

Great Sand Lakes Association Annual Meeting 2024

June 29, 2024 – 10:30 a.m.

Minutes of the meeting – Draft 2

Pending approval at the 2025 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Great Sand Lakes Association was held at the Harwich Community Center on Saturday, June 29, 2024.

Chris Briggs (GSLA President) called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Chris introduced the members of the GSLA Board of Directors: Jim Robichaud, Past President; Patsy Lightbown, Clerk; Pam Sawin, Treasurer; Ann Frechette; Doug MacGilpin; Cathy Frazier, Vice President; Margaret Fallon; and Dave Callaghan, Past President and Past Treasurer.

In addition to the members of the Board, Chris recognized some of the members of the community for their volunteer work in the neighborhood. He expressed thanks to:

Deb Paige – creating and maintaining the garden at the GSLA entrance off Rte. 39

Judy Adams – hosting board meetings, among many other helpful tasks

Christina Hagopian, Brian Fry, and Donna Connolly – maintaining the garden area around the Freshwater/Clearwater flagpole

Dave & Marianne Driskill, and Glenn Bryant – Water Quality committee

[Robert] Clinton – webmaster and the lead volunteer in monitoring and removing invasive plants

Sawin family – providing funds for new flags

Margie Paist and Sandy Sheehan for planning and overseeing the 2023 picnic and for ongoing work to plan for 2024; the many volunteers who contributed their time and energy

Groups of volunteers — cleaning and maintaining the GSLA beaches

Bob Smith, Christi Odiaga, Carol Dyer, Scott Bard, and others who have participated in water quality testing activities

Kathy Gorman – maintaining the little library at Clearwater beach

And many others whose contributions make the Great Sand Lakes neighborhood a wonderful place to live.

Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting

The Minutes of the June 2023 Annual Meeting had been posted on the GSLA web site and were approved as submitted.

President's Report

The President's Letter accompanied the invitation and agenda for the Annual Meeting and can be found at the end of the minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Pam Sawin reported on the 2023 fiscal year cash flow. Total inflows (from dues, contributions, the holiday luncheon in December) came to \$23,734. Total outflows came to \$ \$23,910. The cash balance at the beginning of the year was \$8,531; at the end of the year, the balance was \$7,355. Pam provided some details regarding expenses, including the substantial increase in insurance costs. Nevertheless, the cash position of the Association as of June 29 is strong and sufficient for the expenses we anticipate for the remaining months of the year.

Membership Report

Dave Callaghan reported that our current membership is 217 of 278 possible households. He emphasized the importance of this level of participation in light of the fact that the GSLA is an entirely voluntary association, not an obligatory "homeowners' association" that some members may be familiar with from other residences.

Introduction of New GSLA members:

Susan Lopez and Patricia Carr 1270 Orleans Road

James and Karyn Dinard White 112 Clearwater Drive

Guest Speaker:

Ann Frechette introduced Joseph Powers, Harwich Town Administrator, who provided some updated information about the progress of the Queen Anne sewerage project.

Powers confirmed that the multi-town, multi-year sewerage project now has the Queen Anne portion of the project scheduled as part of Phase 3. Work on construction should begin in July 2026 and it is hoped that it will be completed by the Spring of 2027 and that hook up for individual homeowners can begin after that.

Powers encouraged homeowners to wait until the major construction is completed before engaging an engineering company to plan for individual hook up. "Order to connect" notices will be sent out only after construction is complete.

Powers strongly urged homeowners (individually and as the Great Sand Lakes Association) to attend a meeting that will be scheduled in September 2024 where further information will be made available. In addition, it is important to attend the Town Meeting in May 2025 where voters will be asked to set aside money for the Town's contribution to the project.

Among the financial entities that fund the Town of Harwich for this project are the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust, Cape Cod and Islands Water Protection Fund, Water Infrastructure Investment Fund, Special Purpose Stabilization Fund. In addition, the Town has the highest bond rating.

The cost of hooking up to the system by individual property owners cannot be known at this point. However, financial assistance may be available for property owners through the Cape Cod Aquifund, with low interest loans based on income levels. Further information can be found on their web site:

<https://www.capecod.gov/departments/health-environment/programs-services/water-and-wastewater/community-septic-management-loan-program-csmlp/>

Deceased Members:

Chris acknowledged the deaths this year of the following Great Sand Lakes neighbors. They were honored with a moment of silence.

Sue Langone

Ryan Chrobak

Madaline Grabala

Faith Preston

Old Business:

Ann Frechette provided a brief update on the work being done to remove invasive plants from the ponds and the shoreline. Further information is available on the GSLA web site.

New Business

The annual picnic is scheduled for August 3, with a rain date of August 4.

The holiday party is scheduled for December 7.

Election of Board of Directors

Chris noted that there were three positions to fill on the board.

Dave Callaghan's term on the board expired in June 2024 and he chose not to stand for re-election. Jim Robichaud expressed the thanks of the Association to Dave for his years of service to the GSLA and to the larger community and wished him well in his new responsibilities with the Town of Harwich Real Estate and Open Space Committee.

In addition, Chris announced that he would step back from his duties and asked to be replaced for the remainder of his term on the board.

Doug MacGilpin and Margaret Fallon, the other board members whose terms expired in 2024, stood for another term.

John Connolly was nominated to serve the remainder of Chris's term; Carol Dyer was nominated to serve a full term.

Thus the members in attendance voted for four candidates: John Connolly was elected to complete Chris's term, which expires in 2026. Margaret and Doug were re-elected for new terms running from 2024 to 2027; Carol Dyer was elected for a full term from 2024 to 2027.

Election of Treasurer and Clerk:

Pam Sawin was confirmed as Treasurer. Patsy Lightbown was confirmed as Clerk.

According to the GSLA by-laws, the President and Vice President are chosen by the Board of Directors from the current board members. This election takes place at the July meeting of the board.

Questions from the Membership (Thanks to Cathy Frazier for her good notes the question period) :

Most of the questions were directed at Joe Powers regarding the sewerage project.

Q: What properties in GSLA are included in Phase 3 (2026)?

A: As of today, there are no particulars. The details should be finalized by December, 2024. But anyone in the neighborhood with a teetering septic should be in contact with Board of Health/Wastewater Management as they may be able to provide an interim solution prior to sewer hookup.

Q: What is the average engineering cost?

A: We do not have that information. It should be available at the September meeting.

Q: Is there an analysis of road runoff?

A: GHD owns its statements, and if it's not done, the town will look for it to be done.

Q: What is included in the engineering costs for a homeowner?

A: Included in the cost is disconnecting and abandoning the current septic system, and determining the best way for each house to connect the sewer to their plumbing. There will be more information in the fall. Ann mentioned that she heard the neighborhood could collectively bargain to hire an engineering firm at a reduced cost.

Q: Will an unbuildable lot now potentially become buildable because of the sewer connection?

A: The sewerage project is not meant to ignite building. The building laws will remain the same with sewer as they were with septic.

Q: Does GSLA sewer project refer to Queen Anne Road or all of GSLA?

A: This July an answer to what will happen to the rest of the neighborhood will be discussed. We will potentially know the answer in either July or December. At the September meeting we will seek input and support as to what the project should include.

Q: What else can we do about the health of the ponds?

A: Attend a meeting on July 13 of the newly developed Harwich Pond Commission to see what we can learn from other Harwich pond Associations. There is also funding available from the Community Preservation Act if there are projects we can develop to further the health of the pond.

Q: Will there be enough engineering available for all homeowners to hook up by deadline?

A: The town is evaluating the number of engineers available. The town will provide months of advance warning with steps required to complete the hookup within the two year timeframe following the completing of the sewer project.

Q: How will this affect sales of homes with failed septic?

A: The town can take into consideration the upcoming sewer hookup and come up with a solution on a case-by-case basis.

The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted Patsy Lightbown, Clerk

Great Sand Lakes Association

P.O. Box 119
Harwich, MA 02645

May 29, 2024

Dear Great Sand Lakes Owner,

The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Great Sand Lakes Association will be held on Saturday, June 29, at 10:00 a.m. at the Harwich Community Center. **Come to enjoy social interaction with your neighbors and to learn about issues that are important to the community.** This year's speaker will be Joe Powers, Town Administrator for the Town of Harwich, who will speak on the sewerage project to take place on the north side of our ponds.

Last year's in-person meeting at the Community Center was a welcome respite after 3 years of meetings via Zoom. We look forward to once again meeting in person. We are aware that Covid has not completely gone away, so please feel free to wear a mask or to "keep your distance" in the large meeting room.

The agenda for the Annual Meeting is on the back of this letter, and your 2024 parking tag for the Association Beach on Clearwater Drive is enclosed. If you have renewed your GSLA membership by paying your dues, a copy of the 2024-2025 membership roster is also enclosed.

We anticipate a safe, healthy, and fun filled summer around the Great Sand Lakes. Meanwhile, please plan to join us for the Annual Meeting. Come at 10:00 a.m. for snacks, beverages (including coffee!), and conversation. Stay to participate in discussions of the challenges and opportunities we share as residents of this great neighborhood. We have three open positions for the Board of Directors this year so please come prepared to cast your vote(s).

See you at the Community Center on Saturday, June 24!

Chris Briggs, President
Great Sand Lakes Association