

RPA Annual Report 2020

With COVID-19 preventing meeting in person this year, the RPA was very successful with moving all meetings to a Zoom format with good attendance. The annual meeting picnic format in July at Camp Russell could not be held, so the annual meeting also moved to Zoom format. Camp Russell was able to operate a safe and successful summer camp, opening a week late with reduced capacity.

After 40 years on Richmond Pond, Lakeside Christian Camp announced its permanent closure, effective April 1st. As the property was placed on the market, the RPA strongly encouraged Lakeside's parent entity, Converge Northeast, to consider sale of the property to a similar organization, to preserve the character of the pond.

The successful bidder, Pittsfield's Mill Town Capital, was announced by press release on December 18. The RPA immediately reached out to the new owners, and RPA's executive board met, by Zoom, with their Managing Director. We introduced each other, learned more about their plans, discussed our concerns, and invited The Camp By Bousquet to become a voting member of the RPA. Their plans to retain its rustic camp character appear very compatible with the values of the RPA.

With the Town's financial support, the RPA and the Town continued the vendor's management of invasive weeds. The pond was treated on June 11th and then re-treated on August 26th with good success. However, the native tape-weed has become more prolific this year, causing late-season concerns for swimmers and boaters. Plans are underway to address this in 2021.

Work continues to enact a cyanobacteria bloom prevention/management/communication plan in collaboration with the Town and other Berkshire lakes and ponds. The RPA is also collaborating with the Town to get the detention basins cleaned at Camp Russell.

Development of a canal restoration plan is in progress, involving collaboration with the Town, ConCom, RPA and the Richmond Shores Civic Association. Strategies under study include adding alternative weed treatments such as hand-pulling a channel of the native weeds (in 2021) and hydro-raking (in a subsequent year).

The Town has jurisdiction over farm function permits at the relatively new and locally popular Balderdash Cellars Winery, across the railroad tracks from the Richmond Pond boat launch. The RPA has become an additional forum for expression of both concerns of some near-corner Richmond Shores residents about noise from their live music, and support from others, including regular patrons, about this nearby family-oriented amenity. Following several related

discussions, the RPA opted not to take a pro or con position regarding their live music, but to serve in a neutral role to facilitate related discussion.

Two new at-large board members were elected, filling both vacancies. The RPA contracted for Directors & Officers Insurance this year, covering its board members and volunteers for the first time. The RPA also endorsed the ConCom's recommendation to have parcel #142, the northern corner of Shore Road and Town Beach Road, be turned over by the Town to the Conservation Commission to be preserved in perpetuity as conservation land.

Ongoing:

- RPA volunteers conducted tributary monitoring, and all readings were within “safe” parameters.
- The RPA expressed concerns that active dam management continue during Lakeside's “for sale” period. Lakeside's on-site property manager stayed on to manage the dam and the pond's annual drawdown and has been retained by the new owners.
- The Town funded and managed the public boat ramp monitors, though it was challenging this year to get the positions filled. The Town also staffed the Town Beach, which needed more monitoring this summer due to increased use, as most other area beaches were closed.
- RPA's goose management plan was continued for its second year, preventing expansion of the resident goose population and reducing their impact on the pond's beaches. There were no E.coli readings at any of the beaches around the pond that exceeded safe levels for swimming. RPA expects to hire Wild Goose Chase, NE again next year, and include Whitewood and The Camp By Bousquet in their rounds.
- The RPA website and Facebook page were regularly updated, and monthly pond updates were submitted for the *Richmond Record*. There were no local, regional or state pond management seminars this year.
- The annual “*Developments at Richmond Pond*” funding solicitation newsletter was distributed in July; contributions starting July 1, 2020 were up from last fiscal year, excluding the fall 2019 large donation from Balderdash.
- A Richmond Pond history project (a picture book) is well on its way to a target publication and sale date in late spring 2021. There have been more volunteers helping with this project, and its funding has been approved. Its Table of Contents is posted on the RPA's website, www.richmondpondassociation.org, under the More item on the menu bar

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Kelly, President

Susan Benner, Vice President

Carl Foote, Treasurer

Doreen Donovan, Secretary