

Great Sand Lakes Association Annual Meeting

June 25 2022 – 10:30 a.m.

Minutes of the meeting

Approved at the 2023 Annual Meeting (June 24, 2023)

The Annual Meeting of the Great Sand Lakes Association was held via Zoom on Saturday, June 25, 2022.

Chris Briggs (GSLA Vice President) called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. He thanked everyone for joining the Zoom meeting. Approximately 30 households were represented.

Chris introduced and thanked the members of the Board who were present at the meeting: Patsy Lightbown, Clerk; Bruce Paige, Treasurer; Margaret Fallon; George Myers; Cathy Frazier, Doug MacGilpin, Dave Callaghan, and Jim Robichaud, Past President.

Voting rules

Chris explained that, according to the GSLA by-laws, only those who have paid their dues for the current year are allowed to vote. Each household has two votes at the Annual meeting

Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting

The Minutes of the June 2021 Annual Meeting were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report

Bruce presented the Treasurer's report and commented that the Association is in a good cash position, with a June 1, 2022 balance of \$19,077.

Ann Frechette asked about the special funds that had been contributed for replacement of trees on the Association beach on Clearwater. She suggested that the contributions that were made explicitly for tree replacement be shown separately on the report.

Membership Report

Our current membership is 210 (at last year's annual meeting it was 214). Margaret Fallon (Chair of Membership Committee) expressed satisfaction at the response to the invitation for members to state the areas for which they would like to volunteer for GSLA tasks when renewing their memberships. She reported that 41 members returned the forms. She is working on organizing the responses so that the

Association can draw from a pool of volunteers for tasks such as the picnic, beach clean-up and maintenance, water quality testing, and annual mailings.

Introduction of New GSLA members: Chris noted the names of homeowners who are new members of the GSLA (since the last annual meeting).

Owners	GSL address
Barry Legg & Tracy Richardson	22 Happy Way
Brian & Theresa Hellauer	4 Shady Drive
Carla DeSouza-Lima	6 Freshwater Drive
James Quinn & Robyn Quinn	216 John Joseph
Jill Caruso & Armando Figueroa	101 Clearwater
Lawrence & Nancy Brutti	26 Vacation Lane
Paul Angelini & Christina Hagopian	0 Clearwater Drive

Deceased Members: Chris acknowledged the death of Great Sand Lakes neighbors and former residents, including two past presidents of the GSLA.

Melissa (Callaghan) Rice (daughter of current GSLA president)

Luci Brennan (former board member and mother of current board member Cathy Frazier)

Charlie Blizzard

Yvonne Supino

Robin Wilkins (past president)

Jack Brown (past president)

Old Business:

David Driskill and Ann Frechette reported on some aspects of the work of the Water Quality Committee. David thanked the other members of the committee (Marianne Driskill, Ann Frechette, Glenn Bryant, R. Clinton; Dave Callaghan and Patsy Lightbown also worked with the committee). He drew attention to the brochure and bookmark that the committee designed and which was distributed with the June 1 membership mailing. He emphasized that this brochure is one part of the committee's educational goal to provide information to the community so that residents are informed about how they can protect the ponds, focusing on the preference for prevention of problems related to pollution before they become severe and require.

David also expressed the committee's intention to continue its efforts to educate the community regarding water quality and the control of invasive species of plants in and around the ponds. He reported on a review of the ponds with the help of Town of Harwich Conservation officer Amy Usowski. He also commented on the strong GSLA presence at meetings related to the Harwich Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan this year.

Ann Frechette reported on having entered the information from many years of water quality data sheets into spreadsheets and created graphics that are now available on the GSLA web site. She noted that there was evidence in an overall decline on some water quality measures, including some unexplained spikes in some of the measures. She expressed the intention of the WQ committee to investigate these spikes in an effort to understand their cause(s).

Ann expressed the view that having access to the data has helped to move the GSL area higher on the priority list for sewerage (along Queen Anne Road). She also noted that a system is now in place to ensure that GSL residents will be notified by the Harwich Health Department if there are significant concerns about water quality safety (such as unsafe levels of cyanobacteria or other pollutants). She also drew attention to the work of the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, which is doing testing for cyanobacteria in ponds across the Cape. She invited questions by email and also noted that residents can contact Dan Pelletier, Harwich Water Superintendent, or Russ Kleekamp, Senior Project Manager for the consulting firm that is working with the town on the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan.

Ann and David invited questions. Several members thanked the committee for its work.

New Business:

Updating the GSLA web site

Cathy Frazier reported on progress that she has made, in collaboration with R. Clinton, on updating and improving the GSLA web site. In support of the goal of making information easier to access, some information has been reorganized and/or archived. Some features have been made interactive. She reported that further organization to the sections on water quality are anticipated, pending help from Marianne Driskill, who has collected and analyzed the large number of documents that have been posted on the web site, as well as some additional ones that were consulted by the Water Quality committee. A new FAQ section is being planned. There is also a plan to add a "history" page, drawing on members' photographs and documents. Work is also being done to increase the functionality of the web site, developing tools for on-line membership renewal, boat registration, or volunteering, for example. Cathy invited members to be in touch if they wanted to participate in the work on the web site.

Chris announced that, in addition to developing the web site information, Cathy and Clinton have designed a system for on-line voting, which will be used this year for the election of the Board of Directors, confirmation of the Clerk and Treasurer, and approval of the proposed amendments to the by-laws.

Updates and amendments to GSLA by-laws

Patsy briefly reviewed the four sections of the by-laws for which the Board has proposed amendments. There was brief discussion and a few requests for clarification. George Myers spoke against the amendment that would allow the Board, by a 2/3 vote, to approve of expenses exceeding \$3000. He urged members not to give up the "power of the pursestrings". At his request, his statement is included as an addendum to the minutes (see the addendum at the end of these minutes).

Doug MacGilpin pointed out that members can always remove Board members in an election if they are dissatisfied with their stewardship. Margaret Fallon, Cathy Frazier, and other speakers expressed similar views, emphasizing that board members are volunteers and members of the community and have a history of making decisions in the best interest of the community. Deborah Cline suggested that an alternative approach might be to raise the spending limit rather than change the process.

Pam Sawin asked about the Board's view of next year's budget. Chris responded that we know the cost of insurance and can anticipate large outlays for sand renourishment, which has not yet been scheduled and may not be needed in 2023. Chris asked Pam to send an email with her suggestions regarding the importance of planning and making information public.

Election of Board of Directors

Chris explained that this is the point in the meeting when those in attendance would vote on the slate of candidates for the Board of Directors. He reiterated that this year, because there are four candidates (Ann Frechette, Patsy Lightbown, George Myers, and Jim Robichaud) for three Board seats, the vote will be held on-line in order to ensure that the election is based on the votes of a quorum (currently defined as 25%) of members. Chris urged members to go to the web site to vote as they have been invited to do in recent messages. Members who do not receive email from the GSLA will receive paper ballots.

Election of Treasurer and Clerk:

This will also be done by on-line voting. The nominees for these positions are incumbents: for Treasurer Bruce Paige; for Clerk Patsy Lightbown. Chris explained that a vote for Patsy as a Board member would also confirm her as Clerk. Patsy explained that if she were not elected, the Board would choose an interim Clerk, to be confirmed at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

Pam Sawin asked about the need for a quorum in the on-line voting. Patsy responded that in the past, decisions have often been made in the absence of a quorum, partly because candidates for election were unopposed. However, a quorum is needed in this election, especially for the amendments to the by-laws. She promised to send reminders to members, encouraging them to vote, with the goal of achieving a quorum. Chris assured participants that the plan is to keep up the reminders until a quorum is achieved. At the time of the Annual Meeting, only 27 households had voted; 52 households are needed to represent the quorum.

Questions from the Membership:

Pam Sawin congratulated the Board and the membership for an informative meeting.

Polly Goddard asked about the possibility of placing a bench on the path into Sand Lake from Rainbow Way. Chris responded that this could be considered. Margaret said that she could provide information about this possibility based on a bench that was recently placed in Chatham.

Madaline Grabala expressed concern about the removal of invasive plants. She said that there were plants such as Russian olive and purple loosestrife on their property but it had never spread beyond a small area. She objected to the idea of the GSLA going on private property to remove such plants. Ann Frechette explained that the spread of invasives can occur in ways that are not immediately noticeable in the immediate area, for example, when birds eat seeds and then drop them in new locations.

David Driskill responded that no one will ever go on private property without permission from the homeowner. He also emphasized that the recommendations of the Water Quality committee are based on information provided by experts, not by individuals who do not have expertise.

Madaline asked how many invasive plants had been identified. David responded that there were 5 so far, which have been identified in Kiddies Pond and Sand Lake, not yet in John Joseph and Bucks. Marianne Driskill said that the committee's work so far has been on land-based plants because Conservation Officer Amy Usowski does not have expertise in aquatic plants such as clasp pond weed. Marianne said that the WQ committee would be looking into aquatic plants in the coming months. Deborah Cline expressed gratitude to the Water Quality Committee for their work.

Hans Stahlschmidt thanked the Board for their work on behalf of the community.

Adjournment:

Chris adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patsy M. Lightbown, Clerk

Addendum:

George Myers' statement regarding the amendment to Article IV, Sect 3 (a), which authorizes the Board of Directors to incur expenditures which exceed \$3000 if two-thirds of the Board members approve.

At this moment the BY/Laws require any board expenses greater than \$ 3000 require approval of the membership of the GSLA. The original reason for the board looking at the this 3000 amount was because the insurance premium was almost 6000 which would require the board advising the membership and asking approval . A simple solution is to make an exception to 3000 limit for insurance premiums with your approval to pay more than the 3000 and reporting the amount to the entire membership. The proposed language went way beyond paying for insurance premiums and allows paying for any expenditure for anything without asking the members first. This invites abuse although I am not suggesting that there is any abuse.. The new proposed language allows the board to pay any amount with no limit provided only 2/3 of the board members approve . This is an enormous change in accountability. Currently, the only real control the membership has over the board is the power of the purse strings . If you approve the new language You have given all power to 2/3 of the board (6 people). In my opinion this is very unwise and eliminates the only check and balance the members have. You may be very comfortable with a particular board but this change applies to all future boards. What assurance does the membership have that the funds will be spent wisely—in my opinion you have none if you remove the power of the pursestrings.

> Remember —The members have very little real control over who is on the board and no direct control over who is President or Vice President so the only real power members have over the board is the power of the pursestrings . This is the first time (in the last 20 years) where the membership is actually learning something about who is running to be on the board. But at least the members currently have the power of the pursestrings to help protect the organization especially with the expansionist indication of board activities into areas we are not currently involved in or have any experience or expertise —Don't give up the power of pursestrings . You will never get it back.