

Big Swan Lake Improvement Association of Todd County Spring Meeting Minutes

President Joan Ganley called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 18, 2024 at the Hub Supper Club. The 2023 meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Betty Richter and seconded by Bonnie Alsleben. Treasurer Jan Lind's report showed a checking account balance of \$4,227.63 and a money market balance of \$63,400.22. The financial report also was approved following motions by Betty and Bonnie.

Lee Daly, secretary of the Big Swan Lake Improvement District (LID), gave updates on two pending projects. The first involves applying alum treatments to contain phosphorus imbedded in the lake bottom. The Mississippi-Brainerd One Watershed didn't approve project funding this year due the need to revise details of the application. Daly is optimistic we can gain approval next year, which would require the lake to cost-share 10% of approximately \$950,000 over two years.

The second project involves shoreline stabilization and other restoration improvements to reduce phosphorous loading from Schwanke Creek on the lake's west side. Long-term testing has shown it is the primary source of the nutrient that most impacts lake quality. Restoration would include replanting native vegetation and other engineered and non-engineered methods to reduce phosphorus runoff into the lake. Runoff from impervious surfaces would also be managed. The approximate \$20,000 engineering cost for studying this project is expected to be covered by state funding.

President Ganley updated association members on field erosion controls on Emerald Trail located on the northeast side of the lake south of 184th Street. Deja Anton from Todd County Soil and Water was unable to attend the meeting, but provided written details of runoff and erosion control practices that have already been done by Todd County and Burnhamville Township. She also outlined other steps with the help of state funding that Soil and Water would like to be taken on the field owned by Hollerman Dairy.

Owner Sean Hollerman and his wife, along with Todd County Sheriff Mike Allen, attended the meeting. Before addressing the Emerald Trail project, Hollerman expressed his concerns about what he called harassment by lake residents of his family and other employees working at and around their feedlot and adjacent fields along 184th Street. Incidents include impeding farm machinery, yelling and making obscene gestures. Hollerman said he has been reporting these increasingly dangerous incidents to the sheriff. One Big Swan owner reported that someone pulling farm machinery almost ran him off the road. Sheriff Allen said he receives dozens of calls from around Big Swan and other county lakes regarding interactions between farm workers and lake residents. The sheriff recommends people take photos and videos of dangerous incidents and send them to his office. He said if impeding equipment continues he will issue citations and possibly make arrests. Joan Ganley said it's not likely those at the meeting have been involved, but urged members to spread the word to other residents.

Regarding the Emerald Trail project along his field, Hollerman said Todd County Soil and Water would provide state cost-share funding of 75% to install terraces, runoff

basins and other field features, but his share would still amount to \$130,000. In addition, the projects on the land that is being planted in alfalfa this year would take up to four acres out of production, which his banker says would devalue the land too much. With lower dairy prices and higher costs, Hollerman says he wouldn't be able to pay for his share and asked if the association would be willing to help fund it. He was told the lake couldn't afford to do it either. Hollerman said between the ditch and road work done by the county and township and the alfalfa he has planted, he believes runoff problems have already been taken care of, at least for now. He favors waiting to see how those measures deal with the runoff problems until the field returns to corn and other row crops after four or five years. Soil and Water is concerned that state money not used now would be gone at a later date.

Both county Soil and Water and Hollerman asked for indications from the lake association about how residents feel about pursuing further actions to prevent more runoff from the field. Those present indicated it is up to the county to pursue further action with Hollerman.

Lee Daly reported that early April surveying of the lake for curly leaf pondweed turned up nothing. In addition to the early survey timing done at the DNR's direction, it appears that early curlyleaf pondweed growth all over the state has been suppressed by native weeds that never really totally died off due to limited ice and snow this winter. The DNR did issue the lake a permit to treat the same 24 acres that has been treated for several years. Another survey will be done in late June to determine if expanded treatment is warranted next year and following years.

Joan Ganley asked if anyone is willing to volunteer to organize the 4th of July boat parade. Without a volunteer the boat parade will not happen. Please reach out to Joan if you are interested in helping. The lake association is willing to donate prize money.

Lee Daly, on behalf of Al Leinen, wanted to let everyone know that walleye stocking is scheduled for this fall. The funds were already approved at the previous meetings so no vote was required this meeting.