

RPA Meeting Minutes 2018
(Notes in order from most recent to oldest)

RPA Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2018

RPA Business:

Quorum: Meeting called to order at 5:30 pm. New alternate for South Pond Farm, Laura Rosenthal, was introduced.

Minutes - 9/25/18 minutes unanimously approved.

Meeting schedule for 2019 – Dates would be 4/23, 5/21, 6/25, 7/23, 8/27, 9/24 & 10/22. The third Thursday was chosen for May due to members possibly being out of town for the Memorial Day holiday. Also, the June or July date might be the picnic, but to be discussed later. All dates were available at Richmond Town Hall, and the meeting dates were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's report – Carl reported that balance in all accounts is \$45,044, including \$14,214 in the dam maintenance fund. We have received \$8,570 in individual donations to date, compared to the \$7,900 we received in donations throughout all of 2017. He also recommended that we vote to approve committing funds to pay for year #3 of the ESS Group water level monitoring contract with the Town of Richmond, for \$3,200, so that the Town could approve a 2-year contract for the remainder of the 3-year project, knowing that the funding is committed from RPA. (Year #2 cost of \$3,200 has already been committed, with this spring's approval of our 2018-19 annual budget.) Mark indicates that he will bill the Association as the Town gets billed in order to avoid accounting difficulties due to the Town's fiscal year. The measure was approved unanimously.

Priority Projects:

Weeds – update on tape grass options – Carl reported that Brea (one of Solitude's biologists) performed the year end survey on October 1st. She noted, as Carl had mentioned previously, that there was an overwhelming amount of growth of tapegrass. This has historically been a non-target species, however with the amount of growth this season, perhaps this is something that should be targeted in future seasons. Other than that, things seemed to be in good shape. She didn't note any re-growth of treated non-native species (Milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed), which is an encouraging sign. There were a few other native species present such as coontail, thin-leaf pondweed species, and some elodea. A more detailed Year-End Report, which will elaborate on everything above, is expected in November as she is still finishing up field work.

Status of Canal & Solitude's hydro-raking webinar – Carl and Ken have viewed this webinar & have shared it with Rosanne, who will share this with other Richmond Shores residents. The estimated cost for this is between \$40,000 and \$50,000, not including removal of debris to off-site disposal.

Update on short-term dam remediation action plan & costs – John reported repairs are proceeding as reported last month. The front right corner auxiliary spillway will be repaired during the drawdown. If seepage does not stop, an engineer will be consulted. He indicated that he's not submitting a funding request to RPA at this time, but expects needing help next year with the planned installation of rip-rap along the earthen part of the dam which has eroded from wave action.

New Items:

Dam water level management proposal from Housatonic Valley Association – John shared that Michele Craddish & Kate Benson of Mass Fish & Game, Division of Ecological Restoration, and Dennis Regan of Housatonic Valley Assn. met yesterday with John at Lakeside (Carl & Ken also attended) to propose the adoption of a dam management guidance document (water release plan) that would stabilize outflow into the main headwater creek of the Southwest Branch of the Housatonic River, in the interest of preserving natural conditions for flora & fauna living in the creek. Unlike several other artificially dammed lakes in the Berkshires, Richmond Pond has already been managing outflow during drawdown and refill to gradually adjust permitted lake levels, thereby preventing sudden gushes or a dry streambed, while maintaining recreational pond levels during the summer season. The goal of their proposal is to as much as possible mimic natural rainfall impacts on the stream.

Mass Fish & Game will install a water level gauge shortly below the dam, collect a year's worth of data, & also study the pond level data that RPA is sharing with them from the ESS Group monitoring program. With regard to water quality, they shared data from their own 2017 & 2018 samplings of water for E. coli at many points along the Southwest Branch; the six readings in 2017 at the dam were so low (2 to 21.6) that they discontinued sampling at the dam for 2018! Michele also mentioned that there's a MA dam & seawall program that can provide partial funding for dam repairs or removals. It requires a 25% match. She will send related information about it to John.

Development of all-pond goose management strategy – Steven, John – In Steven's absence, Laura read the entire 10/8/18 proposal to Steven Schnoll (South Pond Farm) from Eric Johnson of Wild Goose Chase NE, utilizing trained border collies. Fees would be \$65 per half hour with most visits in the 2-hour range (\$260), with likely several visits/week. There would be two components - Spring to discourage nesting, with an option 1 and option 2, and summer to haze,

chase (herd-chase) families/flocks of geese. A power boat & kayak would have to be provided by the client.

Other factors relating to goose control were mentioned by others:

- Most nesting is in inaccessible marshes.
- Inability of adults to fly during molting season (while goslings are young); shoreline fencing &/or thick shoreline vegetation buffers keep birds off grass during this period.
- Don't have lawns – having a lawn invites the geese onto it & to Richmond Pond.
- Hunting, with limited pond access, is unlikely to have a major impact. There are 2 seasons; Canada goose bag limit = 15 daily in early season 9/4 to 9/21; bag limit = 3 daily in regular season 10/10 to 11/24 & 12/3 to 12/13.
- Liquid goose repellents made from non-toxic grape extracts, fencing systems, and predator decoys were also discussed, but goose strobe lights were discouraged.
- A cost-sharing plan would have to be developed, likely involving both camps, the community associations, the town and RPA.

Carl stressed the need for a pond-wide goose-control plan, & there appeared to be support for RPA to contribute something toward the effort. A concern was expressed about how much financial support RPA should provide, given the pending possible costs of dam repair, also noting that some areas of the pond have thus far been minimally impacted (Whitewood & Branch Farm).

Identification of winter projects & staffing of project teams – It was determined that goose control and management should be a winter priority. John, Sue, Laura, and Matt agreed to form a group, chaired by John, to study this issue and make recommendations to the board at an RPA meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 8. An educational component will be considered, and community organizations and the Richmond Conservation Commission will be asked for input.

Keeping all W. Mass. lakes healthy (Stockbridge Bowl algae bloom, etc.) – Carl reported that he expects this will be addressed at the LAPA-West Symposium.

Capturing the history of the dam, canal, town beach, weed treatment, the camps, etc. & collaboration with Richmond Library history project, Richmond Historical Commission & others – Ken shared his initial outreach to Gloria Morse (Historical Commission) & Candy Mountain (Library). Ken and Matt will research these areas, involving other individuals, & prepare drafts for spring review.

Development of annual report 2018 – Matt volunteered to do this.

Announcements/updates:

- LAPA-West Symposium – Saturday, November 17, 8:45 am to 1:20 pm @ BCC (free) – All are welcome to attend. (NOTE – Because of facilities issues at BCC, the Symposium has been relocated to the Zion Lutheran Church, 74 First St., Pittsfield.)
- Update from Josh Billings Committee – Ken reported that after the Josh, Patty Spector met with the Selectmen to solicit feedback, as did Lou Oggiani with RPA. Josh Committee held their evaluation meeting & more kudos to Town of Richmond & RPA for our extensive cooperation. They intend to return to Stockbridge Bowl, but want to fine-tune their Richmond Pond back-up plan in the case of future need.
- Winter draw-down plan (starts November 1st) – John has been in touch with Jim on this and is awaiting the City permit. He advised an email to website subscribers, some of whom still have boats on the water. Refill will start in mid-February, with the pond to be full by April 1.
- Collaboration between RPA with Richmond Consolidated School & Berkshire Audubon Sanctuaries for study of Richmond Pond - Susan will talk to Don about property access through Whitewood. Mark will write the Town's insurer about potential liability to property owners.
- Sewer Users Advisory Committee – Mark reported that the committee is working with town treasurer to develop a plan to address the sewer enterprise fund shortfall. He has advised that the committee deal with the shortfall gradually over time rather than asking for a significant amount up front.
- Upcoming Special Town meeting Tuesday, October 30, 6:00 pm, Town Hall.
- Farm function zoning bylaw amendment concerning the need for a permit for amplified sound between 10 am & 11 pm.
- 11th annual Pancake Breakfast, Sat., Nov. 17, 7-10 am, Richmond Congregational Church, 1515 State Road, \$5 adults; \$3 age 10 & under, to benefit Richmond Food & Fuel Fund.
- Tracy Brook Wildlife Sanctuary update – Richmond DPW has installed barrier posts between parking pull-off & beaver pond for safety reasons.
- Facebook page & website updates – Carl posted several photos, with mixed results. Ken posted a notice about lake draw-down & Josh photos on home page & also posted last month's bylaws change.
- Richmond Conservation Commission perspectives – Mark reported that money has been set aside for 50 years to buy conservation land, but that has never been acted upon. The commission is now considering a purchase.

Any update items, of interest to all, from each camp & community association

- Branch Farm will be closing its access gate on November 1.

Meeting adjourned 7:00 pm.

Next meeting – Tuesday, January 8, 2018 – Town Hall (to review first draft of a pond-wide goose management plan). NOTE - This was subsequently postponed to February.

Directors Present: Ken Kelly, president (independent cottages), Susan Benner, vice president (Whitewood); Carl Foote, treasurer (Branch Farm); Matthew Palardy, secretary (independent/public); John Mead (Lakeside Christian Camp); Mark Pruhenski (Richmond Town Administrator)

Alternates Present: Laura Rosenthal (South Pond Farm)

Guests Present: Neal Pilson (Richmond Board of Selectmen);

Directors Absent: Jessica Baumgarten (South Pond Farm); Rosanne Frieri (Richmond Shores); Dan Joslyn (Camp Russell); Nick Martinelli (Richmond Conservation Commission); Jim McGrath (City of Pittsfield)

Alternates Absent: Kais Abderrahim (Camp Russell); Louise Brogan (Branch Farm); Lucy Hoffman (independent/public); Linda Kay (Richmond Shores); Barry Kellogg (Richmond Shores); Kitty Levitan (Whitewood); Joe McGovern (Camp Russell); Matt Melillo (Richmond Shores); Al Nardacci (independent cottages); John O'Brien (Branch Farm); Adam Weinberg (Richmond Conservation Commission)

NOTE - An electronic copy of the minutes of a specific previous meeting may be provided by email in response to an email request to the RPA Secretary.