



freetown-lakeville
LAKE DISTRICT

Tonight's Format

- Introductions and format overview
- Brief PowerPoint Presentation
- Q&A
- Format:
 - Audience questions must be asked at the microphone. Questions raised via Zoom or FB must be written in chat and will be read out loud for everyone to hear
 - Please be respectful and quiet while others are speaking. Repeat interruptions will not be tolerated
 - If we can't answer something tonight, particularly those of a legal nature, then we will do our best to post an answer within 48 hrs

Why are we here today?

- To explain the District and its goals
- To answer frequently asked questions
- To educate on what has been proposed in the past and why a District is the answer

Lake District Charter

- To preserve, protect, and resurrect Long Pond
- To bring Proprietors together as a community organization to address the challenges facing Long Pond
- To address the invasive weed issue by all means necessary
- To keep Long Pond open and available for all to enjoy
- To enact best practices to maintain Long Pond for years to come
- To support the Town of Freetown with staffing and training of boat ramp monitors
- To educate Long Pond residents and visitors on issues facing the pond and how they can help preserve and protect it for in the future

How does the District work?

- Properties that are waterfront, have deeded access, abut a waterway that feeds Long Pond, or are in a neighborhood that has a benefit to Long Pond will be part of the District
- These property owners are called “Proprietors”
- Freetown / Lakeville Selectman will notify all Proprietors by certified mail the time, date and location of the initial District meeting
- The Proprietors control the District by electing a committee and voting on the direction of the district at an annual meeting, including bylaws, applications for grants or other funds, any salaries for board members, and potentially an assessment on properties to establish an operating budget
 - District Moderator
 - Clerk / Treasurer
 - District Prudential Committee consisting of 7 proprietors and 2 alternates, including a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
- In short, the District operates the same as local town government and is also subject to audit by the State Oversight Committee

Lake District's Plan:

- Form a Lake District through the voters of Freetown and Lakeville
- Engage Solitude Lake Management to perform a survey of the pond and provide a proposal to address the weed issues and water quality
 - Initial survey completed and posted to <https://flld.org>
 - Second survey is planned for the Summer of 2021
- Apply for all available funds at the State and Federal levels
- Solitude will perform weed eradication via several means:
 - Diver assisted suction dredging
 - Eco / mechanical harvesting
 - Spot treatment with MA and EPA approved herbicides for reservoirs
 - Estimated first year cost to treat with herbicide is \$350K
- Solitude and the District will work together for ongoing maintenance and treatment of Long Pond
 - Ongoing treatment frequency and costs will be determined by Solitude Lake Management based on impact of prior year treatments
- Provide the Town of Freetown the resources to staff and monitor the boat ramp and perform boat inspections

Frequently asked Questions

- Why not raise boat launch fees? And a boat wash station?
- Why not go after New Bedford and Taunton Water Works for funds?
- Why not go to the Massachusetts Legislature for funds?
- Why not request Federal funds?
- Why not have more fundraisers or find private donors?
- Why not form a non-profit instead of a District?
- Why aren't you asking everyone in Freetown and Lakeville to pay?
- Why are you using assessed value and a percentage instead of a fixed fee?
- What will it cost to eradicate the weeds, and what are the guarantees?
- How is it determined who is a proprietor?
- Are the District Board positions salary based or voluntary?

Answers

- **Why not raise boat launch fees?**
 - We are not against that, however the way the State implemented the management agreement with Freetown limits what we can do, specifically limiting fees collected to boat ramp maintenance and attendant salary.
 - The State also limits the fee to \$10 at state ramps, by law
 - For those proposing we shut the ramp down or turn the pond private, the State also mandated by law that the ramp remain open to the public
- **What about a boat wash station?**
 - We believe the State will approve that and even assist in design and setup, but at the end of the day it's little more than a pressure washer with a collection system.
 - A wash station alone will not address the fact the pond is already infested.
- **Why not go after New Bedford and Taunton Water Works for funds?**
 - We have, and both organizations flatly stated they will not charge their residents to fund addressing Long Pond as it is not the direct source of their water
 - The commissioner also advised “watch what you wish for” ...alluding to the risk that if either city steps in, they may very well demand things we do not want, such as ‘no more power boats’, or worse...

Answers

- **Why not go to the Massachusetts Legislature or Federal Government for funds?**
 - We intend to, but as private citizens we cannot. We need to form a District to do so, and one of our first steps will be to solicit whatever funds are available
- **Why not have more fundraisers or find private donors?**
 - We have managed to raise \$30K in 4 years...so in just 40 more years we'll have enough for the initial treatment
 - At the end of day, fundraising is not a viable approach for the monies we need, however we are happy to continue fundraising and welcome support from the community to fund District activities
- **Why not form a non-profit instead of a District?**
 - We have one...the Long Pond Association. They managed to collect \$1,000 back in 2009!
 - We also investigated this route...and several attorneys we approached all said it was a bad idea
 - Our main concern is that 1 person would be responsible for running the nonprofit, not a group. This same individual would be responsible for grant applications. That 1 person also gets to decide where that money is spent. Not you...not me...that 1 individual determines the fate of those monies and decisions. We feel that is the best way to lose control
 - A District on the other hand, which is managed by many proprietors, is subject to state oversight committee audits and the limits imposed on us by our formation legislation, and further by our own bylaws
 - We are certainly not opposed to other residents forming a nonprofit in support of and/or in conjunction with the District and its goals

Answers

- **Why aren't you asking everyone in Freetown and Lakeville to pay?**
 - We talked to a significant number of residents both on the pond and off. The overwhelming majority of residents that do not live on the pond said they would vote No to District creation
 - We concluded the best approach was to focus on the residents with the most to gain with respect to Long Pond health (or lose, as the case may be)
- **Why are you using a percentage of assessed value instead of a fixed fee to raise funds from proprietors?**
 - We feel it's the fairest approach. \$500 to a person in a \$200K home is a steeper ask than someone living in a \$750K home
- **What will it cost to eradicate the weeds?**
 - Initial 1st year estimate to treat the 300+ acres is \$350K IF we want to treat the entire pond that first year, primarily by herbicide
 - Ultimately the District will need to decide how to spend its operating budget, in consideration of Solitude's input

Answers

- **How is it determined who is a proprietor?**
 - The District committee, once formed, will identify all properties with either water frontage, deeded access, or are in a neighborhood with a benefit to Long Pond (e.g. a boat ramp, right of way, or a community beach) via maps and/or research via Town deed records
 - **What about opting out?**
 - SECTION 21 addresses the option for non-waterfront homes to remove exclude themselves from the District. This approach and language was taken directly from other State approved lake district legislation
- **Are the District Board positions salary based or voluntary?**
 - SECTION 18. The district *may*, by majority vote, agree upon appropriate compensation for its officers and employees, including the committee members, in the event that the district shall include in its budget appropriations for its employees or committee members to perform duties with respect to the lakes within the district

Efforts over the Past Twenty Years

- The State of Massachusetts provides funding for State parks for invasive weed control and eradication, but not to private Ponds or Ponds that have privately owned homes on its' shores.
- In 2004, a bond bill passed with funds for weed treatment only to be vetoed by Gov. Romney
- In 2006 the State of Massachusetts spent \$6M dollars on a study of invasive species and identified Long Pond as a threatened body of water being infested with Fanwort and Variable Milfoil
 - The report, posted on <https://flld.org>, concluded it would cost the state \$100M to treat all the 3,000 lakes and ponds in the Commonwealth. The State has yet to produce funds to address report conclusions
- As a result of the studies, the State of Massachusetts started an Invasive Weed Task Force. The task force is now defunct and longer in service.
- In 2014 State Representative Keiko Orall "APPROPRIATED" \$13,000,000 for the removal of invasive plants and \$4,750,000 for flood control through the Environmental Bond Bill. The Bill failed and the money was never added to the State Budget.
- The Long Pond Association tried Benthic Barriers (lake bottom blankets) and failed. Long Pond Association is now defunct and no longer in service.
- At the local level, Lakeville and Freetown have never recognized there is a problem and have done nothing.

The Risk of Doing Nothing...

- Human life is at stake
- The ecosystem suffers
- Eventually the entire pond will be dead and impassable
- Home values decline as Long Pond water quality continues to diminish
- The ripple effect will impact neighboring home values, costing the towns and homeowners millions of dollars

- We all want something to happen, and we believe this is the only effective direction we can take. We need to take action now.

Proprietor Fee Examples from Freetown & Lakeville

There are an estimated 1,500 homes in the District, so we expect to collect about \$250,000 annually for the District's operating budget*

Property	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3	Sample 4
Assessed Value	\$130,800	\$259,700	\$439,600	\$533,400
X 0.0004 Tax Rate	\$52.32	\$103.88	\$175.84	\$213.36

The District legislation mandates a procedure for filing an exclusion due to financial hardship

**The District will review budget needs annually with a goal of reducing proprietor fees as costs to maintain and protect the pond decrease, and only after first attempting to obtain State and/or Federal funds to cover District goals*

FREETOWN LAKEVILLE LAKE DISTRICT

