



- 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
Lenessa E. Hawkins, Administrator

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 February 26, 2024 minutes. Vice Chairman Thomas moved to adopt the February 26, 2024 minutes as presented. Commissioner Smith 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 or additions were needed to the March 25, 2024 agenda. Vice Chairman Thomas moved to adopt the March 25, 2024 agenda. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously as amended.

Item 4 – Public Comment

Item 5 - Stakeholders

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) – Lake Unit - Officer Joye reported that they conducted regular operations. However, there was an extensive search for a missing person out by the sandbar for at least five days until it was determined the individual went into the water. The body was subsequently recovered. Officer Joye recognized Steele Creek FD for lending assistance with the recovery efforts. No foul play was discovered. Otherwise, it is warm, boats are out, and things are calm so far.

Gaston County Police Department (GCPD) –No report

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 over the last month they had the opportunity to meet with SCDNR to discuss 2023 boating statistics and trends observed in boating incidents. Also, they were interviewed by station WBGE Channel 3 to talk about boating safety in severe weather and other boating emergencies.

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) – Officer Mark Wilson reported that he would be the new representative. Captain Troy Glendye is retiring in June and his replacement will not be residing in the area. Therefore, Mr. Wilson will be representing the behalf of both officers. The Auxiliary has a blitz going on conducting inspections of vessels at rental places weekly at the boat docks on Lake Wylie as well as on Lake Norman. The USCG boating safety education classes are being offered every fourth Saturday at Cabela's now through September. The cost may be \$35.

Mecklenburg County Land Use Environmental Service (MCLUES) – Stormwater Services - Water Quality /Mr. Dave Ferguson reported they were on the lake March 14th, just a couple of days after the 1 ½ vent was opened on the 9th and 10th, which was why the metric was up to 98. This exceeded the target of 97. Experienced a little more water therefore a little more bacteria and turbidity running through the system. Southfork is the only one running in the red, which is common and expected. Everything else is looking okay but as water warms up it is expected numbers will increase. As the thunderstorms come on, they will watch for hot spots. They will not sample in April but will start summer bacteria sampling in May, adding additional sites. They will continue to take bacteria sampling every month. The Cove Monitoring Report is being reviewed and refined. It will describe purpose, scope and methodology as well as future expectations.

Steele Creek Fire Department (SCFD) –Mr. Phil Bryant stated that there was no news other than the drowning event at the sandbar.

Duke Energy – Lake Services Group -Mr. Kermit Taylor reported that the lake level was at 98.0 this afternoon. No drought conditions exist, and no dredges were approved since the last meeting.

Commissioner Hartley asked Tammy Styer to provide feedback on Gaston County correspondence to alert residents of a possible change in flood zone. Gaston County proactively distributed letters to residents residing near/on Lake Wylie informing them that they may or may not be in the floodplain. The letters have caused a lot of concern for people who live on the lake. In response to calls, a dam breaking is offered as to why these changes are occurring. FEMA now requires you to prove that you do not have any property located where Duke does not permit you to build. Ms. Styer stated that flood insurance is not cheap. She stated she spoke with a Duke's Dam Safety Engineer. FEMA does not consult with Duke when conducting their modeling. Ms. Styer stated that this is the first time she has heard that is based on a dam breaking. She also stated they have not been contacted by FEMA, any County or anyone else. As part of the FERC, Duke Energy is required as part of their dam safety, to conduct scenarios, prepare inundation maps, and conduct meetings with Counties. She stated historically, proposed changes are not based on inundation mapping. She offered to look at it and requested she be forwarded contact information.

Catawba Riverkeeper – Ms. Molinari offered a brief update on Alligator weed thrips. They expected to be able to determine how thrips consume the weed and reproduce, and they partnered with Duke to place them on the Alligator weed. The first phase did not go well. The thrips have been brought back to the Catawba Riverkeeper lab to be studied.

TowBoatUS – Mr. Logan Thomas reported that they responded to 31 routine tows, with two salvages, one dock side sinker and one surf boat that ended up on the rocks. Numbers are ramping up.

Item 6 – Update on the FERC Application for the City of Belmont Park – City of Belmont has submitted application for a City Park on Lake Wylie to Duke Energy last Friday. This is the last step before it goes to FERC. Ms. Brooke Hearnese, who is with the managing engineering firm, is tracking that process. Park will be the site for rowing dock for the Belmont Rowing Center. We offered to put a government dock alongside that rowing dock to house the Gaston County Sheriff boat and City of Belmont Fire boat. \$125K was set aside for the boathouse. The Commission will not own the boat house but will turn the funds over to the parties once the FERC permit is approved and the plans for the boathouse has been approved.

Item 7 – Lyngbya Update – Along the lines of what Lake Norman is doing, the Commission has engaged with Aqua Services for the applications to start at the end of April over approximately 5 acres. There will be six treatments about a month apart. The Commission will fund the applications this year. A contract has been executed with Aqua Services.

Item 8 – Charter Boat and Rental Boat Regulation – Chairman Webber and Executive Director Brennan made presentations to Mecklenburg County and established a subcommittee to roll it out. The Commission still has to make a presentation to Gaston County next month. The Commission will still be within the 10-day notice to conduct public hearing for consideration on the April agenda. These actions were prompted by safety concerns from others who have dealt with rental vessels as well as from law enforcement.

Item 9 – Buoys and Buoy Maintenance Update – Mr. Thomas Logan reported that Crowder Creek buoys have been installed and will get the ones over at Joyner’s Marina installed. An old buoy was found but have no idea where it came from. Chairman Webber suggested the Commission use stickers on the buoys. Former Chairman Hanks stated that stickers do not stick. He suggested branding or carving a number onto the buoy so that you can identify them later. You can start numbering new buoys as they are installed.

Item 10– Buoy Tracking Follow up – Question was asked about the number of buoys the Commission is responsible for. Mr. Logan stated that he would get that data. Question was raised about the buoys at I- 85. They are one short on the Belmont-Mt Holly side. Question regarding missing buoys on SC side near River Hills. Mr. Logan will check and let the Commission know.

Item 11 – Clean Marinas – Commissioner Williford Quay four of five marinas have completed their application. There is one application still under review. Two more Clean Marina Banners are needed.

Item 12 – No-Wake Zone – Executive Director Brennan two applications have been prepared and submitted He stated times have changed and the Commission has applied to extend a no wake zone on the western channel of Sadler Island. The other application for Sunset Island was based on Charlotte Mecklenburg Police and citizen feedback from the boat show. It is expected to take some time before the application would be processed and approved when there is more traffic on the water for NCWRC determination of need at the sites. At Joyner’s Marina, formerly Pier 49, NWZ buoys recommended by the NCWRC investigators can be installed.

Item 13 – Treasurer’s Report – The year-to-date budget is attached for detailed information. Treasurer Perkins reported that everything looks good. There is about \$75,000 in the checking account presently. This is adequate to cover expenses. The Commission is waiting to receive about \$6,200 more from York County. Everything is going on according to the budget. There has been a proposal to move cash balance amounts in particular from an old Truist checking account to the NCCMT for a total \$32K with additional \$122 per month generating additional interest income. Commissioner Thomas moved to transfer and close the account. Commissioner Stoner seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Item 14 - Chairman's Report - The Chamber event was well attended. Chairman Webber attended both of the Catawba-Wateree Shoreline Management Plan meetings. A Dredging discussion will be placed on the agenda. Lake Norman Marine Commissioners met with the Lake Wylie Marine Commissioners to discuss the Charter Boat and Rental Vessel Regulation to ensure it aligns with Duke's Shoreline Management Guidelines. Aqua Services contract was signed. Gaston County's new process wanted to know what Lake Wylie Marine Commission does and how many Gaston County residents are served by the Commission. On April 14th a local radio station wants to interview the Commission about what it does. When aired, the link will be on the website. There has been a request for FAQs on the website.

Item 15 – Executive Director's Report – February 2024

Executive Director Neil Brennan reported on the following items:

Gaston County Request

Declared population served, budget amount and amount requested.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Application

The City of Belmont has submitted the application for a city park in Belmont on Lake Wylie to Duke Energy for further submission to FERC. The park is to be the site for a rowing dock for the Belmont Rowing Center and a government dock to house the Gaston County police boat and the Belmont City fire boat.

Lake Wylie Marine Commission Charter Boat and Vessel Rental Regulation

Chairman Webber and I met with Duke officials to ensure the proposed regulation is consistent with Duke's Shoreline Management Guidelines. The final county brief to the Gaston County Board of County Commissioners is scheduled for April 9th. If Gaston County officials have no further input, the required public hearing for the new regulation will be scheduled to occur at our April meeting. The regulation would then go into effect in May.

Lyngbya

The LWMC has contracted Aqua Services to treat the Lyngbya areas in Lake Wylie. Aqua Services is the company treating Lake Gaston and Lake Norman to contain the Lyngbya. The application of the herbicides is scheduled to begin in mid-April. Dr Brett Hartie advises that if treatments are implemented early (April or before), then biomass reduction/ absence will be the primary indicator of a successful program. This reduction can be confirmed by surveys, and his office can help with those surveys. In reactive treatments, treatment efficacy is much more difficult to assess, as dead filaments will still be present after a treatment and may look no better (or worse) than prior to the treatment. With the early season treatments that are proposed, this should not be an issue as biomass will not have time to accumulate prior to the treatment.

No-wake Zones (NWZ)

The NWZ at Joyner's Matina has been approved; the buoys can be installed now. Applications to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to extend the NWZ at the east side of Sadler Island and to establish a NWZ at Sunset Island have been submitted. NCWRC has advised that these areas will be assessed later in the season when there is increased boating traffic in both areas.

Item 16 - Administrator's Report – Administrator asked regarding applying for a BOA credit card. Commissioner Perkins moved to approve applying for the credit card. Commissioner Thomas seconded. Discussion regarding limiting the amount per transaction. Ms. Strosser will propose the limit and the per transaction amount to the Commission. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Item 17 - Public Relations – Commissioner Perkins stated that there is a need for additional content for the website additions: such as, charter boat regulations (when approved) and Lyngbya education. Update was made on the website to change the meeting site to Catawba Riverkeeper offices. The open rate has improved by moving to an early morning weekday. Chairman Webber has contacted a small local pro fisherman group with a southeastern presence to consider being a stakeholder.

Item 19 – Announcements: The Gaston County location for meetings will be in McAdenville at the River Room at the Catawba Riverkeeper Offices.

Item 20 – Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.