

BALL POND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Special Meeting
July 11, 2023, at 7:30 pm
Senior Center Community Room

The Ball Pond Advisory Committee closely monitors the water quality and living community comprising Ball Pond: applying best lake management practices, and encouraging good stewardship by the watershed community, to ensure the health of the lake for current and future generations, as well as for the wildlife that relies upon it.

In attendance: Committee Members: George Buck, Mary Yulo, Jim Mellett, Pete Viola

Alternate Committee Members: Frank Yulo

*In absence of Monica Santos, Mary Yulo is acting chair for this meeting.

*In order to achieve quorum, the board elevates Frank from alternate.

1. Call to Order- 7:32

2. Approval of June 6, 2023, meeting minutes- Pete moves to approve, Frank seconds; motion passes with unanimous approval.

3. Update from FOBP - Mark Spellmann has stated he is willing to send out emails to his comprehensive distribution list, to see who would like to be on a list to be notified of algae bloom.

-Confirmed algae bloom on 30th of June; cyanobacteria/dolichospermum detected in sample.

-Several people put out notice upon discovery. Mary put out information on Facebook, as well as Nextdoor and received multiple responses; was important to get out before July 4th and the ensuing celebrations.

- Both the boat parade and kayak races went as planned.

-Finalized environmental signs for upcoming music concert; 8 signs and duplicates of zebra mussel signs.

-Mark is looking for a new venue for the music concert in town; the congregational church is currently being considered.

-Mary intends to put out a summer newsletter. Upcoming events include the music concert, Labor Day festivities, and holiday party in December.

-FOBP meets 4-6 times a year as far as strategic meetings to plan events.

4. Water sampling schedule- George worked out the next sampling; it is scheduled for July 25th as of now.

5. Larry's Report- Completed but not disseminated.

6. Floating Raft- The raft has been dealt with.

-Frank and George cut up the abandoned raft and hauled it out of the pond, and public works picked it up.

-Raft was #1 priority for Public Works, in spite of the ongoing paving; called on Thursday morning, raft was gone the same day.

7. WestConn status- Monica sent out Dr. Wong's report; levels are well under microsystem threshold, with the exception of saxitoxin present in cyanobacteria in the benthic mat of algae, which was detected in 2022.

- CT has no previously recorded numbers to determine what level is dangerous, but levels are well enough above levels observed in Ohio to be considered alarmingly high.

-CT doesn't recognize saxitoxin as a benchmark to close bodies of water.

-Benthic mats, sheets of filamentous algae, exist near enough to shore that people can, and have tried to, rake them out. Whether or not that is safe is still an unanswered question.

-Dolichospermum has also bloomed.

8. Road salts and weed spray along Rt 39- Julian had spoken to town and state crews; he will do trimming and crews will be moving the no spray zone sign further south to the beach.

-Jim has penned a letter to the CT highway dept and proposed they cease using sodium chloride and instead use calcium chloride. It is more expensive, but it will yield the same results.

-Sodium raises conductivity of water, whereas calcium is a bonus for both aquatic animals and plants.

-Jim intends to contact the Chemistry dept. at Westconn and inquire as to whether or not the change will be better.

9. Community Bloom Watch- BPAC has no volunteer to consolidate information.

-Documentation of blooms is mostly reliant on the board members and other residents reporting information on their social media and getting the word out when something is spotted.

-Elissa Johnson reported the presence of dolichospermum and Larry reported that it can potentially become aerosolized.

10. Cattails- Cattails have returned to Ball Pond brook.

-BPAC previously received a 10yr permit to cut cattails to water level.

- In spite of cattails growing in and catching debris, water is still flowing through.

-Cattails impede flow by an estimated 10%.

-George does not have plans to remove cattails, but will if it becomes necessary.

-Inland Wetland granted the permit, and Frank will bring the issue up in the next meeting; the intent would be to clear cattails from mouth of brook at water level and be sure the central channel is not obstructed. It would only be done as needed.

-George will monitor the cattails.

11. New Business - Julian Laemmerhirt had informed the board via email that he will be stepping down from his position; whether it will be permanent or temporary remains to be seen.

-A new volunteer will be needed in his place to continue with weed spraying, weed whacking, etc.

-Alternate Committee member, Frank Yulo, is being considered for promotion to permanent member of the committee.

12. Adjournment- 8:17 Pete moves, George seconds. Meeting adjourns.

Received by email on 07/14/2023 @ 11:57 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield