has the right to call and/or bring a complaint anonymously. It will still be followed up in the same manner, and the police department wants you to feel free to call. You should not have to give your SSN; if this happens, please bring it to the department's attention. Keep in mind, though, that if a citizen witnesses a crime and wishes to remain anonymous, it sometimes limits the scope of their ability to investigate. Example: if that was witnessing a drug event, it may limit their ability to prosecute that offender. It is possible to identify yourself to the police, but still request to remain anonymous.



Q: Can narcotic medications be brought to the HPD?

A: Thank you, that is a very good question. Yes, they can. Harwich and Yarmouth PDs were the first on the cape to have 24-hr. disposal boxes in the lobbies of their buildings. Anyone can use these at any time.

Ted thanked Sgt. Brackett warmly for his presentation.

**Annual Treasurer's Report.** Treasurer Tony Piro's report was distributed to all attendees. Tony read the highlights. The June 28, 2012 balance on hand was \$11,521.60. The balance on June 28, 2013 is \$14,938.79. The full report is attached. A motion to approve the report was made and passed unanimously.

**Water Quality.** Tony explained that the town and state look at water quality in two ways:

(1) They don't want excess bacteria present in water we use for swimming. This test examines the levels of e coli in the water, and is done by town employees at Bucks Pond public beach, and at Vacation Lane and Clearwater association beaches weekly during the summer. The Bucks Pond test also applies to the Pleasant Park association beach. The very first test of this season (June 11th) failed at Bucks Pond beach, but the results were well within safe limits upon retesting the second day, and tests since have all been good. Tony explained the signs proclaiming the water **safe** or **unsafe** for swimming, which he is responsible for maintaining. Data on all of the areas tested in Harwich are available on the web, updated weekly, at <http://www.barnstablecountyhealth.org/bathing-beach-water-quality> . Select 'Beach Sample Results' from the list on the left, and choose 'Harwich' in the search box, then click on 'Update'. Both salt and fresh water beaches are listed. There is a 'frequently asked questions' on the page, which explains the testing very well.

(2) There is a longstanding practice of monitoring the clarity of the water in our ponds. This is part of the testing conducted by volunteers in our two large ponds 5 times during the summer, and occasionally in Kiddie and Sand Lake. An excellent description of the testing done is posted on the town's website, [http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/public\\_documents/harwichma\\_webdocs/data](http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/public_documents/harwichma_webdocs/data) under the links 'Water Quality', then 'Sampling Program'.

Tony said that the GSLA Board of Directors is very attentive to keep the quality of water pristine. Our results are very good, with excellent water clarity. He cited Hinckleys Pond and Skinequit Ponds as currently being classed as 'degraded', with clarity issues related to algae growth. Clarity is tested using a 'Secchi test', in which a disc is lowered into the water and the observers record its visibility at various depths. Excess phosphorus is a major problem in freshwater ponds, since it promotes algae growth. This enters ponds from road run-off in big rainstorms, insufficient septic systems, lawn fertilizers, and bird droppings mainly. We are the most densely populated ponds in Harwich, by far, and we are about in the middle of the group results-wise, which is very good. All ponds are gradually picking up more phosphorus, so we must remain vigilant.

This year we asked the Highway Department to install more catch basins to decrease the amount of water running down roads and onto our beaches, thus into our ponds. We are happy that they were very cooperative, and new catch basins were installed at the top of the Paradise Path Walkway, and at four other locations where run-off problems were detected.

Tony also cited 'buffer zones' of vegetation at water's edge as a great deterrent to phosphorus entering the ponds, since these plants catch and trap phosphorus very efficiently. The state has finally banned phosphorus from dishwashing soaps, which is very helpful. Finally, people are reminded NOT to feed waterfowl. We have fewer geese than in previous years, and this is good news for our water quality.

Q: Can bacteria in the water remain in/on the beach sand and cause problems?

A: This has never been observed to be an issue.

Q: Does testing include Sand Lake and Kiddie Pond?

A: Testing is done there each year on an 'occasional basis', not as often as Buck's and John Joseph ponds.

Tony then described the water clarity, which is really very good.

Q: What about the excessive growth in Kiddie's and Sand Lake?

A: The water lilies have been there all along. In the past few years, we have had a marked increase in the presence of *water shield*, which has covered large areas of these ponds. This is a difficult plant to eradicate, and it is NOT classified as an "invasive species", which limits what we can do. The root structure is very gooey, with a red secretion. The Board of Health has said we can pull them out (by the roots). Sterile carp have been used elsewhere with outstanding results, but they are outlawed in several states, including Massachusetts, probably because they are voracious eaters, and will deplete the fish in a pond once the vegetation is gone. Also, there have been disastrous episodes of the carp supplied *not* being sterile and overpopulating a pond.

Q: I've been told an aeration system would help the overgrowth.

A: These systems are mainly used where algae (and poor oxygenation) is a problem. We don't have that particular issue. Alum treatments are also used for algae.

Q: Is there any chemical that would help?

A: Yes, but it is very difficult to obtain permission from the Board of Health and the Conservation Commission.

Bobbi Chertov thanked Tony and the Board of Directors for staying on top of this issue.

Ted asked for **names of members who had passed away** in the last year. Herb Tempelmann, Cindy Sawin, and Evelyn Hayes were remembered with a moment of silence.

Joe Murray and family were recognized as **new members** and warmly welcomed to the association.

**Board of Director's Election.** Ted announced that Patsy Lightbown, Jim Robichaud, and he (Ted Borman) were due to rotate off the board, but all had agreed to stand for another term of office. Tony Piro (term expires 2014) has resigned from the board, but he will continue to attend board meetings (non-voting) and advise. Dave Callaghan's name was announced as candidate to replace Tony. Dave has long experience and much expertise in managing a data base, and has already been very active in updating our GSLA data base.

There was discussion from the floor about the lack of opportunity for members to join the board, and Ted reiterated that we welcome involvement by any and all of the membership.

Motion, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote:

Ted Borman	}	elected to BOD, term to expire in 2016.
Patsy Lightbown		
Jim Robichaud		

Dave Callaghan – elected to BOD, term to expire 2015.

The following must be elected by the membership – treasurer and clerk.

Ted Borman was elected Treasurer

Nancy Smith was (re)elected Clerk.

Motion, second, passed by unanimous voice vote.

Ted called Tony Piro to the podium, and, after recounting Tony's long and valued service to the association, presented him with a framed letter of appreciation. Long applause followed.

**Beach Committee** – Marian Piro, chairperson, reported that parking permits have been sent out (for parking at Clearwater Association Beach). The permits worked very well last year. She thanked Dottie Callaghan and Jody Blute for all of their help in checking for permits. If a parked car lacked a permit, they left a one-page flyer on the windshield explaining who could use our association beaches, parking rules and pointing out where the Harwich public beaches were.

**Membership update.** As of today, we have 159 households up to date on dues. Full membership possible is 256. Dave reminded the membership that we save time and money if we can use email instead of US postal service.

**Beach Planting.** Ted reported getting advice from a landscape planning architect and arborist re plantings to decrease erosion at Vacation Lane, the top of Paradise Path, and Clearwater Association beach. The results were not as we hoped. Planting was not done at Vacation Lane, and there are issues at the other sites. We cannot remediate these until the heat of the summer passes, but we will address them in the fall.

**Beach Sand.** The board of directors has ongoing concerns re the quality and volume of sand on several of our beaches. Jim Robichaud addressed this. They have worked hard over the last year to repair existing erosion and to protect the beaches from further erosion. 2007 was the last time we addressed adding sand to beaches, and it was a very long drawn out process requiring approval from several town boards/committees. Ted and Jim met with the present Conservation Commission Agent, introduced her to our property and its issues. She is willing to approve our putting down beach sand under Administrative Review. 7 years ago it cost us \$3400. At this time it will probably cost ~\$5400. Hoping to reduce this cost, the board decided to wait for the off season. Beach sand is in very short supply right now.

The membership was asked to approve the board's spending up to \$6000 for this project to replenish Clearwater, Vacation Lane, and Pleasant Park Circle beaches. Motion, seconded, and passed unanimously.

**Boat Registration.** Dave Callaghan spoke of the need to deal with the overwhelming number of watercraft left on the beaches over the winter, and issues with boats on our beaches in the summer. In 2007, he counted 92 boats in peak season. In August 2012, there were 140, with kayaks accounting for most of the increase. In January 2013, there were still 70 boats remaining.

Boat sticker applications and boat rules have been sent to all members and residents. The plan is to phase in, starting slowly, looking at boats left on beaches *after* Labor Day or *before* June 15<sup>th</sup>. We will start enforcing the 'no boats on beaches after November 1<sup>st</sup>' rule. Those boats will be moved to a designated spot on the main beach, and tagged 'Abandoned'. The following June, these will be given to the town.

Questions arose re auctioning these off, when folk could register a boat (anytime), and how long the new stickers were in force (permanently). There is no fee.

We won't be checking the stickers during the summer d/t the many renters' boats coming and going. The GSLA website has a discussion forum around 'Common Courtesy for Boats and Boaters'.

**Great Sand Lakes Association Website.** [www.gsla-harwich.org](http://www.gsla-harwich.org)

Dave Callaghan has designed our website and it is up and running. Discussion ensued over what was already on the website, and what could be posted there in the future. Suggestions included: info re home sales and/or rental properties in Great Sand Lakes.

Ted opened the meeting to general questions.

Questions arose about the abandoned property at the corner of Rte 39 and Buck's Pond Rd. Could the association write the Building Department? The BOD will discuss this.

**Summer Picnic.** This will be held on Saturday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, starting at 12:30 p.m. at Clearwater Association beach.

Motion, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn. Ted thanked all who attended.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Smith, clerk