

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
MAY 10, 2017**

A Special Town Meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in the Town of Columbia, Connecticut was held at Yeomans Hall, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT on Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 7:00 p.m..

Present were First Selectman Carmen Vance; Selectmen Steven Everett, Robert Hellstrom and William O'Brien; Town Administrator Mark Walter; Town Attorney Ken Slater; Lake Management Advisory Committee Member Michael Gnazzo; Columbia Lake Association member Mary Roikle and numerous others.

MODERATOR: Robert C. Baldwin
TOWN CLERK: Robin M. Kenefick
CITIZENS: 260+

The meeting was opened by First Selectman Carmen Vance at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The meeting was turned over to the Moderator to explain the rules, procedures and who is eligible to vote at tonight's meeting. Any questions and/or comments would be directed to the Moderator. He explained that the two clauses to be addressed at this meeting would be those outlined in the legal notice. The Moderator noted that if Clause 1 passes, Clause 2 is moot and a motion would be made to adjourn the meeting. He then asked the Town Clerk to read the legal for tonight's meeting.

CLAUSE 1: Motion was made by Selectmen Steven Everett:

“I move to repeal the amendments adopted by the Board of Selectmen on April 4, 2017 to Town Ordinance 6-4 entitled” Town of Columbia Activities and Conduct at the Columbia Town Beach and the Launching of Watercraft from the Shoreline of Columbia Lake and Penalties for Violation of Such;” and then to amend the original ordinance, as so restored in accordance with the form of those amendments, inclusive of certain technical changes highlighted in yellow, presented to this Town Meeting on the document that is entitled “Clause 1” and made part of the record.”

Motion was seconded by First Selectman Carmen Vance. The Moderator opened the floor to discussion. Steve Everett spoke to the motion, giving some background on the process and how it brought us to this point. We are all here for the same thing, to keep Columbia Lake pristine. With Mono Pond having invasive species, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) chose to be proactive with Columbia Lake to keep it clean. They received expertise from Lake Management Advisory

Committee (LMAC) and set up an ordinance. The BOS apologized; they did not do their best. They did not hear the voices of the people and what they wanted. We have heard you and that is why we are here tonight.

Carmen Vance spoke and asked to repeal the ordinance and approve the amendments that have been proposed by a working group. She turned the floor over to Mary Roickle, a member of the Columbia Lake Association for an educational presentation, "For the Sake of the Lake".

Mary Roickle reiterated we are all here to protect the lake and to allow access to the lake. She stated that LMAC has been working on this ordinance for 10 years now. A study by the Connecticut Federation of Lakes now shows that 58-60% of the lakes in Connecticut have some type of invasive species or phosphorous; the number one culprit being aquatic hitchhikers. Mary introduced Boy Scout James Drabek, whose Eagle Project last fall included a clean up along the shores of Columbia Lake and an education on invasive species and how they affect the fish and wildlife. James then turned the floor back over to Mary Roickle. Mary's presentation included information on the Lake Waramaug Restoration project (1975-1999), which saw the lake restored with crystal clear water after almost being completely choked out by blue algae. LMAC modeled this ordinance for Columbia Lake on Lake Waramaug's Comprehensive Aquatic Prevention Plan.

The Moderator opened the floor to discussion. Questions pertaining to the explanation of the original ordinance, clarification of the document entitled "Clause 1", access to the lake and the specifics of the inspection procedures were raised and discussed. The Moderator stated that the ordinance provides a foundation and that the procedures would be addressed when the BOS, LMAC and others meet.

Mike Gnazzo, 19 Woodland Terrace (1), chairman of LMAC, stated that right now this ordinance is an improvement in the reduction of risk of invasive species to the lake.

Bryan Tarbell, 113 West Street, stated it is important to preserve the quality of the lake and people are afraid the lake is being taken away from them with the restrictions placed. This ordinance tries to cover preservation of the lake with a gate and allows access with a key system.

Carmen Vance invited Robert W. Kortmann, Ph.D., Ecosystem Consulting Service, Inc. to speak. Dr. Kortmann has been working with Columbia Lake since 1975. There are no invasive plants identified in Columbia Lake. Fanwort, though, is a dominate plant found in Mono Pond and once an invasive gets in and becomes established there are no good ways to get rid of it and the consequences that go with it. An ordinance will enable town leaders to come up with appropriate ways to deal with invasive prevention.

Ann Dunnack, 103 Lake Road, does not live on the lake, but has had a boat on the lake since 1958 and would not like to see things messed up. All we want is to enable the BOS to protect the lake and encourages you to come to a BOS meeting to go over procedure. She then called

the question. Motion was made to call the question (2/3 voted needed). A voice vote to call the question was made. Yes: 240+ No: 3 to call the question. The Moderator re-read the motion. A voice vote was taken on Clause 1. Yes: 240+ No: 10. Motion passes.

The Moderator stated that with a yes vote for Clause 1, Clause 2 has been rendered moot and motion was made to adjourn. Motion seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Robin M. Kenefick
Town Clerk