

**ALLIANCE OF PIGEON LAKE MUNICIPALITIES MEETING MINUTES**

**March 11, 2015, 7:00 pm**

**Room 241**

**Leduc County Administration Office**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Glenn Belozer, Leduc

Rex Nielson, Itaska

Brian Meaney, Poplar Bay

Ernie Elko, Argentia Beach

Doris Bell, Crystal Springs & Recorder

Karen Belmont, Golden Days

Peter Pellatt, Sundance Beach & ASVA President

Barb Martenson, Silver Beach

Frank Dyck, Norris Beach

Don Davidson, Grandview

Brian Waterhouse, Sundance Beach

**REGRETS:**

Pete Langlelle, MaMeO Beach

**GUESTS:**

Susan Ellis, President, Pigeon Lake Watershed Association

Michael Gaian, Pigeon Lake Watershed Association

Mike Pocente, Fire Protection

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Brian Waterhouse called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

Moved by Don Davidson to approve the agenda.

CARRIED

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Moved by Frank Dyck to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2014 APLM meeting as presented.

CARRIED

**NEW BUSINESS:**

***In-Lake Technical Committee Report – Health Advisories***

Ernie Elko reported on the problem of Alberta Health Services Advisories – posting warnings without proper testing, which results in condemning the whole lake.

Mandate – Ernie indicated the In-Lake Technical Committee's mandate to deal with this issue resulted as it was brought up as part of the Workshop in February, 2014. After the workshop, Ernie called Dr. Talbot, the Chief Medical Officer three times to arrange a meeting and the committee met with him in October and January. Don Davidson indicated APLM had made a resolution to have him represent APLM at meetings with Dr. Talbot and that he had the support of ASVA. Michael Gaian indicated PLWA had investigated Health Advisories prior to the Workshop. Brian Waterhouse will clarify representation.

As a result of the AHS Advisory meeting, Ernie reported that there is a possibility to modify the process of advisory posting. The In-Lake Technical Committee proposed to Dr. Talbot that augmented sampling and testing be provided by the Committee, on the condition that AHS train its volunteers. The

Committee feels that if proper testing is done, increased accuracy will reduced the number and duration of postings.

Issue – AHS posted advisories over the past 2 years based on visual observation because water sample testing through a U of A lab took 3 weeks to get results. The time was lengthened because the species of algae present in the water was determined. In that 2 year period of testing, results for microcystin bacteria exceeded criteria only 1 time. The advisory postings negatively affect local economies and property values; the extent of public health protection comes into question when considering the safety levels of microcystin are for drinking water quality (not recreational swimming) and have only been exceeded once.

Members raised concerns about

- the lake being under Federal jurisdiction,
- local property owners to paying (through municipal taxes) for responsibilities under Provincial jurisdiction (water quality testing for public health reasons); and
- signage.

Members indicated they were not in favor of a \$35 per lot fee to ‘prove a point’; although could support it if the funds helped the lake.

#### **Grandview – Health Advisories**

Don Davidson also reported on the January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting with Dr. Talbot and indicated his recommendation to AHS was to base their advisory protocol on “Education, Caution and Self-responsibility”. Based on the paleolimnology report, the blue-green algae blooms are nothing new and his proposal to AHS suggested continued monitoring with the results being posted on the website, taking actions to reduce septic fields and shoreline protection. He indicated Dr. Talbot empathized with the problems created by advisory postings.

In Don’s opinion, although the advisories are a problem, he would not advocate AHS changing the testing method and he is not in favor of augmented testing for many reasons, including

- the beach-level testing discussed at the AHS meeting would compound the problem
- technical personnel for sampling would be needed
- the possibility of a long-term commitment and tax burden,
- AHS water monitoring includes testing for e. coli. and fecal coliforms; and,
- There could be a public liability issue.

There is to be another meeting with Dr. Talbot May 6<sup>th</sup>.

PLWA representative Michael Gaian suggested focus should be placed on the profound common problem created by health advisories testing 7 beaches, with unintended consequences owing to late (not timely) test results. Michael advocated augmented testing so the public would have ‘real time’ understanding of health risks and make informed decisions regarding recreational opportunities at Pigeon Lake. Using the ‘engines of communication’, the public would be able to use the lake with some confidence.

Members indicated the value of in-lake recreation activities and reiterated testing is not up to residents, and that the Province should be encouraged to improve testing services to meet its responsibilities to the public. Members indicated Minister Diana McQueen is well informed of the issue. Other members indicated they are not opposed to testing as it would add more data, and there should be a ‘proportional response.’

Susan Ellis advocated common sense approach based on scientific, World Health Organization criteria. She indicated the PLWA is in favor of augmented testing and prepared to assist with volunteers, linking the program to invasive aquatic species inspections. A qualified program coordinator could oversee sampling.

Chair Brian Waterhouse indicated as there was not a clear conclusion on augmented testing, he would send out an email seeking further guidance and response. Members indicated that funding and volunteers were the key issues.

#### **In-Lake Technical Committee Report – Sediment Testing**

Ernie Elko reported that Hutchinson Environmental Sciences Ltd., the group contracted by Alberta Environment & Sustainable Resource Development to conduct the paleo-limnology study for Chris Taichreb in 2014, had been engaged to do winter sediment testing in February and March. The purpose of the testing is to understand how phosphorus is released from the sediments, which are a function of time of year, water chemistry, temperature, oxygen level. This testing will provide basic information and data to determine whether an additive (iron or lanthanum) to the sediment can prevent blue-green algae growth, blooms and development of microcystin.

Members questions clarified that testing might continue into the summer, mesocosm studies were being considered, costs for Phoslock (containing lanthanum) had not yet been determined. Don indicated residents at Georgian Bay and Environment Canada had concerns, and that whole-lake applications would be costly. He indicated he had concerns with the interpretation of Chris Teichreb's phosphorous budget, based on total phosphorus rather than dissolved phosphorus was being used as an indicator of algae growth.

#### **Grandview – Research Proposal**

Don Davidson indicated he had discussions with Dr. Rolf Vinebrook at the U of A, concerning the apparent anomaly in Pigeon Lake concerning the formation of algae when the concentrations of dissolved phosphorous were so low. Members encouraged Don to investigate the trophic cascade.

Chair Brian Waterhouse indicated that APLM will set up Terms of Reference for a separate Trophic Cascade Committee with Don Davidson as Chairman and inviting experts from the science community. His activities can include more pure and applied research and Susan indicated there is Federal Research funding available.

#### **DELEGATIONS:**

Pigeon Lake Watershed Association – Susan Ellis spoke to the written report provided. Directors are meeting with Summer Villages and have completed meetings with the Counties. Glenn Belozar commented that Leduc County had an extremely positive response to Susan's presentation. Frank Dyck indicated Norris Beach Council had an excellent presentation as well.

Other activities include preparation for the leaders' session in April, whose theme will be 'Synergies'. PLWA met with AB ESRD and learned Jason Kerr the limnologist replacing Chris Taichreb has been reassigned; they asked about the In-Lake Technical Committee and were advised to talk to APLM.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **Fire Protection Update – Wildfire Risk and Hazard Assessment for Summer Villages**

SV's think they have Fire Protection Plan, but don't develop a handbook for an effective plan. Specific Mandate from Minister McQueen to develop an accredited program and work with insurance companies. Indications are there could be reductions in recreational property owners' premiums.

The creation of these management tools will improve public safety. Mike provided members with a presentation. The first draft of plans have been created through grant funding from FRIAA, provided by the Provincial government following the fires at Slave Lake. Most stewardship required is on private property. The plans provide gains and benefits for investments in fire smart programs, which can be expensive. A program called Prometheus to model fire intensity and direction has been used; extreme fire-weather events grow exponentially. It has been validated by the Province and has world-wide recognition. Feedback on the plans would be appreciated.

There was discussion about Fire Contracts: Stand-by Costs and Call Out Costs, and potential changes to insurance improvements for property owners. Potential use of sprinklers were also discussed.

Barb Martenson thanked Peter and Mike on behalf of APLM members for their excellent work on this topic. Mike's presentation has been uploaded onto the APLM website for future reference.

**Residential Addressing** - Tabled.

**Pigeon Lake Chamber of Commerce Meeting**

Brian Waterhouse attended the meeting in February. He received (1) an Outline of the Meeting/Collective Projects, and (2) information regarding a Training Seminar on Social Media which may be beneficial for Councillors. The Chamber of Commerce has sent these two documents to each of the Administrators for distribution to the councils.

**Sylvan Lake Tourism Study** – Tabled.

**MaMeO Beach – AB ESRD – Commercial Fishing on Pigeon Lake** - Received for information.

**2015 Projects** – Tabled.

**FINANCIALS:**

- a) Financial Report - No report. All 7 Summer Villages have contributed \$500; call to other 3 Summer Villages will be made.
- b) APLM thanks Leduc County for its generous support through the provision of meeting space.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, June 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Brian Meaney to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm.

CARRIED

**THESE MINUTES ADOPTED THIS 10<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2015**

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**CHAIR**

**RECORDER**