

# OSWEGO LAKE WATERSHED COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting moved to Gubanc's Pub and Restaurant

Friday, August 8, 2014

The *vision* of the Oswego Lake Watershed Council is a healthy properly functioning watershed. This vision is of streams, wetlands, riparian forests, upland forests/trees, Oswego Lake, and other natural resources working together as a sustainable ecological system that supports good water quality, productive habitat for native plant and animal communities, and enhanced quality of life.

The *mission* of the Oswego Lake Watershed Council is to foster stewardship, education, participation, and financial support for the purpose of the conservation, restoration, enhancement, and maintenance of watershed functions that achieve and sustain a healthy watershed.

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**1. Welcome and Introductions:** Directors present were Andy Harris, Michael Buck, Tom Bland, Rob Amsberry, Mark Rosenkrantz and Sarah Asby. Guests included Mary Ratcliff.

## **2. Operations:**

- **Minutes: Resolved: Minutes for July 11, 2014 were unanimously approved.**
- **Financial Report:** Tom reported we had \$3873.78 in OLWC account. He wrote two checks: one for our webmaster Linda (\$22.95); the other to the bank for more checks (\$13.20).

## **3. Council Business:**

- **Sustainability Action Board:** Mary talked about the first ever film fest undertaken by this group and gave out a handout on the various free film offerings starting in September. These will be shown at various times at the same venue: the Lake Theater Café on State Street. The first film is "Water Blues Green Solutions" and she is seeking a knowledgeable introducer for this September 7<sup>th</sup> viewing. Rob suggested asking Kevin McCaleb, a City employee who works at the water treatment plant.
- **Mountain Park Project:** Sarah talked about the meeting with Kevin Stohler that Mike and Stephanie were also present for. Kevin walked us to four possible projects, most of the sites are already on the CIP list for the City. The first location is actually the headwaters of Springbrook Creek and near residential property lines. A second vicinity was Tanglewood Park which has a fairly straightened drainage flowing from an outfall in this grassy, flat area. Some of the trees are invasive and the narrow corridor is devoid of natural stream characteristics. This park has high usage especially among picnickers and dog owners. Kevin then took us to Preakness where two drainages converge and where an outfall from the street empties into the ravine. This underground piping could be daylighted but this project would be expensive due to necessity for excavation and purchase and conveyance of rock/wood material for stream restoration. All of these sites are already included in the City's CIP index to improve water retention and biofiltration, and in those narratives, the scope of work exceeds our OWEB grant/fund availability of

\$10,000. Whatever site is finally agreed upon, we would need the engineering drawings for what the City wants in the specific location. One member suggested the possibility that one entity could fund this design work and OLWC could pay for the implementation. Rob made it clear that the current surface water budget of the City has been constrained due to the water pipeline project and so many projects are delayed for two years or more. He suggested Tim Kraft take a look at our projected project site. If a design work is undertaken and completed in one year, it is easier to get funding for implementation the second. Members then concentrated discussion on possible riparian work on the channel in the Preakness area which would independent of CIP. Rob is meeting with Kevin next Monday and will mention our discussion and focus. He will then get back to the Watershed Council afterwards. Mike mentioned our need to be sensitive to Kevin's schedule and demands and work in a way that does not place undue burdens on his current responsibilities.

• **SL proposals:** Council opened discussion on the evolving proposals coming out of the Sensitive Lands public process. Andy talked about his testifying before the Planning Commission to help their understanding of Title 3 material and thought their awareness was encouraging. He mentioned that Nancy Gronowski also attended and provided feedback to the Commission. OLWC members received the clarification of what a "ditch" is from Rob: "a man-made roadside conveyance" which distinguishes it from a narrow channel that may be natural headwaters. Andy commented about the proposal to regulate stream corridors only after the fifty acre line of the watershed. He thought that DSL would have problems accepting that scenario. Utilizing personal knowledge and experience of watersheds, members talked about how best a community could realistically protect it while staying realistic with stream corridor diversity and proportionate buffers (function applied to stream volume). Andy used a residential example and asked if upland streams were not regulated, could the property owner actually do anything in terms of restoration. Members discussed the delayed action on "habitat benefit areas" which are part of the proposals. Hopefully, new LIDAR mapping will show historic stream channels and with higher resolution, the City will have a topo map indicative of significant natural resources. Andy volunteered to draft talking points that can be used at this stage of the public process to help educate Council members, citizens and ourselves. No date has yet been set for this to appear again before the Planning Commission. Rob did mention that Andrea Christenson would be leaving her position at the City and we lamented what a new person would have to become familiar with in terms of this lengthy SL process. Rob and Andy talked about streams being regulated by the State, City and Corps of Engineers and thought it would be consistent for all to use the same definition of "stream," "stream bank." Andy qualified determinations of channel and buffer quantification by referring to "bankfull indicators." OLWC recognizes that testimony before any public agency serves a larger audience and talking points should take that into consideration. Andy left us with this closing thought: Regulations have to make sense and have to match up to helping improve watershed health.

**4. No Public Announcements.**

**5. Next Meeting: September 12, 2014, 8:00am .**