

RPA Annual Report 2022

Due to ongoing concerns about COVID-19 and to enhance convenience for board members and the public, the RPA met monthly using the Zoom format, with good attendance. The RPA's annual meeting was held August 23rd, in person, and was hosted at Camp Arrow Wood. There were over 115 attendees.

The 211-page picture book, *The Gem of Richmond - A History of Richmond Pond*, was published in February. This was a 2.5-year effort, involving dozens of contributors and several sponsors. As of year's end, over 520 copies of the 750 printed had been sold, priced at \$20, reimbursing RPA for all of its publishing and marketing expenses. They remain available at Bartlett's and other locations.

Weed treatment of the pond was not done this year. This was due to Natural Heritage's decision to reduce the allowable concentration of the herbicide used to treat the invasive weeds. The concentration put forth by Natural Heritage would have been ineffective in killing the weeds. Mechanical weed harvesting and hand-pulling are being explored as other options. The RPA is working with the City of Pittsfield and Town of Richmond on the necessary permitting. The intent is that the resulting permit will include various options for weed management so that a flexible long-range plan can be developed.

The second phase of the canal restoration initiative was completed this summer. A 3-year permit was issued by the Richmond Conservation Commission and Natural Heritage, and Aquatic Roots was again contracted by RPA for this project. The area harvested was a 10-foot-wide channel from Shore Road bridge back to Town Beach Road. The weeds were hand-pulled by scuba divers; support staff in kayaks transported the weeds to shore. The weeds harvested were removed away from the Pond for composting.

RPA officer elections were held in the fall. This coming year will be a transition year, as Ken and Carl serve their final year as president and treasurer. Louise Brogan was elected vice president, Doreen Donovan as secretary, and Laura Rosenthal as the newly created position of assistant treasurer. Ken and Carl will be delegating tasks they have assumed over the years to more equitably engage more board members in leadership roles and prepare the following year's officers for more narrowly defined leadership roles.

Ongoing:

- All beaches are tested weekly for E. coli by vendors hired by beach owners. Resulting E. coli counts have been below warning levels, so there were no beach closings this summer.

- Cyanobacteria testing was done bi-weekly, paid for by the RPA. While cyanobacteria are present at deeper levels, the amounts did not approach concern thresholds. Ongoing monitoring is again planned for 2023.
- RPA volunteers conducted tributary monitoring, with testing done twice this summer. While E. coli and nitrate counts emerging from the tributaries have been low, Phosphates have been high in Clarks Brook, which promotes algae growth in the southwestern part of the pond. This should be studied further.
- The Town funded and managed the public boat ramp monitors. This year, they were able to staff the boat ramp with sufficient monitors. However, there were no applicants for the life guard positions. The beach opened without a lifeguard and the gate was left open 24 hours. Without a lifeguard's presence and with the gate unlocked, there were incidents of vandalism to the float and more garbage was left behind. The Town decided to start locking the gate at 6 pm due to the vandalism incident.
- RPA's goose management plan was continued for its fourth year. A decision whether to continue with the current management plan for 2023 will be discussed in spring, but if there is still no volunteer to manage a 2023 program, it will not be continued.
- The Town's attempt to collaborate with Camp Russell to schedule restoration of the deteriorated detention basin at the camp had not been successful by year's end.
- The RPA website and Facebook page were regularly updated. A Richmond Pond Update column was submitted monthly for the *Richmond Record*.
- The annual "*Developments at Richmond Pond*" funding solicitation newsletter was distributed in July.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Kelly, President

Louise Brogan, Vice President

Carl Foote, Treasurer

Laura Rosenthal, Assistant Treasurer

Doreen Donovan, Secretary