

**Echo Hill North Board Meeting  
March 4, 2014  
At 163 Heatherstone Road**

Attending: Lisa, Faythe, Paul, Steve B., Steve E., Liz, Pippa, Jim, Trudy, Linda  
Absent: Dick

I. Approval of minutes from January 7, 2014. (Lisa)

Move to approve: Paul  
Second: Trudy  
Vote: Unanimously approved

Co-Secretary distributed the draft of the minutes from the Annual Meeting. The following corrections were noted:

- > The bill for EHN property taxes will be reduced from \$400 a quarter to \$50.
- > Spelling of name corrections: Sargeant Arocho, Elizabeth Lingo; Karl's Excavating

II. Treasurer report (Paul)

- > The current value of the CF is \$3,085.06.
- > The current balance in the checking account is \$13,485.58. This includes the actual current balance of \$12,504.26 plus the \$629 to be reimbursed by the Amherst Women's Center for the deposit on the space for the Annual Meeting.
- > The 2014 check register shows: Expenses paid to date are \$132. The CPA filed EHN taxes for a total of \$475 owed. The only outstanding checks are for the property tax bill for \$13.90 property tax and the refund of \$629 from the AWC.
- >The real estate for the year is \$188.33.

Move to accept the Report: Trudy  
Seconded: Faythe  
Vote: Unanimously approved.

III. Tree report (Paul)  
No report

IV. Speed report (Liz)

Liz reported that she drafted the letter on her own. She had sought consultation; however, perhaps more connection with neighborhood was needed.

Paul suggested narrowing down the solution options since a number of them are unrealistic; he recommends selecting a few viable options.

Moved to table discussion until after guest, Scott Fisher presented: Faythe,  
Second: Trudy  
Vote: Unanimously approved

V. Pond (Jim); Guest Scott Fisher from New England Environmental (NEE)

**Background from Jim on his research on the status of the algae in the pond:**

He spoke to some of Board members about pond ideas, to an expert friend, to a wetlands regulation representative, to the conservation agent in town, and to a friend from the Conservation Commission, and to Scott – where should we go with algae problem? He had thought that solving the algae problem was top priority, but he is not sure now.

After reading portions of the Practical Guide to Lake Management in Massachusetts, a companion piece to the 2004 Final Generic Environmental Impact Report on Eutrophication and Aquatic Plant Management in Massachusetts, he believed that phosphorus was a major cause of algae problems in Massachusetts lakes. The NEE report is based on algae and weeds but does not address phosphorus.

Last summer the clarity of the water was deteriorating, due to algae, and the weeds seemed to be getting worse. Now, he is perplexed which way to go, and how much money to devote to it. His expert friend said algae treatment is hard to control and asked if EHN had considered dredging the pond? Jim said he thought it was too expensive. His friend suggested giving it some thought.

Jim's question for Scott: What guarantees do we have that treatment will restore water quality?

Jim believes we need to do something; EHN needs to file a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission. Scott's report reflects that it is \$3000 to file the Notice of Intent. Whether we treat with herbicide, treat algae or dredge, it seems that we need to do something this year. We could pay money to NEE or form a subcommittee of the Board and do it ourselves to save the consulting fee. It is an onerous application.

Question: Should we consider dredging (long term picture) vs. herbicides (short term, band-aids)?

Options:

- a. Do nothing
- b. Treat with algacide and herbicide, following the NEE proposal
- c. Dredge (very expensive)
- d. Address phosphorus by determining its source and mitigate.
- e. Other?

**Question-answer period with Scott Fisher:**

What are the effects of doing algacide treatment without dredging pond? We are not addressing the phosphorus problem; we don't know where it is coming from.

Response (Scott): Phosphorus is always the problem. There are many options you can do for any pond; it has to do with financing, what you use the pond for, and what people's interests are. The cost of any dredging is extreme. The permitting is onerous. It can open a can of worms. The bottom line is whatever you dredge out will have to be

disposed of as hazardous waste. For our pond, the issue is how much waste is in the bottom of pond. The phosphorus layer is on the bottom. There is a line in the pond from the top that does not mix. Certain times of year phosphorus floats up.

The main reason to do algae treatments is that it is cheapest and easiest to do. It is not a one-time intervention; you need to do pond management and do it regularly. NEE thinks the water quality is not that bad in middle to lower tier, relative to what other projects they deal with. The conditions change each year, too. The only way to make problem go away for a longer period of time is to dredge.

Scott did not have an exact figure for dredging – for 1-acre pond, the base cost of \$20,000 would be a low estimate.

Jim said we could save money by doing our own permit application. He would be glad to help by providing needed information. He wants to be able use it as intended.

Jim said he does not advise doing our own treatment; it requires permitting; even if you were putting herbicide in your backyard, as water leaves your property and goes elsewhere (e.g. to livestock), polluting others. Jim is most concerned with doing herbicide or algaecide treatment without training or license – dangerous.

Question: What is the safety of the actual treatments that NEE would do, given than children, etc. are using the pond?

Response: (Scott): There are light restrictions on algaecide; most have no restrictions; the most the limitation would be is 24-hour restriction in terms of the use of the water. He would be more concerned about herbicides than algaecides that have a copper base and affect fish.

Question: What are the comparative costs of yearly applications vs. the long-term solution of dredging?

Response (Scott): Algaecide is not very costly. There are new ones coming out every year. Dredging is a good consideration; however, very few people dredge ponds. At some point you may need to dredge, but you need to consider your funding.

If permitting and the treatment (five monthly) are done in the same year, the cost is \$6000+as per the NEE proposal. The number of treatments per year is up to us. Scott assumes about two treatments per year.

Question? What will be amount of improvement?

Response:(Scott): We will see a difference. After the first year, the cost is about \$1200 per year.

Question: Can we get information on the source of the phosphorus?

Response: That has not been done yet; NEE could do an investigative analysis; you might be able to do some of that yourself. Take samples to labs. Scott does not think

analysis will produce that much information considering feeders are spring water and wetland. He thinks most phosphorus in substrate.

Question: If we pursue algae treatment, is there anything we can do in concert with weeds? EHN removes floating stuff in the spring cleanup; Dick lowers the pond level in fall to kill weeds but we do not scoop it up. Is there any value in scooping up while water level is low?

Response (Scott): It depends on what the plants are. There are some pros to doing that; the con is that you need a permit to do that. You might be able to add that to Notice of Intent.

Jim said the purpose would be to reduce the stuff that goes to bottom of pond. Jim would like to see more regular clean up during summer.

Response (Scott): You can stir the water by mixing top and bottom water to aerate it; that has some beneficial effect.

Question: What are the effects of pulling cattails out.

Response (Scott): It is hard to get at the roots; however, cattails are good at cleaning water. It would not help to clean pond to remove it.

Scott will look up price for dredging, based on how much material you remove from bottom, based on each foot that remove. The bottom line is, it not simple.

A Sub committee to pursue the pond issues and solutions further was formed:—Faythe, Jim, Steve E.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Terry, Co-Secretary