

## BELLA VISTA VILLAGE LAKES JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES May 13, 2020

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Matt Champagne (Chairman), Kelly Austin, (vice Chairman), Marvin Macedo, Rick Yorman, Paul Bickford (Secretary), Jason Adams, Gracie Turley

**Bella Vista POA Board Liaisons in Attendance:** Tammie Loyd, David Brandenburg, Jerre Barron, Jerry Hover, Ruth Hatcher

**Management Liaisons in Attendance:** Rick Echols, Trey Anson

**Guests Present:** Carol Phillips, Arell Wasson, Ross Gerner

**Call to Order:** Matt Champagne called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm with seven committee members present

**Additions/deletions to the Agenda:** None

**Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The minutes of the March 2020 Lakes JAC meeting were approved as submitted

#### Management Comments:

- **Tom Judson**, POA COO
  - The end of April there were 3,680 boat registrations compared to 3,566 at the end of last month. Also, an increase of 114 over the prior year
  - Most of the increases were in the kayak and large boat categories. Carmen Dissing, Member Services Manager, reported **64** boat registrations on the last day of boat registration!
  - About photo activity cards, at the end of April there were 852 more than last year, and with the current trend for May we will be about 900 to 1000 ahead of last year, about a 17% increase
  - Restaurants are open with about half of the business coming from take-out orders
  - Received the OK from the AR Governor to open swimming pools, and Avalon beach on time with many new operation protocols in place
  - **Austin:** Is there current information on boat slip rentals?
    - **Judson:** Currently flat. We were hoping for an increase with the reduction in rates; however, we haven't yet seen an increase in boat slip rentals.
    - **Austin:** I noticed many empty boat slips on Winsor; however, this may be because folks haven't yet brought their boats to the lake.
    - **Judson:** of the 150 boat slips on Loch Lomond, 50 are unused.
    - **Echols:** There is a significant increase in requests for kayak rack space on Winsor; therefore, in the next month or so, two old ones will be replaced with new ones with more space
  - **Champagne:** Tom, did you provide the number of boats registered this year versus last? **Judson:** Last May 31<sup>st</sup> there were 4,312 boats registered, and as of May 12<sup>th</sup> this year, there are 4,076 and the trend seems to indicate we will exceed last year's boat registration numbers by about 100
  - **Judson:** A change in subject: *The revised boating/watercraft regulations were approved and have been printed and distributed to registrants*

- **Rick Echols, Lakes, Parks and Fisheries**
  - I Request JAC committee guidance on the schedule for continuing lake drawdowns: the next lake, and last in the queue, is Lake Rayburn before the cycle begins again.
    - Lakes Brittany and Norwood aren't considered for this event because of the time required to refill them.
  - Lake and trail use are substantial, presumably because of the Covid-19 pandemic and how these amenities can facilitate adjustment to health safety guidelines
  - We are in the process of gathering materials and permits to build the Granton fish cleaning station.
    - With savings stashed away in the department's budget, and a matching funds grant provided by the Bella Vista Fly Tyers, this project should be completed in the near future
  - A personnel slot opened in the Lakes and Parks department; therefore, we hired a fisheries student who is helping within his specialty, as well as educational projects, lake fertilization, and other activities
  - In the process of updating all the lake kiosks with the recently new revised boating rule changes.
    - Included will be colored coded maps of the three large lakes easy to read and follow, clearly indicating where wake boats, as well as, boats pulling skiers, or tubers can lawfully navigate.
    - Buoys marking the 200-foot distance from shore have been installed to aid boat drivers and the people/devices pulled behind to follow lawful "distance from shore" navigation rules
  - **Lake rangers:** have scanned our seven lakes for watercraft without 2020 registration stickers, and efforts are in process of calling and requesting owners to register and/or attach 2020 registration stickers to watercraft
  - Presently in the process of adding parking signage and direction arrows at Stonykirk in addition to adding parking spaces to help ease congestion.
    - Also, added signage requesting people fishing from the courtesy dock to withdraw lines and stand aside while boats are loading/unloading at ramp
  - The Lakes Ecology and Fisheries Department decided to postponed fish sampling until Fall
  - Tournament fishing is more popular than ever; therefore, to follow pandemic protocols, social distancing is enforced at fish weigh-ins and all awards are processed by mail
  - Final trout stocking occurred 4/16 on Brittany; therefore, trout are plentiful and fishing is encouraged
  - The Aquaculture program has been successful with spawning about 1.1 million fry (Saugeye): 125,000 delivered to Avalon, 100,000 delivered to Lake Norwood, and 200,000 are being grown in the golf ponds with the anticipation to delivering them to Lake Ann and Winsor in June.
  - Avalon Beach E. coli level tested at 3 which is very good (the upper limit is 127).
  - Currently fertilizing lakes Norwood and Ann. Plan on fertilizing Loch Lomond this week or next depending on rainy weather. Aquatic weed control activity is in process on Avalon and Loch Lomond.
    - Objectives: Strike a balance between total weed eradication and

fish food

- Keep swimming and navigation areas free of weeds. This is done with chemicals and grass carp (1550 were added to Loch Lomond this Spring)
- Presently struggling on Loch Lomond to control “Parrot Feather” an evasive plant species that, we believe, entered the lake via resident’s “water gardens”
- **Macedo:** Rick, what size was the Saugeye delivered to lakes?
  - **Echols:** eyelash. In about a month the fry in the golf ponds will be about 2 inches
- **Champagne:** Rick, can you address Steve Hilton’s concerns about the Stonykirk boat launch parking area? **Echols:** Yes, Steve has expressed concern about the parking area congestion etc. before, and as I mentioned earlier, we have made improvements by adding signage, guidance arrows, and adding more parking spaces
- **Champagne:** Back to lake drawdowns: Several Lake Ann residences explained they couldn’t get needed worked completed because Lake Ann refilled to quickly after the recent drawdown: Question: can we drawdown Lake Ann again?
  - **Echols:** I request it be determined by the JAC about how many residences asked this be done prior to making another Lake Ann drawdown decision.
  - **Austin:** can both lakes be drawn-down simultaneously? **Echols:** Yes, however, Lake Ann is somewhat tricky because it refills rapidly.
- **Champagne:** Rick, when does a decision need to be made? **Echols:** in May or June, after which I will meet with residence to review procedures and answer questions
- **Yorman:** Rick, how much POA or your department’s effort is required to perform a lake drawdown, and are there any negative fishery issues to consider?
  - **Echols:** No negative fishery effects.
  - Lake Ann drawdown is relatively easy and doesn’t take much effort; however, Lake Rayburn requires siphon pipes to be installed by the water department which takes four people about a day
- **Yorman:** Rick, are there any other needed lake related tasks you or the POA plan to do? **Echols:** None that I know of. There are gravel bars that need to be removed on Avalon but no hurray at this time.
- **Champagne:** Do we need to vote on the Rayburn Lake drawdown request now? **Echols:** June vote is OK

### **Old Business:**

- **Yorman:** Is the subcommittee chairman, to consider the regulation of boat size, horsepower, dimensions, capabilities, and number on POA lakes.
  - Committee startup members are: Rick Yorman, Kelly Austin, Arell Wasson and other JAC members are welcome to join (Ross Gerner volunteered his services). We will take a “shotgun” approach to consider the many components of this endeavor.
  - I received comments/suggestions from Ellen Creakbaum and others that will be considered at this committee’s next meeting, and will report back to the next JAC meeting
  - **Champagne:** Please involve the POA legal counsel, Doug McCash, as your committee considers recommending regulation additions or changes

- **Champagne:** Is the subcommittee chairman, to consider forming a volunteer “Neighborhood Lake Watch group” to help improve timeliness reporting of suspected boating rule violations, and help improve boating safety and reduce lake residence’s property damage
  - Current committee volunteers are: Trey Anson, Paul Bickford, Rick Echols, and Matt Champagne. The subcommittee met on March 17<sup>th</sup> and discussed its scope (*see meeting minutes below*).
  - Procedures under consideration are:
    - Lake watch group member and/or community member, upon observing a suspected rule violation, would immediately call the lake ranger hot line number, 855-5067, to report and possibly video the incident. The lake ranger would respond ASAP.
    - This procedure would *supplement the existing lake ranger rule violation reporting procedures, to help minimize or eliminate the need for new/additional record keeping/reporting costs*
  - Subcommittee recommendations are:
    - With the new boating rules now enforce, review the effectiveness of above procedures through the 2020 boating season, then evaluate and consider changes as needed
  - **Hover:** I’m disappointed in the committee’s recommendations for the following reasons:
    - The POA board has repeatedly asked the JAC for data via a lake watch group to collect trusted data to support boating rule change decisions
    - It’s disappointing the JAC continues to “kick the can down the road” and not give our lake residence justice
    - **Champagne:** Jerry, what type of data collection are you referring to?  
**Hover:** collect data on the number and types of boating activity  
**Champagne:** We are encouraging residents (and/or lake watch group member) to report, picture, and possibly video suspected boating violation
    - **Turley:** Do we have historical complaint data? **Champagne:** Yes, the Lakes and Fisheries Department keeps such records and they have been presented at past meetings.
      - **Turley:** can we analyze these records to help decide if we do need to apply more effort i.e., establish a formal or semi-organized lake watch group?
      - **Echols:** Every lake ranger on every shift fills out a “lake violation report” and these reports can be shared for analysis
    - **Gerner:** Collecting more data may be more helpful; however, it’s clear to me that committee members have given the suggested procedures much thought; therefore, I recommend we proceed through this boating season as recommended, then consider changes as necessary
  - **Discussion Continued:** Topic comments continued from Arell Wasson, Marvin Macedo, Rick Yorman, Jason Adams, Paul Bickford, and Grace Turley
- **Old Business Topics Continued:**
  - **Turley:** Has Carmen expressed concern about issuing 2020 boat stickers?  
**Judson:** She hasn’t mentioned any problems and is issuing wake boat stickers as appropriate

- **Bickford:** How is the wake boat video training proceeding? **Echols:** I plan to email the training video to wake boat owners before the end of May and include a test to verify each viewed it
  - **Yorman:** Back to the boat size and limits subcommittee topic: Tom, I would like to confirm that at boat registration, boat length, weight, engine HP, etc. isn't recorded? **Judson:** We only record the boat category. Correction, Carmen said we do keep a copy of the state boat registration which does display boat length
  - **Champagne:** Fishing tournaments participation for non-members: Tom, has the R&R committee decided on this issue? **Judson:** It will be considered at the next meeting; however, remember, the Board must approve any decision
  - **Champagne:** Rick, how are you managing fishing tournaments? **Echols:** Only member registered boats are allowed; however, quests of members can participate in tournaments
  - **Judson:** The R&R committee is attempting to consider all the possible ambiguities and impacts on amenities of the links between members and guests
  - **Ruth Hatcher:** As my last JAC meeting in attendance, I want to thank committee members, of behalf of the POA Board, for all the many hours of hard work you have given to make the committee what it is to the community. It's people like you that make Bella Vista a better community in which to live
- **POA Board Member Liaison Comments:**
    - **Anson:** The Marina is humming and we will be open on Memorial Day. We are attempting to adjust operations to Covid-19 protocols. Now open 9 to 6 on the weekend now, and will stay open to 8 pm in June. Signs are being installed to notify visitors that video cameras are installed (not new, video cameras have been in place for about 2 years)
  - **Open Forum: None**
  - **Lake Announcements and next meeting:**
    - The next Lakes' JAC meeting will occur at 2 pm on Wednesday, June 10th, 2020
    - *Lake JAC meeting minutes and videos can be viewed, (with a simple "Ctl+left mouse click), at: <https://bellavistapoa.com/governance/committees/#lakes>*

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:13pm

Respectively Submitted, Paul Bickford, Secretary

Lakes Neighborhood Watch Group Meeting: Tuesday March 17, 2020

- Attendees: Rick Echols, Trey Anson, Paul Bickford, and Matt Champagne
- Discussions centered around this group of individuals being an additional reporting mechanism specifically for reporting violations of any boating activities. In addition, these individuals are to be experts on knowing and understanding all new rules and regulations concerning boat/lake activities. Preferably, these individuals would also have a good working relationship with the lake rangers thru training/communications etc.
- Responsibilities to include but not limited to
  - Report any violations to the POA Lake Rangers at 479-855-5148 immediately
  - Take pictures or videos if necessary
  - Encourage other neighbors to immediately report any violations to the lake rangers
  - Focus on reporting violations or other dangerous situations
    - Ensure 200 ft rule is being followed by boaters participating in skiing, tubing, wake boarding, or wake surfing and that boats engaging in wake boarding or surfing have the required wake boat sticker on their boats
    - Ensure boats participating in wake boat activities throw wake toward the center of the lake and operate in a counterclockwise rotation.
    - Ensure 100ft from shore being observed by other boaters not participating in watersports
    - Lake Watch Group captains on each lake to have a range finder to verify distances and report suspected violators
- Recruiting and training members
  - Members should be lake front residents and will be recruited by Lake Announcements in POA publications and Lakes JAC meetings.
  - Training will be conducted by Lake Rangers to ensure consistency, direction, and scope in this new position
  - Ideally, Loch Lomond should have 6 volunteers, Lake Windsor should have 4 and Lake Ann should have 2.
- Alternative solutions:
  - While the idea of a Lake Watch Group much like a Neighborhood Watch Group is appealing, we also recognize that such a group also poses additional risks which may not be in our best interest long term.
  - Issues created by the Lake Watch Group might include the following:
    - Response times may be delayed if a resident tries to contact the Lake Watch group prior to calling the Lake Ranger number directly. The Watch group member may not respond quickly or some other delay may prevent the Lake Rangers from being called immediately.
    - Most everyone has a cell phone capable of taking pictures and/or videos. In theory, every lake resident and user in an unofficial Lake Watch Group member and can simply call the Lake Rangers to report a violation or safety concern. It avoids duplication of effort and those who witness the violation can report based upon firsthand knowledge.
    - Lake Watch Group members may take on additional non sanctioned roles which may conflict with official Lake Ranger roles and responsibilities and may cause friction with other neighbors
    - Additional POA resources will be required to train and manage this group of volunteers and resources may be used more effectively in other ways.
  - New rules and regulations have just been enacted and no data exists to inform us of the need to adjust or add additional resources.

- The recommendation of this group is to wait and evaluate the new rules and regulations put into place for the 2020 boating season and make reasonable adjustments as needed once the 2020 boating season is complete. In addition, lake rangers should encourage members to report violations immediately by calling the number posted: 479-855-5148.
- Groups that sprout up organically are not discouraged and may be helpful on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis.