

# OSWEGO LAKE WATERSHED COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Friday, July 10, 2020

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 for virtual meeting:** Stephanie Wagner, Tom Benson, Mike Buck, Mark Rosenkranz, Mary Ratcliff, Denny Barnes, Tom Berridge, Dwight Sangrey, Tom Bland, along with Jack Halsey, Watershed Coordinator; and Kat Maloney, Community Outreach Specialist.

## **2. Operations**

### **• Minutes:**

**Resolved: Minutes for June 12, 2020 were unanimously accepted.**

**• Finance Report:** The Finance Committee will meet on July 16<sup>th</sup> according to Stephanie to go over the half-year report which will be shared at our August Board meeting. Tom said he was holding invoices until we had a cushion in our cash account with checks that have been authorized by Megan Big John and mailed on behalf of the City. Tom will be checking the mailbox and let Stephanie know when they arrive. These checks were issued after our Annual Reports were turned in, which then allowed us to invoice for our new projects.

**• Volunteer Hour Tracking:** Jack has the link on the agenda for members to use.

## **3. Staff Reports**

### **• Watershed Coordinator—Jack**

- Summer Fieldwork Updates:** Jack mentioned the continuing delays on the IRCO hiring process. He said that likely we would receive people in two weeks. Jack said that IRCO was asking for written policy on how we are abiding with County regulations on social distancing. He has hence drafted fieldwork guidelines which apply to board members when working with small groups. Interns may also be working with volunteers and the guidelines would be in effect. These will need to be updated as phasing continues. Mike and Stephanie expressed interest in helping review the guideline procedures. Jack asked if anyone else had interest. Jack will send out the link so members can visit the site. We may have Pilar return to work for us this summer since she has graduated from Wilson High School and has re-applied.
- Westlake HOA update:** (Tom Berridge will have a report later under Stewardship.) Jack said that the permit form for tree removal has been turned in to the City. Planning Staff will let the Watershed Council know if more documentation is needed. Jack is

aiming at September for the removal of 230 trees to comply with native oak enhancement. 107 trees are slated for falling; others will be girdled and left as snags for habitat potential; still others will be pruned and fractured. Jack said that the plan figured in fire danger mitigation.

- **Outreach Specialist—Kat**

- **PSU Communications Intern:** Kat reported that Michael Follett was brought on the team June 22<sup>nd</sup>. She said he specializes in graphic design and has expertise in campaign programs and media work. He will be with us until August 17<sup>th</sup> and Kat inquired whether any of us had design project ideas in mind. Please let her know.

- **“Soil Your Undies” Launch:** Kat is working with Michael on this new campaign launch so participants can gain a better understanding of their own residential soil conditions. They will send out a teaser and go “live” in the next two weeks. An email will also go out alerting watershed subscribers. Stephanie is working on recruiting people for an Education Committee that would also be tied into following this campaign on soil awareness. She wondered about an article in the *Lake Oswego Review*. Mary responded with interest in being on the new Committee with the goal of broader educational extension.

- **iTree BETA, Next Steps:** Kat sent an email to board members and Tree Summit Committee members. She also has a separate contact list of those not on email and a survey will be sent for feedback. In response to a question on how much time does the survey take to respond to the data requested on a self-selected tree, Kat said about 30-60 minutes. Members who had done it said that it seemed more fun rather than time consuming. Of course, the more one uses the app, the more facile adding trees can be. Kat is available for questions during this survey time. She wants to have training in person on an outside site if possible. And the City’s arborist consultant, Morgen Holen, would be invited to attend and help in this orientation.

- **Summer 2020 Newsletter:** Kat said that this newsletter with individual articles would be released in the next week so please look for it. A quarterly newsletter publication is the goal.

#### 4. Committee Reports

- **Stewardship Committee Report**

- **Westlake—Tom Berridge:** In his overview, Tom shared a brief history of how these seventeen acres had been set aside in the 1980’s as open space in the development planning process for this residential neighborhood. As an established neighborhood and HOA, attention on how to address instances of encroachment on this land came to the forefront; and Tom wrote an HOA policy for land use emphasizing habitat values. In this time of familiarity with the acreage, Tom noted the alarming level of invasive species. When on the Board of the Westlake HOA, Tom applied for and received grants to remove invasive plants. He was directed to contact the OLWC and connected this ecological organization with the HOA. A restorative plan was developed with reciprocal funding—a good commitment on the Board’s part. Removing the invasive trees, mostly English holly and hawthorn, was initially problematic since die-back did not occur as planned. But with a switch in herbicide contractors, Tom saw better results. After work on the invasive groundcovers, attention is now focused on thinning out the native trees to allow the Oregon white oak to flourish. The State of Oregon has only 5% left of the original oak woodland prior to white settlement. Indigenous peoples had used fire to suppress our native Douglas firs. Oak managed to survive this control mechanism. Since fires no longer are allowed, manual removal by cutting, girdling or converting to snags will be undertaken. Dead trees are good habitat material, and Tom said that in the surveying process hazardous trees

will also be identified. Homes surround the perimeter of this project and so neighbors value this natural open space and the views accorded. They also desire good buffering from busy arterials. Tom has become the liaison between the OLWC, the HOA, and individual property owners. He listens, informs, supports and advocates for effective stewardship. In looking at ongoing maintenance obligations, Tom wants to organize volunteers. He has appreciated the HOA Board's support and commitment for his work on behalf of this watershed project. Mary suggested appropriate signage to help communicate the good work being done. Members discussed ways for continued education, outreach and messaging. Mark also initiated a conversation regarding ongoing commitment by HOA Boards when participation can change due to new membership and new people moving into the area who have no knowledge of what is happening. How do we cooperate with nature rather than put the emphasis on manipulating our backyard landscapes? In conclusion, Tom said he has four photo points on site to help track the progress of restorative change. Jack said minimum replanting will occur with low growing shrubs and wetland plugs. Watershed goals include addressing erosion issues on the creek bank and also the forest understory health. Stephanie thanked Tom for his critical role in this whole undertaking. What remains is how to get all that's been done embedded into the cultural framework of the Westlake HOA.

- **Education Committee—Stephanie:** Stephanie has written and sent out a job description for recruitment to urban forest committees and other outreach contacts. She recruited a high school student, Nick Foster, to help with the campaign on soil information; and also reached out to Sharon Holley whom she knew from Tryon. They will have a first meeting in a couple of weeks. Regular reports will follow as this Committee tries to support the “boots on the ground.”

## 5. Old Business

- **DEI Approach—Stephanie and Jack:** Stephanie thanked everyone for their shared written contributions: Denny, Dwight, Mike and Mark. Someone suggested having a folder in Google Drive so our thoughts could be together for future referencing. Jack is continuing to follow up on our beginnings by investigating and capitalizing on what other organizations have utilized. He called for our own deepening reflection in light of the BLM movement and opened the floor for sharing. Mark said for him the biggest thing is understanding white privilege as a white male and choosing to actually think about it. Coming to a realization about the reality of discrimination and inequity and how this was experienced adds a stress and discomfort that motivates for change. Knowing this has been ignored for so long adds its own impetus. Jack said that he feels uncomfortable and tired; yet, the very fact of having the privilege of being able to turn it off and on means he should push on and engage. Tom B. wanted to connect with the local group *Respond to Racism*. Mark mentioned that his North American Lake Management Society members were trying to attract and recruit more non-white students to aquatic sciences as well as develop media for teachers in the classroom or field trips as well as outreach efforts. Dwight applauded all these efforts and advocated for us to go beyond by reaching out to make our own Board more diverse. Discussion centered on how to create this opening where a person of color would feel comfortable coming on board and feel appreciated. Linkage to particular projects and issues so they are directly involved would help overcome any aspect of “tokenism” according to Stephanie. Mike thought a prudential process for incorporation includes the triad “confiding, comprehending and conveying” our mission and commitment. Jack wants us to slow down and reflect more deeply to find the right person or persons. This means strategizing and using tools for non-profits that help assess policy and organizational structures. Jack, Stephanie

and Mark will formulate this organizational assessment.

- **Lake Access Comment and Discussion:** Jack brought this issue up at our last meeting, but the Board's meeting time had expired. With everyone understanding the current restrictions for lake access and some of the history, discussion and questions centered on avoiding a conflation of disparate issues, understanding how this issue relates to current awareness of discriminating practices, wondering what Todd Praeger's agenda was in seeking our involvement or engagement, and discerning what our response should be. Mention was made that Jeff Ward has offered to give our Board background information on where this controversial case is now. Given Todd's linkage of our State's and City's racist history to this lake access issue, Mary appreciated how a more complete history would help her own perspective. Mark thought we needed clarity on how this topic would benefit our mission. Denny said so many homes have lake easement in their deeds and that fees from these go to ongoing maintenance for water quality. Stephanie would value Jeff's document since she thinks the story needs to be told. Group discussion followed and went deeper into many aspects given members' own historical knowledge and what current practices are currently undertaken for invited access to outside groups. Mike referred to the lake as an anomaly and ellipsis based on privilege: the lake and its water is not listed as a natural resource in City documents or codes or maps. Hence, it does not have stated riparian and habitat value, nor recognized integration into our other listed natural resources. Tom Berridge thinks of the lake as private property protected not by racial considerations but by class. No one without easement rights can kayak on the lake. Some wondered why this obviously navigable water is not under State propriety. Stephanie thought it helpful to gather background information so we could come together for some statement.

*(Note: The time was near 10:00am and the Secretary had to leave. Jack offered these following notes to complement the minute record.)* Various board members expressed their desire to not ignore the issue (questions about our stance on lake access). It's a potentially divisive issue, but we need to address it in some way. Jack will reach out to Todd and give him an update. We will seek out more resources and information on this topic and make sure all viewpoints are represented as we decide where we stand on the issue of lake access.

#### **6. New Business**

- **Strategic Plan—Process: (not addressed at this meeting)**
- **Job Review for Jack:** The job review process is upcoming, as he has been with us for almost a year. Stephanie will send out more information in the near future.

#### **7. Public Comments and Announcements: None**

#### **8. Meeting Adjourns: 10:15am**

