Big Fish Lake Association Annual Meeting

Collegeville Township Hall

June 22, 2019

1. Call to order, 8:35 a.m. Kit Ferber

Absent members: Nina Steil, Josh Hirschfeld, Bill Unger

1. Matt Peters presented the treasurer’s report.

Motion to approve by Sarah Unger, seconded by Beverly Jacobs – passed.

1. Kit Ferber gave a membership drive update. Our association has the best membership in the state for lake associations. Out of 194 lake property owners, we have 147 members or 76%. Business memberships were added a couple years ago with advertising on emails and newsletters. Those memberships pay for our communication with members.
2. Hailey Bayer and John Ronning were both unanimously approved as new board members, with Nina Steil and Allen Schmitz stepping down. Other board members whose terms expired were also renewed. Megan Johnson agreed to serve as the board’s secretary with Nina’s resignation.
3. Ted Ruzanic, Matt Peters, and John Ronning gave an update on the loons. One loon family was given names: mom loon-Maang (Ojibwe for loon), dad loon-Bdoza (Dakota for loon), and baby loons-Medawisla (Native American name for loon) and Gaviidae (the scientific family for loons).

Three aluminum loon nests were put out by Matt Peters and Ted Ruzanic. Mark Backes put out the PVC nest. Three of the nests had nests made by loons, and there are at least four baby loons this year.

1. Stearns County Sheriff Steve Soyka discussed the county water patrol whose primary goal is enforcement and safety and the recent no wake ordinance. The county water patrol are funded through state and federal grants based on the number of lakes in the county and activity levels.

Sheriff Soyka also discussed the no wake zone that was placed on the lake by the county in June after they received several complaints from property owners regarding high water levels and shoreline erosion. County assessors came out to the lake to measure water levels and determined the water was 5-6 inches high.

Kit Ferber discussed pursuing a no wake zone temporary ordinance for Big Fish Lake. Five other lakes in Stearns County have enacted this type of ordinance that triggers a temporary no wake zone within 300 feet of the shoreline when water levels exceed specified levels. The process of enacting this type of ordinance takes about two years and involves petitions from county residents, research and inspections by the DNR, and approval from the county board. A motion was made by Chris Wenner for the board to set up a survey for property owners on the topic of pursuing a temporary no wake zone ordinance, Paul Steil seconded – passed.

After a short discussion about parking issues at and around the lake’s public access it was suggested that we extend the no parking zones on nearby roads. The board will look into extending the no parking zone area.

1. Doug Adamek and Chris Wenner gave an introduction of the BFLA Legacy Campaign. A short video was played that gave an overview of the campaign and outlined the need to protect our lake for future generations. The goal of the campaign is to have the resources available to combat starry stonewort should it be found on our lake and to protect our investments and our property values. We are looking for significant donations over the next 3-5 years. The fund is professionally managed by the Initiative Foundation and will get an estimated 5% return.
2. John Ronning gave a brief aquatic invasive species (AIS) training session focusing on starry stonewort and zebra mussels and explained the differences between native plants and AIS. Zebra mussels were found on Big Fish Lake last summer. Over Labor Day Weekend we will have a “find your mussels” hunt to help us monitor them on the lake and see where they are drifting. We encourage homeowners to look on docks, tires, boats, etc.
3. The 4th of July decorating contest will be changed this year to decorate docks/shoreline instead of the boat parade.
4. Reminder of future events:

August 15 – Annual picnic at the Hidden Cove Orchard

Labor Day Weekend, August 31-September 2 – “Find Your Mussels” lake wide search

1. Motion to adjourn by Matt Peters, Ted Ruzanic seconded – passed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

Minutes written by Megan Johnson.