

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Thursday, June 7, 2018 – 7 pm
Yeomans Hall
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

Members Present: First Selectman, Steven M. Everett; Deputy Selectman, Robert Hellstrom; Selectman, Lisa Napolitano; Selectman, William O'Brien.

Members Absent: Selectman, Robert Bogue.

Also Present: Town Administrator, Mark B. Walter; *The Chronicle* reporter, Michelle Firestone; Department of Environmental Sciences, Dr. Greg Bugbee; President of the Columbia Lake Association (CLA), Mary Roickle; President of the Lake Management Advisory Council (LMAC), Mike Gnazzo; Bryan Tarbell Environmental Advisory Committee; Various Citizens.

CALL TO ORDER: S. Everett called the meeting to order at 7:03pm

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - 2.1 **To discuss and decide upon a course of action after hearing from Lake Management Advisory Committee (LMAC), Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC), Columbia Lake Association (CLA), Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), residents and interested citizens to discuss Invasive Species Weed Control at Columbia Lake.**
 - 2.1.1 **LMAC Overview of Phragmites Australis Invasive Species.** M. Roickle presented the PowerPoint prepared by LMAC that outlined the course of the *Phragmites Australis* on or near Columbia Lake; why there is a need to eliminate the *Phragmites*; the negative impacts; and what the treatment options are. M. Roickle turned the floor over to M. Gnazzo to read the recommendations to the Town of Columbia BOS which entailed the following:
 - Based on the thorough research conducted, LMAC recommends the Town of Columbia move forward to eliminate the invasive species, *Phragmites Australis*, found on or near Columbia Lake.
 - A motion approved by LMAC (9-1) on May 2, 2018 recommends to the Board of Selectman that the Town of Columbia hire SOLitude to treat the six stands of *Phragmites Australis* found on or near Columbia Lake.
 - Based on expert guidance:
 - ✓ LMAC recommends that the target treatment date be the last week of August 2018, at whatever natural water level the lake is at that time, without a draw down.
 - ✓ LMAC recommends a second treatment, as needed, four to six weeks later before the first hard frost.
 - 2.1.2 **Scientific Support ~ Greg Bugbee, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.** G. Bugbee works for the Department of Environmental Sciences for The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven and runs the Aquatic Invasive Species Program. G. Bugbee stated that the phragmites on or near the lake that will need to be treated is an extremely small area compared to other places he's seen. He stated that SOLitude would need to obtain a permit through CTDEEP. Once the permit is approved the method of application that SOLitude would use is a hand wand application, not with a

backpack sprayer using Clearcast (Imazamox). He added that likely the area would need to be treated more than once. He stated that the first application could cover 90% of the affected area with a potential second application needed. G. Bugbee suggested that a follow-up surveillance is needed through citizens efforts to detect pop-up phragmites.

2.1.3 Public Comments and Questions and Answers Session. S. Everett opened the floor for comments and questions.

Carol Williams, 21 Gaulin Rd asked how long the seeds are viable. G. Bugbee responded that they can be viable for decades.

Shirly King, 31 Woodland Terrace asked that once the process is finished and the weeds are withered down, should it be removed. G. Bugbee stated that the application will be in late August or September and once applied that stops the growth within 24 hours. The plant will stay green for a while and then brown out normally in the fall.

Mike Matthews, 1 Lower Terrace asked if you pull at the roots will phosphorus be released into the lake. G. Bugbee responded that probably a little bit, but not enough to matter.

Andrea Drabicki, 131 Rte. 87 asked if the permit will be open for a full year. G. Bugbee explained the it will expire at the end of calendar year. He added that the town can request a 3-year permit. A. Drabicki then asked what the cost would be. G. Bugbee explained that the cost to file is \$200.00 per year.

Bill Ross, 183 Rte. 87 stated that he is on the Inlands Wetlands Commission and that the material produced tonight was not brought to IWWC. He stated that IWWC approved Rodeo (Glyphosate) not Imazamox. His concern is that funding this will open the door or set a precedent for further request to fund the eradication of invasive species.

S. Everett requested that M. Walter get the minutes from the IWWC meeting to verify what was brought to IWWC from LMAC. He then added that property owners do not own into the lake, they own up to and that the town owns the lake property; therefore, the town would fund this. He continued that the town is being proactive by trying to keep the invasive weeds out and referenced a recent article in the paper that Coventry Lake is looking at having to fund over \$100,000 to eradicate the invasive species on their lake because they have not been proactive.

Bill Ross, 183 Rte. 87 reiterated that he felt that the town was opening the door to funding of invasive species control on private property.

Ann Dunnack, 103 Lake Rd. is the Chairman of the Conservation Commission and stated that 5 years ago the Conservation Commission studied the invasive plants in Mono Pond and that the pond was infested with the invasive weeds, but the town decided to not address it. She added that the Town of Columbia has an opportunity to address the issue, while we were too late with Mono Pond.

Henry Beck, Rte. 87 and 40 Sleepy Hollow Rd. stated that LMAC's record is clear that no property owner raised the question of eliminating the invasive species, that LMAC raised the question and that private residents will likely not have success getting the town to pay.

Bryan Tarbell, 113 West St. is a member of the Environmental Advisory Committee and stated that the consensus of the committee agreed that the town needs to get in early enough to minimize the long-term impact of the lake.

Bill Ross, 183 Rte. 87 stated that he has been very vocal about the need to get ahead of this as soon as possible, but that the BOS is misunderstanding his questions and that we are opening the door for ongoing expensive solutions and asked “where do we draw the line.”

Millie Ramsey, 100 Hunt Rd., stated that she feels that we need to deal with this now because of the likelihood of it coming back again and it will continue to spread.

Karen Sneider, 27 Sleepy Hollow Rd. stated that she is a new resident and was appalled at how other towns took care of their lakes, that’s why she chose to live here. She asked what kind of safety studies have been done.

G. Bugbee responded that the USEPA has done a series of tests over many years to determine toxicity to fish and invertebrates and suggested that if people have more question they can go to the USEPA website.

Andrea Drabicki, 131 Rte. 87 asked if we have to act quickly would we be able to get the permit. G. Bugbee responded that the DEEP is usually much faster at this time of the year because they have already processed the bulk of the requested permits.

David Vanderbilt, 213 Rte. 87 said that for the first year in a long-time water levels are higher in the lake and it appears that the plants are not doing as well because of this. He asked if the town will be doing an early draw-down.

S. Everett stated that the town will not be doing an early draw-down.

M. Roickle stated that there is no difference if it’s standing water or in a field because SOLitude will be using a hand wick and a whisk.

David Vanderbilt, 213 Rte. 87 stated that Bill Foichi had the biggest stand of Phragmites and now it’s gone because he pulled it out.

Bill Foichi, 62 Lake Rd., stated that the towns zoning official said he could no longer cut his lawn and that is what caused the problem of the weeds spreading. He added that he had been cutting the lawn for 35 years and that the IWWC stopped him from cutting, which caused the *Phragmites* to grow.

Lynn Haller, Rte. 87 is the Vice President of the Columbia Lake Association stated that last month, on May 24th at the CLA Member Meeting they reviewed the body of work researched and measures taken to date that has failed to not only remove the *Phragmites Australis*, but also in some areas they have seen it increase. A motion was made and nearly unanimously, with only one dissenter, that the CLA voted to support and adopt the LMAC recommendations and motions endorsed by the IWWC to hire SOLitude and implement their plan of action. They urge the Town of Columbia to move forward now while at an early stage to eliminate the invasive species.

2.1.4 LMAC Recommendation and Motion to the Town of Columbia Board of Selectmen. Based on the thorough research conducted, LMAC recommends the Town of Columbia move forward to eliminate the invasive species, *Phragmites Australis*, found on or near Columbia Lake.

- A motion approved by LMAC (9-1) on May 2, 2018 recommends to the Board of Selectman that the Town of Columbia hire SOLitude to treat the six stands of *Phragmites Australis* found on or near Columbia Lake.
- Based on expert guidance:

- ✓ LMAC recommends that the target treatment date be the last week of August 2018, at whatever natural water level the lake is at that time, without a draw down.
 - ✓ LMAC recommends a second treatment, as needed, four to six weeks later before the first hard frost.
- 2.1.5 IWWC Statement of Support for the LMAC Motion.** IWWC provided a list of requirements for the safe and legal application of treatment for the *Phragmites Australis* found on or near Columbia Lake.
- 2.1.6 Environmental Advisory Committee Statement of Support for the LMAC Motion.** Bryan Tarbell stated that the consensus of the Environmental Advisory Committee agreed that we need to get in early enough to minimize the long-term impact of the lake.
- 2.1.7 Deliberation of the BOS and action on the motion.** S. Everett MOVED to approve based on the thorough research and presentation completed tonight. The BOS recommends that the Town of Columbia hire SOLitude to apply for a 3-year permit and to treat the stands of *Phragmites Australis* found on or near Columbia Lake. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. 4.0.
- 3. ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to Adjourn the meeting at 8:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie