

Lake Wylie Marine Commission
February 26, 2024 LWMC Meeting
Red Fez Shrine Club– Mecklenburg County



- Commissioners Present:** Chairman Ray Webber (York County)
Vice Chairman Brad Thomas (Gaston County)
Commissioner David Stonner (Mecklenburg County)
Commissioner Brian Yarmon (Mecklenburg County)
Commissioner Jerry Smith (Gaston County)
Commissioner Ray Williams (York County)
Commissioner Quay Williford (York County)
- Commissioner Absent:** Sam Perkins, Mecklenburg County
Dan Hartley, Gaston County
- Staff Present:** Neil Brennan, Executive Director; Chris Clark, Legal Counsel
Alice Flowers, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Minutes

Item 1 – Welcome

Chairman Webber called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and welcomed everyone present.

Item 2 – Approval of Minutes

Chairman Webber asked if any changes need to be made to the January 22, 2024 minutes. Commissioner Yarmon requested a revision of the meeting minutes from January 22 to accurately reflect his absence. Vice Chairman Thomas moved to adopt the January 22, 2024 minutes as amended. Commissioner Yarmon seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Item 3 – Approval of Agenda

Chairman Webber asked if any changes were needed to the February 26, 2024 agenda. Vice Chairman Thomas moved to adopt the February 26, 2024 agenda. Commissioner Yarmon seconded the motion. Discussion to move the South Point Access Area Kayak Launch Site presentation on the agenda by Mr. Brian Couture from item seven up to item six. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously as amended.

Item 4 – Public Comment

Mrs. Mary Williams, a resident of Lake Wylie, on behalf of the America’s Boating Club of the Catawba proposed a Vessel Safety Check (VSC) Community Project. The proposed joint action is to offer free vessel safety checks and boating safety education on Lake Wylie. Mrs. Williams suggested utilizing the power of our Civic Organizations, to include, LWMC, US Coast Guard Auxiliary and America’s Boating Club. The project's goal is to improve education and boating safety on Lake Wylie. She has reached out to the River Hills Club and they have agreed to host the event at Pier 88. The “Vessel Safety Check Days” event at River Hills Marina Club at Pier 88 on May 18, June 22, and August 24. The ABC Boating Course will be offered. If successful, additional groups will be contacted to participate going forward. The event is to be promoted on the LWMC website.

Item 5 - Stakeholders

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD)– Officer Joye mentioned the success of both the Mid Atlantic Boat Show and acknowledged Tow BoatUS for making the Christmas Parade the most organized. He reported that Officer Brian Estes will be joining the CMPD starting this summer. Permits have been cleared and

the Invitation for Bids has been released for construction of a new Boat House for the CMPD. No incidents to report.

Gaston County Police Department (GCPD) – Sergeant Knupp introduced Captain Matt Hensley who is replacing previously retired Captain Battle. The new sonar has been installed on the white boat. No incidents to report. An Invitation for Bids for sonar for the larger boat has been released. A collier replacement bid process is in progress as well. They hope to have the sonar installed on the larger boat before the summer. No incidents. They were able to attend the Boat Show one day.

York County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) – No report was given.

Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office – No report was given.

Tega Cay Police Department (TCPD) – No report was given.

Tega Cay Fire Department (TCFD) – No report was given.

Mecklenburg County ABC Board Law Enforcement (MCABCLE) – No report was given.

NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) – Sergeant Laton reported that the No-Wake Zone for the Joyner Marina is slated for a commission vote on April 18, 2024. Discussion and clarification on the danger/illegal buoys.

SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) – No report was given.

US Coast Guard-Sector NC (USCGSNC) – No report was given.

US Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCGA) – No report was given.

Mecklenburg County Land Use Environmental Service (MCLUES) – Mr. Matthew Phillips reported on behalf of Mr. Dave Ferguson. February is an off month for routine samplings. The next routine sampling will be March 14, 2024. Recently, they were on the lake conducting cove monitoring, particularly bathymetric testing. Mr. Phillips mentioned the cove monitoring report that will be coming out soon which will include Brown's Cove, among others.

Steele Creek Fire Department (SCFD) – Mr. Bob Fredrikson reported on behalf of Mr. Phil Brant that they have received the rescue litter and will start training in March and April. Stormwater Control measures were discussed.

Duke Energy – Mr. Kermit Taylor reported that the lake level was at 97.2 and no dredges were approved since the last meeting. The low in-flow protocol has returned to normal conditions.

Catawba Riverkeeper – Ms. Torres Molinari gave updates on three areas they are working on: 1) They will be working with the Water Watcher Network offering a series of meetings on different dates and in different watersheds offering presentations and open discussion on topics such as dam removal and policy; 2) Riversweep is in the planning phase and promotional materials should be available soon; 3) The South Fork Basin Protection and Restoration Plan is available on the Catawba Riverkeeper website at <https://www.catawbariverkeeper.org/southforkplan>.

Chairman Webber announced that going forward, the LWMC meetings in Gaston County will now be held at the Catawba Riverkeeper River Room at 102 Main Street, Suite 100, McAdenville, NC 28101. The Gaston County meeting dates are April 22, July 22, and October 28.

TowBoatUS – Mr. Logan Thomas reported that they responded to 23 routine tows and three salvages and sunken vessels. The Boat Show was a success and SPLASH was a big hit. They have four boats in the water and available if needed.

Item 6 – South Point Access Area Kayak Launch Site. In the absence of Mr. Brian Couture, Mr. Kermit Taylor (both from Duke Energy) briefed the Commissioners on the South Point Access Area Kaya Launch Site. Duke Energy Carolinas proposes to upgrade the South Point Access Area to enhance public recreation opportunities on Lake Wylie in Gaston County NC. For water safety measures, their plan is to use double rows of the high-level silt fencing and other storm water control measures. LWMC is to work with City Ordinances to establish a policy requiring the use of double-row, high-level slit fencing on all construction projects to preserve the beauty of the lake.

Item 7 – Lyngbya on Lake Wylie – Dr. Brett Hartis with Duke Energy gave a PowerPoint presentation on the effects of Lyngbya and briefly spoke about Hydrilla both being invasive species. Duke Energy plans to actively survey the lakes for early prevention as early and often as possible. The recommendation is to commit to a ten-year treatment plan in areas of most invasive species. Lyngbya is more difficult to control than some of the other invasive species, and there are not a lot of options to control it. The best management options are prevention and early detection. There is a small window of time to go after Lyngbya to get control of it, and the cost starts at around \$500 per acre, \$9,000 - \$10,000 for treatment. Currently, Lyngbya is isolated in one small spot on Lake Wylie above the 74 Bridge. Eel grass is concerning and is being watched; however, is not on Lake Wylie. Lyngbya and Eel grass are not on the invasive species list. Duke Energy recommends committing to 3-to-4-year treatment plan. More information about Lyngbya and Hydrilla can be found on their website at <https://www.duke-energy.com/community/lakes/services/nuisance-aquatic-plants>. Executive Director Brennan advised moving ahead to allocate up to \$20,000 for the treatment of Lyngbya in the area that they are currently aware of on Lake Wylie. Alligator weed issue was discussed as well as the use of thrifts in the affected areas. Chairman Webber suggested making the counties aware that LWMC may need to request additional funds to help offset the cost for additional treatment of Lyngbya on Lake Wylie. Place the Duke Energy Aquatic Plants link on the website. Commissioner Yarmon moved to authorize Executive Director Brennan or his sub-committee to spend up to \$20,000 to address the Lyngbya problem on Lake Wylie based on the quotes they receive from the contractors. Vice Chairman Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Item 8 – Charter Boat and Rental Boat Regulation – Chairman Webber and Executive Director Brennan attended the York County Board of Commissioners meeting, during which Executive Director Brennan presented the Charter Boat and Rental Boat Regulation draft proposal to the County Commissioners. They are scheduled to present the draft to Mecklenburg County Board Commissioners next month, followed by Gaston County Board of Commissioners in April. The projected timeline includes briefing the County Commissioners on 4/9, scheduling the public comments notifications (10 days prior), and targeting to have it in place by the end of April.

Item 9 – Buoys and Buoy Maintenance Update – Mr. Logan reported that since the last meeting the buoys issues have been corrected and they are back to normal on the water. The only issue is the construction site near the Wilkson bridge and Dale's Boat Ramp. The No-wake buoys are missing, danger buoys and channel markers are all over and out of place at the site. Mr. Brennan recalled coordinating with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission regarding buoys and channel markers. Chairman Webber will share the plan with Mr. Logan to assess what is the responsibility of LWMC and what the NCWRC oversees. The Buoy Committee will meet to review the plan to determine if it is necessary to engage in additional communication with NCWRC to reevaluate the current plan considering the buoy situation in the impacted area.

Item 10– Buoy Tracking Follow up – No report was given.

Item 11 – Clean Marinas – Commissioner Williford submitted documentation to Chairman Webber that was provided to the Commissioners. Commissioner Williford also reported that all documentation and inspections have been completed for the four areas. However, there may be updates from Pier 88.

Item 12 – No-Wake Zone – Executive Director Brennan reported meeting folks at the Mid-Atlantic Boat Show that suggested that additional No-Wake Zones might be appropriate to extend one at Sadler Island. Executive Director Brennan recommended that the LWMC apply to the NCWRC to extend the No-Wake Zone to the south end of the channel. Vice Chairman Thomas moved to accept Executive Director Brennan's recommendation.

Commissioner Yarmon seconded the motion. Eight members voted in favor of the motion and one abstained from voting on the motion, which was then approved. Executive Director Brennan suggested that the Commissioners should assess Sunset Island for the placement of safety buoys on both the north and south sides of the island in the future.

Item 13 – Treasurer’s Report – The year-to-date budget is attached for detailed information.

Item 14 - Chairman’s Report - No report.

Item 15 – Executive Director’s Report – February 2024

Executive Director Neil Brennan reported on the following items:

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Application

The Belmont Rowing Club (BRC) has reviewed the application. The City of Belmont is now reviewing the application before sending it to Duke Energy for eventual transfer to FERC.

Lake Norman Regulations

Chairman Webber and I attended the LNMC briefing to marina owners regarding their charter boat and rental boat regulations. The LWMC will host a similar session once our regulation is enacted.

Lyngbya

Chairman Webber and I attended the Lake Norman community meeting regarding the infestation of Lyngbya in Lake Norman. Dr. Brett Hartis explained the need to eradicate this invasive species and presented similar presentation.

Joyner’s Marina No-wake Zone (NWZ) Update

Commissioner Yarmon recommended expanding the NWZ at the Joyner’s Marina and including a danger buoy at a shoal area inside the NWZ. I passed his recommendation to the NWZ coordinator at the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for consideration in the NWZ request the LWMC previously submitted.

No-wake Zones (NWZ)

The unofficial word is the NWZ at Joyner’s Marina has been approved.

Item 16 - Administrator’s Report – During her final meeting, Ms. Flowers introduced Ms. Lenessa Hawkins as her successor in providing support to the LWMC, and introduced Ms. Michelle Nance, who will be assisting with the transition.

Item 17 - Public Relations – Any concerns related to the website should be emailed to Secretary Treasurer Perkins and include Chairman Webber in the copy. Chairman Webber warned the audience to stay alert regarding calls requesting Apple Pay cards in his name, it is a scam.

Mr. Mark Sigmon introduced himself as the Captain & Special Operations for Gaston County Emergency Services (GCES). He mentioned that the GCES boats have water tech paramedics and are ready to assist with water-related emergencies in the Lake Wylie Area. Currently, one boat is on Lake Wyle, and they are planning to add a second boat later this year. Mr. Sigmon will become a stakeholder of LWMC.

Item 19 – Announcements: Commissioner Smith announced that he will be sending out information about updating Lake Wylie maps.

Item 20 – Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.