

**CITY OF MARLBOROUGH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Minutes

January 29, 2015 (Thursday)

Hudson Town Hall, 78 Main St. Auditorium 2nd floor

7:00 PM

This was a **joint meeting** held with the Ft. Meadow Commission; Hudson Conservation Commission; and Marlborough Conservation Commission.

Marlborough Conservation Commission Members Present: Edward Clancy-Chairman, David Williams, Lawrence Roy, Dennis Demers and Karin Paquin. Also present was Priscilla Ryder-Conservation Officer.

Absent: Allan White and John Skarin.

Hudson Conservation Commission Members Present: Leif Longtine- Chairman; Paul Byrne; David Mercer, David Esteves, Joe Rodrigues, and Marianne Iarossi. Also present was Debbie Craig- Conservation Administrator

Absent: Minot Wood

Ft. Meadow Commission - Lee Thomson-Chair, was present.

Absent: Joe Delginio, Mike Kaczmarek

Public Hearing: Ft. Meadow Reservoir Weed Control – Notice of Intent (NOI)

The hearing was opened by Chairmen Clancy, Longtine and Thomson. Chairman Longtine officiated.

Mr. Dominic Meringolo from Aquatic Control Technology (ACT) presented the Notice of Intent (NOI) wetland application on behalf of the Ft. Meadow Commission. He provided an overview of the lake and problems the lake has experienced in the past with Eurasian and variable water milfoil being most prominent and Fanwort being a newcomer nuisance weed to the lake. ACT has had a contract with the Ft. Meadow Commission over the past 8 years and has been inspecting the lake each spring and performing herbicide treatment as necessary. Treatment is designed to control the invasive non-native plants from taking over the lake. By doing so, the native plants have a better chance of taking hold and keeping the lake healthy. There is always a pre-treatment survey and a post treatment survey to gauge what needs to be done and how effective the herbicide was and what the lake health is after treatment. He is requesting permission to treat the lake again as the past permit has expired in both Hudson and Marlborough. At this time, they are proposing the use of the following herbicides when and if conditions and weed growth require it. The application methods and concentrations are dictated by the State and Federal government on the labels which must be strictly adhered to and are outlined in the Notice of Intent (NOI). Permission is sought to use the herbicides: Diquat – for spot treatment of water milfoil; Clipper- for spot treatment of Fanwort (the only spot treatment herbicide on the market for Fanwort control); and Sonar – for full lake treatment of water Milfoil and Fanwort. Sonar requires a long residence time and needs re-application to keep the concentrations at designated levels. All these products are in compliance with the State's

Generic Environmental Impact Report for Lakes and Ponds. Permits will be obtained by ACT from Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) before any use and all application rules shall be followed.

Mr. Meringolo said he knows there was a blue-green algae bloom this summer (2014) in the lake that was a cause for concern and closed the lake to swimming use for a while. The NOI proposes the use of either a copper based or buffered alum treatment to help control algae blooms in the future. The buffered alum is used to bind up the phosphorus in the water column, so it isn't available to "feed" the algae bloom. The copper treatment kills and treats the algae and then accumulates in the soil at the bottom of the lake. The copper treatment must be early in the bloom to be effective. More regular monitoring is required to determine when treatment is needed. This can be measured with a secchi disk to check clarity. If clarity is minimized to less than 4' then there may be an issue. These are options that can be used.

Another member asked about phosphorus in the lake and what we know about its abundance. Mr. Meringolo explained that ACT has not been testing for nutrients they have only been looking at plant growth. A treatment of Alum in the spring may help if conditions warrant, however it is a very expensive treatment. The copper treatment would also need some extensive monitoring too. He explained that controlling phosphorous and doing a watershed plan for the lake will help in the long term, but will not affect short term treatment. Alum is applied early prior to a bloom, copper is applied during the bloom, but not too late.

Chairman Longtine then invited Mr. Mike Celona from the State Department of Public Health to speak. Mr. Celona explained that he has been monitoring algae since 2009 in the State. He noted that blue-green algae is a normal occurrence and is always in all lakes in the State and around the country. However, once in a while, as happened this past summer, under certain circumstances with the right combination of phosphorous + sunshine + stagnant water + higher water temperatures = an algae bloom. On average, blooms that get to a critical health alert stage last about 5 weeks as conditions persist. In some lakes the bloom happens once and never occurs again. Other lakes have a more persistent algae bloom problem. The health concern is that the blue-green algae called Cyanobacteria, in high concentrations can produce a toxin that is not healthy to swim in or for pets/animals to ingest. When concentrations are high, the Mass Dept. of Public Health (MDPH) will take samples, send them to a lab and if it exceeds certain levels, the MDPH will send an advisory to the local Board of Health (BOH) and recommend beaches be closed and areas posted. Last July samples were taken which came back below "concern" levels. But when tested again in August, it came back high which caused the beaches to be closed. The advisory can only be lifted after 2 weeks of testing are "below critical levels". He explained that other lakes in the State had similar problems. Chairman Clancy asked what species of Cyanobacteria were found. Mr. Celona indicated he'd have to get back to him with genus and species.

Chairman Longtine asked if Richard Hartley from Div. of Fish and Wildlife was present, who had been invited to speak about the fish health in the lake, but he was not present.

Chairman Leif opened the questions to the audience and asked everyone to state their names and addresses when speaking: (note these comments are clumped together by speaker when

questions were repeated they are not noted here. The conversation did not necessarily occur in this order.)

Warren Carlson from Marlborough asked what happens to the herbicides used and do they accumulate over time? The consultant explained that the entire herbicides break down quickly into inert products, however copper when used does accumulate in the sediments, so caution must be used when deciding when and how to apply copper treatments. Mr. Carlson also asked about the “all” salt use that the city has adopted and is concerned what impacts the salt is having on the lake and he has seen an abundance of small clams and wondered if they were a problem. Chairman Clancy explained that the Marlborough Conservation Commission has the same question about salt and will be meeting with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to discuss same next week. The clams observed are the invasive “Asian clam” which was discovered quite a few years ago. They are at the northern edge of their range and haven’t created the problems expected when first discovered, but the Commission is watching this as well.

Chris O’Keefe from 39 Cullinane Dr., Marlborough - wanted to know who would be monitoring the algae next year and how that would be paid for. Sam Wong, Hudson Board of Health Director was present and explained that since the BOH in Hudson routinely monitors the beaches in the summer for bacteria, they could also be trained to look at algae in the lake. When clarity is reduced to a certain level, a call can then be made to the Mass Dept. of Public Health (MDPH) to take samples. He agreed to do this for Hudson and the Marlborough Conservation Commission agreed to ask the Marlborough BOH as well.

Dave Domke of 74 Paquin Dr. asked what mechanism is to be used to notify residents about the algae bloom. He noted that because of a sickness, his immune system is suppressed. He swam the day Hudson residents were notified by reverse 911 NOT to swim. He did not receive the notice until 24 hours later. He wasn’t sure why Hudson was notified sooner. No one from the Marlborough BOH was present to answer, but this question will be conveyed to the BOH as a concern.

Gail Barbera from 111 Cullinane Dr., Marlborough - explained that she is with the Lakeshore Dr. Association and has a lot of questions (many similar to those noted above). Of the two issues discussed tonight, weeds and algae, she wondered if treatments happens together. Mr. Meringolo explained that the weeds can be seen and treated on a schedule. The algae has to be treated when it’s present which cannot be predicted. She is concerned about the overall lake health and thinks something more must be done. She raised concerns about lawn fertilizer use and noted that there are plenty of lakes around the State and country which have salt and fertilizer restrictions that come with fines for violations. She advocated education and is willing to help. She was concerned that the city needs to pay more attention to this issue now that they have invested so much money in upgrading Memorial Beach.

Ellen King from Ft. Meadow Dr. in Hudson said that sometimes when she kayaks near Red Spring Rd. it smells. Ms. Ryder and Chairman Clancy noted that the Marlborough BOH had provided a list of septic systems on Red Spring Rd. and provided information about 12 of the 28 systems that exist. Mr. Wong explained that the septic systems should be pumped at least every two years by the homeowners and that documentation should be provided to the BOH. The Commission will follow up with the Marlborough BOH to find out more information and ask to

get a better handle on whether these systems are working properly and if there is any concern with nutrients entering the lake from these systems.

Michael Manning of 302 Lakeshore Dr. Marlborough - asked Mr. Celona about his experience with the lake. Mr. Celona explained that he is responsible to support the local Boards of Health and to help identify the health issues when they arise. His job is not to solve the problem, but just to identify any health issues. He noted that testing does not continue after the beaches are closed, but people still swim in the lake into Sept. and Oct.

Conray Wharff of Hudson – He is the Chairman of the Lake Boon Commission and explained that Lake Boon has had similar issues at Ft. Meadow Reservoir. He agreed that a total lake program is a good idea, everything contributes to the lakes health, including drawdowns, weed treatment, pollution control etc. They did use sonar on their lake which was effective. Now they used a pelletized form of sonar for spot treatments. They have also used Diquat/Reward for spot treatments. He just wanted to lend his support for this weed program and be a resource if necessary. He also noted that there are shallow wells around Lake Boon and the use of Sonar was not an issue in that situation, so shouldn't be on Ft. Meadow Reservoir either.

Henry Powell of 88 Paquin Dr., Marlborough - asked if the salt issue could be addressed with the Dept. of Public Works in Marlborough. (See answer above)

A gentleman who did not identify himself expressed concern that there is no consistent plan for the lake. Chairman Thomson suggested that the Ft. Meadow Commission take the lead and meet with all the associations. He is in charge of the Ft. Meadow treatment budget and if other items need to be addressed, he can ask for funding to address it in his budget. Chairman Leif suggested that it would be a good idea to look into a larger comprehensive plan for the lake in the future and he'd like to work with others on this. Ms. Ryder noted she could help too.

Ruth Brown (mother of Gail Barbera) 111 Cullinane Dr., Marlborough – asked if the lake could be dredged, wondered what information was available on the drains and suggested that everyone get together to make a plan.

Richard Shebak of 6 Elizabeth Rd., Hudson - He explained that it was he who called Ms. Ryder first in July about the algae. He noted the lake is priceless and he would like to see the city and town come up with a whole lake program to protect everything about the lake.

Randy ? (past Ft. Meadow Assoc. president), Marlborough - Repeated comments/questions already made.

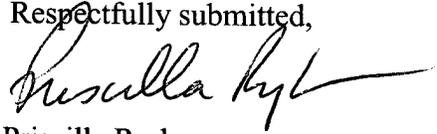
Mr. Esteves from Hudson Conservation Commission asked Mr. Thomson who has keys to the boat ramp gate since he's seen lots of boats go in early and is concerned that no one is checking their boats for invasive weeds, because it is before the attendants get there. Mr. Thomson said to please report these observations to him immediately and he'll take away the keys. Only a few early morning fishermen have keys. He'll keep an eye on this too.

There being no more questions, Chairman Clancy closed the Marlborough Public Hearing.
Chairman Longtine closed the Hudson Public Hearing. Draft conditions will be prepared by

Ms. Ryder and Ms. Craig and distributed for consideration at each of the Commissions meetings on Feb. 5, 2015.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Priscilla Ryder", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Priscilla Ryder

Conservation Officer