

Joe's Pond Association Meeting Minutes

September 2, 2023

President Joe Hebert opened the meeting at 10:00 am and approximately 100 members attended. Joe asked the membership for a moment of silence for Andre LaPrade who passed away 2 days ago. Andre was the JPA president from 1998 through 2004 and was a very active leader instrumental in the pavilion renovation. New members were asked to introduce themselves.

Board Actions/Announcements:

1. A defibrillator was purchased due to an incident at the pavilion in July and is mounted on the exterior wall of the kitchen. Applause was given. A training session will be given next season. Joe mentioned that the device will be removed for the winter and Jenny Rafuse asked if she could house it at the Hastings Store for the winter. This was agreed upon.
2. Boat Launch: there have been parking issues where trailers are parked straight ahead of the ramp itself and the State finally agreed to "no parking" signs. They are installed. Also, there is a new bulletin board at the boat launch where there is a tube for lead anchors to be deposited.
3. Joe mentioned that the WDCC dock located at the Rte 2 bridge was damaged during the flood but has been fixed and is back in place.
4. JPA sponsoring dinner at the Congregational Church. The Board feels that it is not appropriate for the JPA to take dues given to the JPA and donate money to other organizations.
5. The Board feels that email polls to the JPA members are a last resort method to communicate with members. Preferred are discussions at the three meetings per season and email polling will be the exception and not the rule.

Secretary's Report: Jamie Stewart read a condensed version of the July 1 meeting minutes. For full details please go to the JPA website. A motion was made, seconded and by voice vote, to accept the meeting minutes.

Treasurer's Report: Jack LaGue was unable to attend the meeting. Joe Hebert read a financial report by Jack. We have a surplus for 2023 of \$22,714, primarily due to no fireworks expenses in 2023. Not all the bills are in for the social events for the year, but it was his projection to have a 2023 surplus of \$16K to \$20K. Jack predicted that the balance at the end of the year would be between \$61K to \$65K. Our near-term needs are kept in our checking account and any excess is invested in US Treasury securities. A motion was made, seconded, and by voice vote accepted by the membership.

Water Quality/Milfoil: Was not discussed.

Membership: Peter Crosby was not at the meeting.

Maintenance: Larry said he had nothing to report. He asked if anyone had a small rototiller for him to borrow to fluff up the wood chips in the playground to speak to him after the meeting.

JPA Events: Sue Bouchard said we had a very active summer and thanked all the coordinators for such a successful season. She reminded everyone about the Sailing T-shirts for sale and to see her to submit an order.

Fireworks: Joe Hebert gave a brief history of the costs of fireworks. Since 2018 the costs have risen from \$5K to \$7K to \$10K and then the brakes came on, with the members, when the costs were to be \$12.5K. In 2022 the Board email polled the members who agreed to pay \$10K but when the costs for 2023 were to be \$12.5K, the email poll to JPA members resulted in a “no” for fireworks for 2023.

Another new issue has come to light as to where we can have the fireworks shot off from. The State of Vermont now controls the rail trail. The JPA cannot shut down the rail trail for the 8 hours NorthStar needs to set up the fireworks. The State said we can divert rail trail traffic up Island Drive and back down Channel Drive, but the Board felt this would be too dangerous and a huge liability for the Association. Island Drive and Channel Drive are private roads and there have been incidents with bikers by camp owners on Channel Drive.

The Board concludes that we need to find another site. Regulations by the State and NorthStar require a safety zone of a 420-foot circle where no buildings can exist. If the fireworks are shot off close to water, then the safety zone is 280 feet.

Jim Desrochers volunteered the use of his property located north of Route 15 across from the Cairn’s property. Jamie Milne also volunteered his property, located north of the rail trail and between Brown Road and North Shore Road. These sites will need to be examined by NorthStar depending upon how the members vote whether to pay for the fireworks or not.

Joe Hebert also mentioned there are people willing to donate generous amounts of money (\$40 K to \$50K) to help pay for the Fireworks with the Board to decide how to use such funds.

Joe asked: 1) Do we want Fireworks and, if so; 2) Invite Northstar to permit the 2 choices talked about today.

Joe Hebert stated the vote for fireworks will be by paper ballot by members in good standing having one vote per camp. Some members with 2 camps (and pay for 2 camps) get 2 votes. Members were asked to identify themselves as they were recognized to speak.

Discussion was opened to the members with a request for members to be brief:

Richard Hackett: Made a motion for the JPA to host fireworks for 2024 up to \$13K contingent upon finding a safe acceptable site. Nancy Buttura seconded the motion.

Don Sherwood: asked to take his July 2 motion off the table which said that Ice-Out money is to be used for fireworks by existing history. Don repeated his July 2 comments stating that previous ancient Board actions earmarked this money for Fireworks and hence no vote needed.

Considerable discussion occurred as to which motion takes precedence. Steve Dudley (Robert's Rule of Order guru) stated that the motion made by Rick Hackett takes precedence over the table motion since it was made first in today's meeting.

Maryanne Boivin stated we have a moral obligation to say no to fireworks due to the noise and disruption and suggested we celebrate another way.

Joe Cassani, in favor of fireworks, has talked with a specialist who says there are a handful of places to shoot them off.

Joe Shadrui cited his family history of being renters and now camp owners. His pets are terrorized, loons are spooked. "Let's have silent fireworks. Let's avoid noise pollution and put the money into protecting our Pond".

Chryss Rustad was very concerned about the bird situation and the noisy celebration severely impacts the birds. She cited that 90% of the bird population is down in numbers. Her feeling was not to do fireworks. Laser lights are an option.

Don Sherwood stated that "old business" from the July 2 meeting comes before any new business. Joe Hebert said that Robert's Rule of order says there is no such thing as "old business" and is called "unfinished business". Don did not make a motion to move it off the table. Another motion was made, and this took precedence.

Jenny Rafuse asked to vote.

Mark Nicholson made a motion to "call the question" (or end the discussion).

Joe Hebert said the vote to end the discussion required one representative of each camp to "stand-up" in favor of ending the discussion. The stand-up vote was overwhelmingly to end the discussion.

Jamie Stewart gave instructions on how the paper ballot was to work. There were 3 tables set up in the room, organized alphabetically by camper's last names. The representative for each camp was to go to the appropriate table, get checked off, given a ballot, and then requested to place their marked ballot in the bowl on the President's table. The motion to be voted on was 'do the members want fireworks for 2024?' "Yes" meant yes and "No" meant no. If there were any proxy votes to be given, the member was to cast his/her ballot first and then go to Jamie Stewart to get the proxy ballot. The whole voting process took about 20 minutes.

The motion to have fireworks in 2024 passed by 71 votes for yes and 19 votes for no.

Don Sherwood insisted that his table motion of 7/2 still had to be dealt with. He was reminded that no motion was made today to take it off the table.

Ted Decker made a motion stating that all Ice-Out proceeds to be earmarked for fireworks. Motion was seconded.

Discussion:

Steve Dudley stated that dedicated funds are nothing but trouble and was opposed to earmarking any money.

Barry Cahoon stated that the Board needs discretion on how to spend the money and was opposed to earmarking.

Dwight Coffrin said the Ice-Out money was already earmarked. He remembered George Karnedy telling him that. Jamie Stewart reported that he searched the meeting minutes back to the 1970's and there was no definitive motion ever made to dedicate (earmark) Ice-Out money for fireworks. There were many Board actions that stated to pay for fireworks for a particular year the board would use donations, Ice-out money and the general fund.

Joe Shadroui asked that the JPA use this money to repair the roads instead.

Don Sherwood stated that in 1992, the JPA voted to use Ice-Out money for fireworks, but Jamie Stewart said the board voted for 1993 only and to use "up to \$3K" only.

Andy Rudin asked if competitive bidding was used. Richard Gagne stated that no other suppliers responded.

Joe Cassani stated that the Ice-Out contest supported the fireworks and people buy the tickets to have fireworks.

Cheryl Chesley stated that money is money and please use the general fund. It gives the Board flexibility. Do not earmark any money.

Cheryl Chesley also called the question (end the discussion). It was seconded. By a voice vote it was overwhelmingly approved to end the discussion.

Joe Hebert asked that only one camp member vote by raising their hand. 28 said yes to earmark the Ice-Out money. 36 said no to not earmark the money. The motion did not pass.

Other Discussion: Joanne Stewart asked for ideas for the newsletter.

Shawna Foran asked why we do not want the money dedicated. Joe Hebert answered that the question had been called and the discussion ended and voted. Joe reiterated that when the members voted to have the fireworks for 2024, the Board had to pay for them. It did not matter where the money came from.

Dwight Coffrin asked if Jim Bernotas (snail guy) was at the meeting and wanted to talk with him. He was.

Larry Rossi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded and passed by overwhelming voice vote. Meeting ended at 11:21 am.