

# **GRAND LAKE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023**

**JULY 8, 2023, 10AM**

*Parc Thibault-24 Chemin du Parc, Val-des-Monts*

**1. WELCOME** from President Dale Smith who noted that this is the first in-person Annual General Meeting since 2019, so greetings to all, thanks for attending and also a thank you to VDM for use of the space.

- 1) Dale welcomed the VDM biologist Samantha Rhains and thanked her for joining the meeting.
- 2) Paul Butler, acting as Secretary for the meeting, announced that there were 10 proxies and well over 20 households present in person. Dale declared the meeting duly constituted as we have a quorum.

3) Dale introduced the present executive members - Paul Butler, Jim Nicol Sr., Nichole McGill, Gary Beach, Rosaline Frith, Dorothy Laflamme, Abby Hoffman, Ray Otten, Michel Rossignol ... regrets James Levesque

## **2. ADOPT AGENDA**

Dale confirmed circulation of the draft Agenda for the 2023 Annual General Meeting in the AGM package to the Members and asked for any proposed additions to the draft, which could be added or brought up at the end.

Motion to Approve the Agenda moved by Jim Nicol Sr.  
Seconded by Tony Frith  
Unanimously carried

## **3. ADOPT MINUTES OF 2022 AGM** - as distributed by email to members

Moved by Ray Otten  
Seconded by Jim Nicol Sr.  
Unanimously carried.

## **4. REPORTS**

### **1) President's Report**

Dale Smith firstly called for a moment of silence for those who passed away since the last meeting Bob Boland, John Clark, Ken Maclaren.

The Board has been in regular communication with our liaison at VDM regarding the new Barrage bridge as we have been told not to communicate directly with the Province. The latest update from last week is unchanged, with a new bridge date set for 2024. The design has not yet been developed to the stage where they will review it with us. We are hoping that the new structure will allow for a much better water flow and ideally allow for 2 boat lanes simultaneously. The severe narrowing of the passage with backfill to shorten the original

construction created a huge impediment to the water flow between the lakes. In the spring it blocks water egress from Grand Lake causing very long lasting and high-water conditions.

Later in the meeting it was announced Dorothy would speak about 4 backlots being developed - which do have large enough lots to accommodate docks and Nichole will report on the Crouch Rd development.

The Spring Newsletter had a notice that the municipality had a \$300,000 budget to help with private road associations (1% of their current operating budget). It has not been determined how the funds would be distributed and it was noted that whoever accepts the funding would however give up their privacy as the roads that get funding will definitely permit public access, and all that such access implies. To be discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

Dale's personal opinion is that accepting the funding (becoming then a *chemin de tolerance*) means that any member of the public could then access it and park on it. Gary noted that public beaches have to have public access ... not via a private road.

Dale's focus remains to protect the amazing quality of our pristine lake, and reiterated that our shoreline is threatened as you can see each year with new trees toppling in the lake. We all need to do what we can to slow that down.

Dale noted that the current board has been doing this a long time and that we are looking for more and new involvement from the membership. And not necessarily to even be on the board, though that would be ideal, but to volunteer or to present ideas or projects to support the lake initiatives.

Ray Otten noted that some 15 years ago the mayor said Ch du Barrage would be paved, but it has only just been patched and there are many potholes - they can't seem to manage even their public roads let alone private roads! Dale said he would speak to the mayor to determine if Barrage repair is on their radar still...

In discussion about the extent and potential availability of Crown Land Abby Hoffman noted that most of the Crown Land on the lake is the north and south shores of the northwest arm, except around the Culbute itself. There is also some Crown land on Barber's Bay. All of the north shore and east end is all Crown land, comprising thousands of acres. Ch du Parc could make Crown land accessible one day. Tony Frith indicated that there is also some Crown land in the south end of the lake and some of the islands themselves are Crown land.

Gary noted that the bridge at the Culbute could lead to Crown Land - where there could possibly be 400 lots.

## **2) Treasurer's Report Gary Beach**

The fiscal year end is May 31st Gary noted, but income comes in both before and after this date.

The Balance of Cash in the Bank operating account as of May 31, 2022 was \$5,995.26.

Expenses in the disbursements section amounted to \$8,246.82.

The laddered GICs now total \$65,095. There are multiple GICs represent reserve funds, which are segregated to reflect certain groups, efforts or initiatives, e.g.: Calendar Project(s) and Millennial fundraising (main reserve) and The Grand Lake History Book project. The Main Reserve Fund has a balance of \$44,705 with the Operating Reserve portion \$7,430 currently. Gary indicated that with interest rates moving upwards recently, we can now anticipate that annual interest may amount to some \$3,000, which will help hedge our reserves against inflation.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Repost moved by Diane Parent  
Seconded by Nathan Cooper  
Unanimously carried

Motion to waive the annual audit requirement audit moved by Jim Nicol Sr.  
Seconded -by Jack Archambault  
Unanimously carried.

### 3) MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNICATIONS Rosaline Frith

Rosaline reported that we have 137 fully paid-up members and that number is changing every day. Last year we were at 193 for the year. We have a group that appears to be in rebellion for various reasons and are not interested in being members. Some object to any communications related to saving the environment and don't like us sharing information regarding shoreline erosion issues. At the same time, they are vehement they should be kept on the mailing list and receive all Association communications. Sylvain Brisbois indicated that our current policy of NOT sending them communications was indeed the right response. Overall, most cottagers are keen on being members and we have a strong voice. Rosaline will continue to share info on shoreline erosion, milfoil, phragmites, activities, fire ban etc., as she has been doing. She believes we are behind the times in terms of our website and what could be done to aid in managing and facilitating membership, etc.

Tim Frank asked how many are not interested in membership and why? Rosaline says there are more than 5 for sure who seem to think that \$25 is too much for what they receive! There are 228 possible members and last year we had 193 members. She thinks we will maybe have 187 this year.

Ray Otten thanked Rosaline for all the communications (lost dog, raft, fire ban and many more). Ray suggested maybe there should be a free gift to newcomers to the lake - perhaps a Directory, a free membership for the first year etc. and perhaps there should be a welcome committee. Siobhan Devlin volunteered to be on the committee and Jim Nicol Sr. as well. Generally new owners have been eager to take over membership from the old owners Rosaline stated. Currently we have no Grand Lake History Books available - which had been welcome gifts at one time.

Tim Frank noted that we could have an E-version of the book as well.

Sylvain Brisebois thinks communication is excellent!

Why are people not interested or antagonized Dave Gibbard asked? Paul Butler suggested it may be another example of “shoot the messenger” as shoreline erosion or other environmental issues are “inconvenient truths”.

Keith Parker and Julie Richer were welcomed as new members, who are noted, very happy with communication and the good work. Keith offered to monitor a Facebook like page or other social threads if added to the website.

#### 4) ENVIRONMENT

Samantha Rhains who has been the VDM biologist for 3 years spoke about the recent watershed program, water monitoring and testing and various other initiatives. The Grand Lake water quality is again very good. However, with increasing human pressure the natural aging process will speed up. Currently the water transparency, Phosphorus, E-coli, etc. are all very good. Aging too quickly will result in murky, low oxygen, silty conditions.

Regarding the main Watershed and other projects English versions will be on the website or Samantha can set up a video chat to go over specific issues in the plan - including water usage and ongoing testing. An action plan followed the VDM public consultation last year on the Watershed with some 60 actions to be taken over a 5-year period, including education initiatives on how to enjoy shared water resources.

Water is under Federal jurisdiction, not municipally nor provincially with only a few lakes having public ramps.

Regarding the recent closing of the public beach at St Pierre, how dangerous is that to other lakes downstream, Tony Frith asked. Samantha replied that the test, which was done last week, was during a very hot period in an area where there were no concerns for even other parts of the same lake as it was a very isolated incident. In general lawns (being fertilized) and birds (geese poop) are the problem.

Asked about the trees falling into the lake, “is it better to leave the organic matter or remove it though it may create viable and even desirable habitats for fish or other water creatures”. Samantha said that Grand Lake number of trees in the water are very low and tests would have to be done over years, to not be at a point in time, to make a determination of the impacts, but she was not concerned this was a serious issue.

Sylvain Brisebois asked if anything could be done about the increasing number of abandoned “ghost docks” appearing and even buildings falling in the water. Can the Association with, or without the municipality do anything? Dale suggested a volunteer initiative and undertaking regarding the process, a bin, haulage, and disposal.

Sylvain Brisebois made the motion  
Dale Smith seconded  
Unanimously carried

Rosaline wondered if the MRC/VDM would waive the dumpage fee. Samantha noted that docks not claimed, but blocking waterways were usually cleared by the VDM Fire Department. When you rent a dumpster, the rent includes the dumpage fees.

Dale estimates that there are now possibly some 15 abandoned docks and all are now tied up or comfortably resting on shore somewhere.

Ray Otten asked Samantha if there is currently a program to reforest the shoreline, as there has been in other years. If not, is there an opportunity to make this happen again?

Samantha says there is a limited program, but as they never know how many trees they will get from the province. This year they bought 5,000 trees. She brings trees to each lake association meeting. There is a grant program for their visiting and re-treesing and simply consulting on shorelines as well, which will pay 50% of properly authorized purchases up to a \$400 grant limit.

Though the website form says June 1st is the deadline Samantha said the program is still open so send a summary or ask about specific species (which have to be native). It could be a single tree or for a whole shoreline. Ray asked Rosaline if it could be announced in our communications earlier in the spring so we know in time. The MRC has a website for grants and the programs can all be found there.

Ray Otten raised the question of restocking the lake with fish, something which had been discussed a number of times over the years but never done. Paul Methot responded that he had been part of a group with Brian Reynolds 15 years earlier, which had done reviews, and had potential spawning grounds mapped and plans to create these areas but it was not possible as we didn't have public access to the lake which was a requirement for Government funding. The lake association would have to pay for it in its entirety and as not everyone fishes, it was deemed not an acceptable use of the Reserve Funds at that time. It could be revisited, perhaps several people noted.

Dale suggested that it should be looked into and brought to a vote.

Shelly Baker asked Samantha about swimmer's itch. She doesn't know for certain, but sometimes it may be related to beavers, and not waterfowl as often suspected. She indicated that she would do some research and send us her findings.

If there are more questions Samantha offered that she would respond by email.

Dale thanked her for attending the meeting, for her ongoing work and her presentation today.

#### a) LAKE ACTIVITIES AND PROTECTION Abby Hoffman

Generally, this committee has to do with the lake environment vis a vis human activity on the lake and the long-term sustainability to protect the lake for our use, and for those coming after us. Abby posed the question "what can we do to help influence the profile of things on the lake, such as boating vs non-motorized activities and how do we make the lake a bit more friendly to the latter activities". Our current Grand Lake guidelines focus on powerboating mainly, so maybe we could be looking at different parts of the lake adjusting the speed in some areas. Other lakes have pilot projects to promote non-motorized activities, she noted and some lake associations have codes of conduct which could complement the boating guidelines. This information could also be made available to new cottagers coming to the lake or with renters of cottages. The group had a very good meeting a couple of weeks ago and will meet again in the next 2 weeks. Two years ago, there was a meeting with the wake-related sports group to

discuss where these sports could best be practiced and result in the least possible damage to shorelines, as well as other protocols that make sense to promote.

Tom Martin asked if there was a way to determine the aging of the lake that Samantha had mentioned in her testing process? Abby said we could follow up on that with Samantha.

Abby noted there have been issues with Dam Lake boaters coming to Grand to practice their sport. Dale will attend their AGM tomorrow and noted that the President of Dam Lake has been to our past meetings and was invited to this meeting today. Further, the Dam Lake Association circulates our boating guidelines so it is a question of ongoing discussion, education and communication.

b) WATER QUALITY issues. Tim Frank brought samples of a very eco-friendly dishwasher soap, which is environmentally friendly. It sells for \$20 and does 300 dishwasher loads. Other water quality matters are covered in the Newsletter and by Samantha's reporting.

c) MILFOIL - Dorothy Laflamme reported that we are making positive progress and it's not as bad as it has been - in fact it looks very good the past few years compared to where it was when various initiatives were implemented. Part of this must be that this is a natural cycle Dale remarked as it certainly isn't coming back worse each year. Staying out of the dense areas helps most and scooping up all floating bits that drift near your shorelines.

d) PHRAGMITES Michel Rossignol - This is Canada's worst invasive species and is a disaster in parts of Ontario and getting worse with climate change. No animals can live in them, nor trees as they excrete a toxin that nothing else can grow in. Some municipalities use herbicides or tarps after cutting them. The tarps have to be left on for a few months. Digging them up is another possibility but the soil is contaminated and needs proper disposal. Michel asked Samantha what can be done then by VDM to put more priority on this matter? She said phragmites is a terrestrial invasive species and is very costly to invest in its control and management as it is a multi-year project. VDM is aware of the issue and will work in collaboration with the public works department to develop a strategy.

Michel says now phragmites are along the roads in VDM but when they reach the lakes, they will be unstoppable and can reach heights of 10 feet. Spot herbicides cannot be used in some municipalities including VDM. Provincial roads have their own regulations. It would have to be tarps ... and then removal. We will need to continue reminding VDM of this issue which needs more attention.

e) DEVELOPMENT Nichole McGill who has property on Crouch Rd. reported on the development there in the south east end of the lake. 24 back-lot properties are being developed for sale with a road and 3 cul de sacs. The neighbours have formed an action group to address safety and ecological issues which have rainfall and water flow consequences. The developer MCL had advertised a footpath with 3.5-meter access to Grand Lake and there is a right of way on the deed - but the developer may be back-peddling as there has been resistance by neighbouring owners. Nichole is now on a municipal consultation board and will report back to us. With the current permitted zoning, MCL could potentially build duplexes, which would make for 48 housing units. Dale says only the French publications publish notices of variances etc. so we will continue to monitor those to stay informed and be in a position to intervene where possible. If anyone hears of threats, please contact someone on the Board to make sure we are aware.

Many nearby lakes have footpaths that are part of deeds and people need to be aware when sales are being considered. Ideally the municipality might be able to provide such. Ray says James Levesque had a PDF of all the access lots around the lake at one time. Gary can get a copy of this information from his son, which could be useful in identifying possible lake access points that need to be monitored.

5) BOATING GUIDELINES Gary Beach noted that our boating guidelines have served us well for over 40 years. The guiding principle has always been to make the guidelines so reasonable that no reasonable person would object. #1 is “watch your wake - be mindful of it!”

## **5) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

a) BOARD ELECTIONS - Gary and Paul's 3-year terms were up as of this AGM. They have agreed to stand again for another 3-year term. Dale asked if anyone else would like to become a member of the board, but there was no response.

Motion to approve the nominations Louise Dubois  
Seconded by Roger Paul  
Unanimously carried.

b) WEB SITE Paul Butler reported as follows ...

With an updated website users could have secure accounts, with logins and passwords and ways to reset passwords if forgotten etc. The site would be secure with end-to-end encryption to protect user info and financial data, would auto backup daily and security updates would be automated as well. All that is standard stuff now.

Members could directly modify any contact information on their membership forms in a database which would greatly simplify the membership and Directory process ... and pay their annual dues with PayPal, credit or debit cards which could be set up by users to be recurring payments - again simplifying the membership effort each year.

*Initial costs to update the website...*

It would take about 8 weeks and it would cost about \$4,000 as it is a rewrite. The programming code is 12 years old now, so essentially it is “legacy code” .... which means the code base is not compatible with the contemporary software plugins that we will need for personal info security and e-commerce handling of transactions.

Ongoing costs ... The cloud storage and hosting would be \$65 more a year, as the site needs to be a secure site i.e., HTTPS, so any information transmitted, like cash or personal info, is encrypted end to end and is then very difficult to hack and intercept. No user data is stored on the site to safeguard members' personal and financial data. The cash transaction companies take about 2.9% + 30 cents so on a \$25 membership that would be 98 cents per membership per year - off the top. So, it would cost the association about \$180 a year.

The software plugins are subscription based and would cost about \$300 per year in total.

**Total cost annually then would be ...** plugin subscriptions \$300, cloud hosting & backup \$315, e-commerce transaction deductions \$180 = \$795 vs the current \$250. So, an increase of \$545 per year.

Tom Martin moved to accept the proposed reworking of the website  
Nathan Cooper seconded Carried unanimously

c) LOST AND FOUND Nathan Cooper reported that everything is on the website so check often. Some lost items go back to 2012 but we have success stories too! Dale thanked Nathan for his efforts in reuniting items and owners.

d) WINTER PATROL Dale reported for James Levesque, saying 56 homes were in the winter patrol this year and there were no issues at all other than trees or branches down - a quiet winter it was.

## **6) SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

a) Canada Day - Dale reported that the Canada Day Boat Flotilla comprised nearly 50 boats this year. The 3 winners will be announced shortly. There were no fireworks this year with the fire ban as the ban was lifted just too late to acquire the fireworks in time.

b) Walking Trails - Abby Hoffman had no issues to report and suggested people consult the Spring Newsletter for a full report. Abby reminded members that walking on the trail is the best way to maintain it. One recommendation, and the most frequent question is "where is the trailhead - where does it start?". Rosaline will communicate to members, and potentially signs can be placed at the trailhead docks in the Culbute basin.

c) Golf Tournament - Dale Smith noted that the registration form had been sent around by email and asked all to please send in as soon as possible so as to get the number of participants finalized for planning purposes.

d) Sailing - Volunteers needed! Sarah Potheary stated that the Grand Lake Sailing Club which has been running for over 65 years, is now down to 2 sailors and with an average age 72! So new blood is required. Contact details and other sailing info can be found on the website. Sarah will help train the new team and has the sailing club buoys and trophies needed to carry on this legacy.

e) The Poker Run is being organized for the Labour Day weekend as usual and an announcement will be coming as to where to pick up the first card etc. and other details. The prices are the same as always ... \$20 per hand. This is the last social event of the cottage year and usually boasts 80 people or so. There will be the usual BBQ and corn roast and events and prizes for kids so please come out, join in and meet your cottage neighbours.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

It was suggested to consider seeking out advertisers for the completely revamped website, which would defray some of the new proposed set-up and ongoing annual operating costs. There is a Services section currently for advertising but it is not used often. To be discussed further and Keith Parker is prepared to help us get organized to seek advertising.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn Dorothy Laflamme

Seconded by Paul Methot

Objections - none!