

**Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association (VCLRA)
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 27, 2020
9:00 a.m. Zoom Conference**

Present: Tom Ewing, Carol Warden, Steve Budnik, Emily Heald, Paul Lewandoski, Anne Kretschmann, Susan Knight, Celeste Hockings, Karen Dixon, Jeff Currie

Absent: Debby Soberg

Guest: Dick Jenks

Call to order: President Tom Ewing called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and quorum established.

Agenda: Accepted as presented.

President’s Report: March 29, 2020, revised April 15, 2020

• Provided articles/support for January Newsletter. Thanks to all who contributed and helped with production and mailing!

• Contributed a letter of recommendation for the grant application by Northwoods Lands Trust: 2020 DNR grant application for the “Northwoods Private Shorelands Protection Project” in Northern Langlade and Vilas Counties.

• Website development

Added online membership to website. Permits joining/renewing using a web form that dynamically adjusts based on inputs and allows payment by credit card or check. The paper/mail-in form is still available as an option. Three memberships (all renewals) have been paid online by credit card to date. You can try it and test the new features, but please enter in the Lake Association name field something like “Testing” and use the pay-by-check option so we know it’s a test and you don’t incur real charges.

Added re CAPTCHA protection to all forms (a free service from Google to tell humans and bots apart and eliminate spam and abuse). We were starting to get spam as our sites public profile increased, but the re CAPTCHA protection fixed the problem.

Tweaked web performance. Here are metrics useful to measure performance (lower numbers better, except for Page Speed grade, where 100% is best) and how we measure against Microsoft.com:

	Page Speed Grade	Fully-loaded time	Total page size	Total # of requests
Vclra.org	A (94%)	2.8s	1.15MB	69
Microsoft.com	D (61%)	6.0s	1.25MB	147

• Have been closely monitoring the New Shoreland Ownership Initiative web page and free membership offer. There have been only 2 free membership requests—both back in November: Charles Coventry on 11/17/19 and Frank Kopecky on 11/20/19. After these came, I adjusted notifications to automatically be sent by the system to: president@vclra.org, mengleson@wisconsinlakes.org, rjenks.jenks@gmail.com, sunwarmedsand@gmail.com, warden@wisc.edu, kretschmann.anne@gmail.com. However, there have not been any additional requests since November. I periodically scan the forms log online, which independently saves records of form use, to

guard against missing an emailed response. ALL form use is captured by the web logs, even if the email delivery fails or goes to spam. Although this is a lower return than expected return, I believe it is correct.

An interesting side note: despite the lack of free membership takers, the new shoreland owner webpage is seeing high traffic! Here are the most popular pages in order: 1) homepage, 2) lake organizations list, 3) new shoreland owner, 4) resources/initiatives, 5) meet our board, 6) articles, and 7) about.

- Developed a concise Power Point briefing for our New Shoreland Ownership Initiative that can be used to engage stakeholders, such as lake associations and realtor groups.
- Added articles to the website for upcoming WI Lakes & Rivers Learning Event and the Vilas Travel Advisory for COVID-19. • Ordered hats with our logo through Lands' End, which waived fees and allowed us to get a great price for such a low order size (minimum size order of 24 for \$250, so ~\$10 each). 100% cotton chino twill cap with fabric strap and buckle to adjust fit.
- Have pulled together all 2019 usage data for the DO meter, which we acquired with a Lake Planning grant that runs from February 15, 2019 to June 30, 2020. A request for final payment is required within 6 months of the grant period; extensions may be requested. I will work with our grant specialist to get the maximum remaining grant dollars. The COVID-19 outbreak will likely alter usage this summer if prolonged.
- Made an inquiry with WDNR (Kevin Gauthier) to see if the use of email or video conferencing could satisfy the state's requirements for registered lake associations to conduct meetings. They were not aware of a resolution regarding this yet, but I later found online the following information regarding conducting regular and special meetings (applies to 501c3 organizations as well). Bottom line is yes, as long as some indicated requirements are met.

(b) If a meeting will be conducted through the use of any means described in par. (a), all participating directors shall be informed that a meeting is taking place at which official business may be transacted. A director participating in a meeting by any means described in par. (a) is considered to be present in person at the meeting. If requested by a director, minutes of the meeting shall be prepared and distributed to each director.

Secretary's Report: The 9-23-19 Secretary's report will be approved at the next meeting.

Treasurer's report: Anne reviewed the following documents with the board:

- 2019 year-end documents (budget, membership report, membership lakes report)
- 2020 proposed budget
- YTD 2020 documents (budget, membership report, membership lakes report)

Anne also sent a membership renewal to Wisconsin Lakes for \$350.

We had a short discussion on the use of credit cards.

Motion made by Paul, with second from Karen, to approve the Treasurer's Reports. Motion was carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/OLD BUSINESS

New Shoreland Owners Initiative (Dick Jenks, Jeff Currie, Carol Warden, Debby Soberg, Quita Sheehan, Patrick Goggin)

Dick's notes:

The final implementation step in VCLRA's initiative to connect with new lakeshore property owners is to encourage the Lake Associations to create a "Greet Your Neighbor" program. I'm proposing an e-mail cover letter with several attachments ("Greet your neighbor" package). This package is ready to be sent (pending Board approval) to all of the lake associations to enlist their help. I already have lake association e-mail contacts from Cathy Higley and UWEX. The "Greet your neighbor" package consists of: Conversation starters, Cover letter to lake associations, Example welcome letters, Property transfers.

A VCLRA Power Point presentation has been developed for briefings on the initiative with realtors, lake associations, and other community stakeholders by Tom Ewing. The goal was to keep the presentation very short, very visual, and hopefully compelling. It is intended that the briefing will fit into VCLRA's multi-phased shoreland owners initiative: business cards, free memberships, new web site with links to support info, BMP's etc. and a "Greet Your Neighbor" program for lake associations.

Suggestions from board members: send documents in WORD to information can be personalized by lake associations; VCLRA members who are also members of lake associations can bring packets to their board meetings to solicit suggestions; include header/footer information with the name of the initiative, the source, and include on our website.

Dick encouraged us to get the packet approved ASAP so we can get started by sending them to lake associations so they can focus their energies on the program. Motion made by Karen, second by Paul, to approve the "Greet Your Neighbor Program" and the Stakeholders Power Point Briefing. Motion carried.

Next steps: Enlist the OCLRA in our efforts; prepare packets to go to lake associations; distribution list from Dick will be sent to Anne and Tom who will work on edits and then send out on VCLRA's email. Tom will set up alias email for people to contact with questions that will go to the committee and Tom for responses. Dick has a supply of business cards and brochures. Tom will include the origin of the documents on our website that will have the most recently updated version of the packet.

VCLRA Scholarship Program (Anne, Carol, Steve)

The committee has an applicant that they are recommending for moving forward with: Nathan Krause from Eagle River High School. After the online ceremony (we will send a recording of the award presentation), a photo and article will be included in the Lakeland Times and the Vilas County News Review. We may also send information to Channel 12. Susan will take the lead on the articles and include information about the scholarship, some of the other VCLRA initiatives such as the Blue Heron Award and Greet Your Neighbor Program. She will also mention our website.

Motion made by Carol, second by Steve, to approve the recommendation of the committee to nominate Nathan Krause for the 2020 VCLRA Scholarship Award. Motion carried.

Spring Newsletter (Celeste et al)

Discussion of whether it is advisable to produce and mail the next newsletter in paper form or just do it digitally. There was consensus to send the May Newsletter digitally, so we are kept in people's minds, and include a membership reminder. Celeste will check into whether printing is an option and get back to the board.

Blue Heron Award Initiative (Carol)

- Carol: suggests we solicit for Blue Heron award as we normally would. These assessments are easily done without any close contact. She will send information to the LT and VCNR and ask for nominations. Please contact Carol if you know of any properties to nominate.

Annual multi-county meeting (Steve)

- Steve has been coordinating with OCLRA. Meeting tentatively scheduled for Friday morning July 10th. Tentative theme: "Shoreland Owner Outreach". New Shoreland Owners Initiative is one of the topics. Realtors will be invited. If in-person meeting is not possible, will handle electronically/online rather than cancel. If meeting is done on online, the date could possibly change. Suggestions for speakers are welcome. The OCLRA is having a Zoom meeting on Monday, May 11 to make decisions and we are welcome to join.

County Conservationist/Lake Specialist Report - none

Other business? (All)

- Emily: could work at stockpiling articles and kids page information for the VCLRA website (has interns that could help). **This was not discussed due to time constraints.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Next meeting: TBD

Respectfully submitted by:

Karen Dixon, Secretary