



**Executive Committee Meeting
December 10, 2008 – Farr Center, Onekama**

Called to order by chair, Mike Acton, at 4:00 p.m.

Present: *Mike Acton, Mark Tonello, Kathy Ervin, Jim Simons, Howard Hughes, Tim Morley, Mary Reed, Herb Lenon, Daniel Behring, Alice Hendricks, Frank English, Roger Cody, Phil Joseph, Jim Hunter, Dave VanEerden, Nipper Wisniski, Roland Clement, Junior Kauffman, Jim Mrozinski, Anna Veverica*

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mark Tonello is the new liason from the MDNR. Roland Clement and James Wisniski, Onekama Township Board Members and Phil Joseph, Onekama Township Planning Commission.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the October 23rd meeting were unanimously approved. They are posted on the website.

3. Committee Reports

- **Community Outreach and Education** Kathy Ervin reported that the fall update letter went out in the Onekama Twp. tax bills and the email list for the watershed. We have been receiving donations to the endowment fund as a result of that. Dan Behring has been holding educational forums at area churches. His goal is to have all the churches involved.
- **Monitoring & Inventory** Herb Lenon, Dave VanEerden, Frank Beaver, Jim Hunter, Jim Simons, and Jim Mrozinski have agreed to be on the Monitoring and Inventory Committee for 2009. This winter the committee will start looking into pricing for the lake testing. The committee will meet again in January or February to come up with the new sampling sites for e-coli testing. Due to concern about the level of cladophora, the committee is considering adding a phosphorus test. Jim Hunter reports that the results of the lake testing done by Onekama High School are in and the report should be ready by Christmas.

4. Budget Committee

The committee consists of Mike Stifler, Dee Dee Miller, Kathy Ervin, Herb Lenon and Dick Tomlinson. They are currently working on a spreadsheet that will estimate the cost of implementing the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan. Once the spreadsheet is complete, it will provide material for the Watershed Committee to plan for 2009 and for the Endowment Building Committee to use to accomplish their goals.

5. District Health Department #10 Point of Sale Well & Septic Ordinance Status

The final approval for the ordinance will take place on December 19th at the District 10 Health Dept. Board Meeting in Cadillac. The ordinance has already passed in all ten counties. The next step for the Health Dept. is a meeting with the Manistee County Register of Deeds. Inspectors will need to be trained and certified. The ordinance requires inspections on well and septic systems when a house transfers ownership. Once the inspection process is in place and running, there needs to be a plan to get with District 10 and add transfer from parents to children.

6. Comments on DEQ Permit Requests

Permit requests to the DEQ are forwarded to the Township office via mail or email. There is a 45-day period in which people can comment on the request. Recently someone had submitted a request for a permit that would allow filling of the wetlands and building where there was a flowing creek. The Township Planning Commission requested that a letter be written advising the DEQ to refrain from issuing the permit which Dan Behring wrote. In the letter he referenced part of the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan and the Onekama Twp. Master plan. The DEQ honored the comments sent in the letter and worked with the property owner to move the development to the upland portion of his property instead. There was some discussion about whether the Watershed Committee should get involved in commenting on every permit request, but a consensus was reached that they should be added to the list of recipients for permit requests so they will be informed. Mike Acton will call to see if the watershed can be added. They will decide how to review the requests at the next meeting.

7. Storm Drains

Dan Behring reported on a possible solution to the amount of silt entering Portage Lake through the storm drains. He looked at several options and believes that the best one is a three-compartment interceptor that would be located at the end of the storm drain and will trap debris to keep it from reaching the lake. Alliance for Economic Success informed Onekama Township Board of an infrastructure stimulus package that they believe the project will qualify for. Also other possibilities for the application was funding for the completion of the Channel walls and Piers, Sewer system around the Lake and reconstruction of M-22 and the sidewalks through the Village of Onekama. . Mike Acton thanked AES for all their help in trying to secure funding and acknowledged that they have been a valuable resource to the Watershed Committee and all communities in Manistee County.

8. Clean Marina Program

At the last Township Board Meeting it was stated that Onekama Marina was interested in the Clean Marina program. The Watershed Committee showed interest in assisting this program and Mark Breedland from the Michigan Sea Grant could come and make a presentation at the next meeting. It is important for the Watershed to help the marinas in any way they can with the program. Promoting sustainability will aid the marinas in these tough economic times and the positive publicity will attract more people to the area. It was agreed to have Michigan Sea Grant come to the next Watershed Executive Committee and give a presentation of the Clean Marina Program. Mike agreed to arrange.

9. Adopt a Highway Sign

John Herzog from PLEA would like to know if the Watershed Committee is interested in “adopting” Portage Point Drive. The Watershed Forever name would appear on a sign at the entrance to the road and members would only be required to clean up the trash twice a year. Kathy Ervin suggested turning the cleaning into a community event and providing refreshments for participants. Between official cleanings the Watershed Committee members are encouraged to pick up any litter they see on the roadside. The committee unanimously supported the Adopt a Highway idea and agreed to help keep Portage Point Drive clean.

10. DNR Report

Most fish in Portage Lake maintain their populations, such as blue gill, perch, crappies, bass, and pike, but the MDNR has had to actively manage the walleye and brown trout populations. In 2007 they were unable to stock Portage Lake with walleye due to the VHS disease. This gave them a chance to use electrode fishing to see if natural walleye reproduction was occurring in Portage Lake. It was discovered that there are a fair number of walleye resulting from natural reproduction. However, the MDNR will continue to stock Portage Lake because a large number of walleye are lost to Lake Michigan. They hope to stock the lake again this summer, but may not be able to do so. Due to a shortage caused by VHS, there are some lakes that need it more. If they are unable to restock Portage Lake this year they will do it in the summer of 2010. The MDNR’s last netting survey was completed in 1999. The next survey will occur in May or June 2009.

11. Wetland Designation Ordinance

Phil Joseph is on a committee for the Township Planning Commission that is working on a draft of an ordinance to aid in wetland protection. The goal is to ensure that there is no net loss of the wetlands surrounding Portage Lake. The ordinance would be in addition to the DEQ ordinances and would require property owners to apply for a local wetland permit before developing their land. The committee is working to balance public goals with private rights. Ten years ago, another group of people tried to pass a similar ordinance and were unsuccessful. It was suggested that the current committee should contact the people who had tried in the past to find out what went wrong and also contact people in areas where similar ordinances have passed. The committee would like to include public input to help the ordinance succeed.

12. Invasive Species Plants Committee Report

PLA funded an aquatic vegetation survey of the entire lake and the Invasive Species Plants Committee looked at the results. They found that there were two non-native species of concern, phragmites and Eurasian watermilfoil. The discovery of Eurasian watermilfoil in 10% of the plant-covered portion of the lake. The Eurasian watermilfoil is currently located in areas of the lake that are between 5 and 18 feet deep and the plants have grown to within 15 inches of the surface of the lake. When the milfoil reaches the surface it spreads out and forms a mat over the lake that shuts out light and kills all of the other vegetation. The committee did extensive

research and looked into the milfoil situation in Long Lake, Houghton Lake, Manistee Lake, Carp Lake, Bear Lake, Lake Mitchell, and Lake Cadillac as well as lakes in other states. There are two ways of treating the milfoil situation: weevils or herbicides. After looking at information regarding other lakes and researching each option the committee recommends the use of the 24D herbicide that will target the affected areas. Funding for the treatment may be available by setting up a special Assessment District with PA 188. The committee also recommends having another survey done in the spring or fall with Herb Lenon to observe. Frank English made a motion to have the committee give their power-point presentation at the December 17th meeting for the Township and Village Board. Roger Cody amended the motion by adding that the committee should present all of the options available along with their recommendation, but ultimately leave the decision up to the Township and Village. There was some discussion about looking at other lakes that may be more similar to Portage Lake. One suggestion was Lake Macatowa in Holland. After the discussion, Dave VanEerden seconded the motion and its amendment. The motion was unanimously passed.

13. Next Meeting

The next Executive Committee Meeting will be at the end of January. Mike Acton will contact members to find the best date for everyone.