

MINUTES

OTTER LAKE LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION (OLLA)

20th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JULY 23, 2011

1. WELCOME:

President Marcia Maxwell welcomed all to the 20th annual general meeting.

Two guests from Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) were in attendance at this meeting – Rudy Dyck and Ferdous Ahmed. Rudy will be discussing beaver management and Ferdous will address the proposed 100 year flood plain for Otter Lake.

2. CURRENT EXECUTIVE:

Marcia introduced the current directors.

Marcia Maxwell	President
Carol Schaefer	Secretary
Phil Mayhew	Director
Lisa Baker	Treasurer
Doug Franks	Web Master and Lake Steward
Jim Noble	Director
Ed Wilton	Membership Coordinator

3. PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS:

Marcia's opening remarks are attached to these minutes.

She sadly noted that Frank Soural, the founder of OLLA, passed away this past winter.

Marcia also noted there are 2 meetings coming up for those interested:

- One regarding the plan for the township
- One for Lake Links

4. APPROVAL OF AGM MINUTES FOR 2010:

The minutes for 2010 are posted on our current web site www.otterlake.cyberus.ca As well, copies were sent with the notice for the meeting and a few copies were available for review as members arrived at the meeting.

No errors or omissions were noted.

MOVED by Bernard Ulyett **SECONDED** by Frank Croft that the AGM minutes for 2010 be approved as printed. **CARRIED**

5. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Our past treasurer, Mike Carson, has moved from the area. Our new treasurer is Lisa Baker. An overhead was provided for all to follow and Lisa reviewed the highlights. The current bank balance as of July 22, 2011 is \$ 1,758.55. Debenture Value as of December 31st, 2010 was \$ 5,225.19

MOVED by Elaine Mackay, **SECONDED** by Tom Gifford that the report be accepted as printed. **CARRIED**

6 & 7. SUCCESSION PLANNING – CALL and APPROVAL FOR DIRECTORS:

Dorothy Goubault led this portion of the agenda.

She read the portion of OLLA's constitution dealing with the make up of the board of directors. The board shall have no more than 10 members.

This year, there are 4 vacancies. Jim Noble has resigned due to personal time constraints.

Robert Langstaff has offered to serve on the board, but was unable to attend today's meeting. Frank Croft read personal information provided by Robert which explained why he is interested in serving on the board and his qualifications for doing so.

MOVED by Frank Croft, **SECONDED** by Linda Baker that Robert be accepted as a director. **CARRIED**

Phil Mayhew has served for 3 terms on the board and is willing to stand for a 4th term of 3 years. **MOVED** by Dorothy Goubault, **SECONDED** by Jim Noble that Phil be accepted. **CARRIED**

8. RON HAHN & RUDY DYCK (OCBMG):

OCBMG stands for Otter Creek Beaver Management Group.

Ron spoke at the meeting last year about forming a group to pay RVCA to continue their beaver management program. Ron and Rudy described the program which began in 2007. Between June 2008 and September 2010, there were no complaints regarding the lake level. Once the program ended, because other areas required RVCA's assistance, the beavers took over once more.

They explained that the dam on Doug Walker's property is the key to keeping the water flowing at an acceptable rate. At this site, there is a natural rock ridge beyond which the creek would not flow if the lake level reached a particular level, regardless of beaver dams.

When the lake level is very high, the shore line erosion is extreme, causing soil to enter the lake and causing trees to die.

Late in 2010 Ron met with RVCA, and they agreed to continue the program if they received remuneration. At last year's meeting, an unofficial vote seeking support to continue the program was taken and members gave their support. And so, Ron formed a small group of interested landowners who paid OCBMG \$1000 to continue the program.

At this point, approximately \$ 500 has been spent by OCBMG, and there is still money to continue paying RVCA for beaver management.

However, this spring we had extremely heavy rainfall and an early snow melt causing very high lake levels despite excellent flowing in the creek.

The floor was opened for questions, and a lengthy discussion followed. Some of the issues raised are recorded below:

- A member asked if OLLA had determined a water level that is acceptable.

Our lake steward explained that several years ago a survey was conducted asking for feedback on several issues. One hundred and thirty out of 326 property owners responded. A majority of the responses expressed no concerns over the water level. OLLA suggested 34" as a bench mark. The 34" figure represents the distance between the water surface and the top of the culvert. At this level, neither OLLA nor RVCA received complaints.

The OCBMG group consists of approximately 20 people. Their intent is to maintain an acceptable water level. No dollars are paid out of OLLA funds.

- How many years has OLLA tried to control water levels?

OLLA does NOT control water levels. However, they will bring problems to the attention of RVCA. RVCA also receives individual calls from property owners. If RVCA deems the water level to be a problem, they will take action. Controlling the beaver population has been an ongoing problem. They employ local, professional trappers.

- Doug Walker owns the property where the most problematic beaver dam is located. He has lived there for many years and notes that when a bridge, rather than a culvert spanned the creek, the creek bed took a different course. When the culvert replaced the bridge, the problems began. He feels either a larger culvert, or an additional culvert needs to be installed to allow heavier flow. Many present agreed with Doug.
- Dorothy Goubalt asked Doug if he has given his permission for RVCA to control lake levels by controlling the beaver population and dams on his land. The answer is yes.

She asked what government legislation allows RVCA to carry out this work.

Rudy advised it is the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. They are not permitted to alter the channel or the creek bed, but can only work on the dams. He mentioned Otter Lake does not fluctuate as much as many other lakes. However, one big problem caused by high water levels is shore erosion.

He also noted that without beavers, the natural bed of the creek controls water levels. At this time, the entire dam has been removed, rather than just breaching it.

- A member asked how OCBMG justifies having a few people making decisions to control the lake level.

Ron agreed the group should consist of representatives from all areas of the lake.

- Is Road 09 the only road affected by high lake levels?

No, several roads are affected.

- Is the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) legally involved in the work being carried out by RVCA? And is RVCA acting on the request of only a few residents?

Rudy advised that RVCA took over the control of the beavers at the request of the township that was reacting to many property owners' concerns.

- OLLA's policy is not to interfere with water levels.

Ron would like to see OLLA take over this responsibility.

Dorothy Goubalt would like the MNR to carry out a formal survey.

Doug Walker asked that individuals not contact his elderly mother with lake level problems.

One member expressed concern about boat launching and fish habitat when lake levels are extremely low.

Frank Croft has resided on the lake for many years and notes the lake level can vary by as much as 6 feet over the years. The health of the lake is controlled by nature.

Marcia noted there are approximately 13 streams coming into the lake, and some of them attract beavers. Local property owners keep them cleaned out.

MOVED by Gerald McBride that OLLA request the township either replace the current culvert with a larger one OR add a second culvert. **SECONDED** by Bill Rowland.

The above motion was later withdrawn.

During discussion, Jeff Banks advised the township would not accept the request from OLLA. It would have to come from RVCA.

MOVED by Dorothy Goubault that OLLA approach the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) asking them to explore the possibility of carrying out a comprehensive assessment regarding the health of Otter Lake and to provide their recommendations. **SECONDED** by John Hopps.

During the discussion, the question of who would pay for this assessment was raised.

The results: For – 21 Opposed – 1 **CARRIED**

It was noted that there are 3 dams on the creek, but 1 and 2 are the only ones with which RVCA has been dealing.

Ron Hahn asked if members wanted the OCBMG to continue supporting the beaver management program run by RVCA.

MOVED by Tom Gifford that the beaver management program be continued by RVCA as it has been since 2007. **SECONDED** by Dale Lindsay

The results: For – 23 Opposed – 4 **CARRIED**

At this time an OLLA member commented that members should be willing to get involved with OLLA either as directors or volunteers. She noted there are not enough volunteers to carry out the Lake Plan – get involved!

At this time, Frank Croft thanked the current board for their efforts.

Now, how to continue and how to fund proposed projects?

When Ron Hahn suggested that their group (OCBMG) be made part of OLLA, Lisa Baker was very concerned that the few members who were still at the AGM would be making such a decision.

MOVED by Lisa Baker that in order to be fair to all Otter Lake residents, it should be the full membership that decides whether or not they want OCBMG under OLLA's jurisdiction, not just those attending the AGM.

SECONDED by Linda Dekaban.

The results: For – 12 Opposed – 6 **CARRIED**

NOTE: OLLA's current mandate does not allow the board to interfere with water levels. To do so would require a change to the present constitution.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

People are interested in what the proposed 100 year flood plain will mean for them. Ferdous Ahmed addressed this issue.

A report regarding a 100 year flood plain for Otter Lake has been prepared and approved by RVCA. A few copies of the plan are available on the side table. If all are taken and anyone wishes a copy they can call RVCA.

Jeff Banks spoke on behalf of the township council. What effect will this policy have on properties, development, etc? He feels it will lower property values. He is also concerned about the third dam. If a larger culvert or a second culvert were to be installed, it would affect the flood plain level.

To set a flood plain level, it must be determined what the highest lake level could be in 100 years. Guidelines are set out by the MNR. RVCA has completed their study and has presented it to the RVCA board. It has been approved.

Doug suggested if you wish to determine where the flood plain level will be on your own property, measure 30", vertically, from your current water surface = 100 year flood plain level. Rudy noted this is correct, providing there are NO beaver dams.

Rudy said, historically speaking, the culvert is an artificial impairment to lake flow, and in retrospect, it was a mistake. The old bridge was 6' wide.

Ferdous indicated roads can be one foot under water and still be deemed acceptable.

Marcia thanked Rudy and Ferdous for attending today's meeting.

10. LAKE STEWARD REPORT:

A detailed report on the lake was sent out with the last newsletter.

Doug reviewed what is measured in the lake and why and also reviewed the results for the past year. He explained our phosphorous levels in the lake are low.

Dissolved oxygen is necessary for a healthy fish population. Over the past 3 years, oxygen levels have increased to the point the lake could probably now support lake trout. It could be time to request stocking the lake with trout.

All in all, the lake is in good health.

A member asked if the breaching of beaver dams on inflowing creeks will affect bacteria levels in the lake.

Doug responded it definitely does, but we have no way of measuring how much because we don't know when breaching occurs.

11. MORE NEW BUSINESS:

Several lake residents have received letters from the township offering septic inspections. It was noted this is strictly on a volunteer basis. Although it is stated in the literature there will be a \$40 fee, that is wrong – it is free.

It was suggested that in OLLA's next newsletter people be advised they can access information on our website: www.otterlake.cyberus.ca

12. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.