MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LAKE ANGELUS CITY COUNCIL

AUGUST 9, 2012

Present: Mayor, Lee McNew; Councilmembers Jon Cabot, David Haines and Dan Jenaras; Attorney, Dan Christ; Environmental Board Chair, Linda Daniels; Treasurer, Julie Frakes; Clerk, Rosalie Lake
Absent: Councilmember, Chuck Poploskie
Visitors: Chris Cortez, Anne Cusmano, Hugh Miller, Karl Storrie, Bob Bailey (by phone)

Mayor McNew opened the meeting at 7PM with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Minutes of the meeting of July 10, 2012 were approved as corrected.

Councilmember Cabot spoke on behalf of the Environmental Board regarding the weed situation in the Lake. He noted that there was unanimous agreement that an ongoing plan needs to be developed. The immediate question is what to do now. The recommendation of the Environmental Board is to harvest the weeds this month to remove the biomass from the Lake and improve recreational activity and, hopefully, minimize growth next year. Mrs. Daniels explained that when the weeds die they will give off phosphorous which could create an algae bloom. Unusual weed growth has occurred for lots of reasons, zebra mussels clarifying the water, lack of a winter freeze, lack of moisture and evaporation creating low lake levels, sunlight penetrating more deeply into the Lake, hot weather and warm water temperature.

Bob Bailey had researched harvesting for the Environmental Board. He indicated that it would require four vessels on the Lake, two harvesters, one transporter to collect the weeds harvested, and one other boat to monitor clean-up. Two of these boats would have outboard motors and two would have a phone number printed on the side. A place to launch these boats will be needed as well as a place to off load the harvested weeds into a dump truck. The weed material will be dumped on City property west of the tennis courts and will be composted there. There should be minimal odor from the compost.

Mayor McNew asked how many Environmental Board members attended the meeting. Mrs. Daniels thought ten and Dr. Cabot indicated that the vote to pursue harvesting was unanimous. Dr. Cabot indicated that the big debate surrounds whether to spend the $50,000 for harvesting this late in the season. The advice has been not to let the season go by without doing something. Mr. Storrie felt that the Council needs to take action in response to the concerns of the citizens. Treasurer, Julie Frakes explained some of the City’s budget constraints since the financial downturn. The City has run a deficit budget for the last few years. Monies that the City holds in its budget from the State are designated for specific items such as maintaining roads, police training and other things. There presently is $110,000 in the Environmental budget that has come from the Taubman consent judgment payments over the last 15 years. Those payments concluded this year. Chris Cortez acknowledged that most residents do not know about the financial position of the City. If we start the weed harvesting now, special assessments will probably come. People need to know to expect this. Dr. Cabot noted that the City has the money for this year and maybe for next year. Then assessment may be needed to continue. Dr. Haines felt a special assessment would be worth it to keep the lake usable. People want a weed
Mr. Storrie did not wish to be assessed for what he feels he already pays for. He felt that the budget needs to be adjusted so as not to require a special assessment. Dr. Cabot noted that the amount needed will be $50,000 to $60,000 a year and it has to come from somewhere. Mr. Christ was asked whether a special assessment was better than using General Fund monies. The millage would have to be increased or a dedicated millage would need to be applied to provide monies in the General Fund. A special assessment would require a petition, public hearings and a vote of the Council. Mrs. Frakes mentioned again that the Taubman money has been the sole source of funds for the Environmental budget for the fifteen year term of the consent judgment, and those payments are no longer coming into the budget.

Several emails had been received by the Clerk from residents. She quoted from them and submitted them to the Council.

Dr. Cabot proposed a motion to: Approve the expenditure of $53,000 to harvest weeds this year; Approve dumping of harvested weeds on City property; Approve the launching of four vessels onto the Lake acknowledging that they are in violation of Lake rules.

Several questions were posed to Bob Bailey by telephone as he was unable to attend the meeting. How were the 120 acres to be harvested determined? Mr. Bailey and representatives from the harvesting company inspected the Lake by boat, marking areas on a map, then used the Google Earth GIS photo. Is the Google Earth map something that can be monitored? Yes. A tracking system has been provided that can be accessed through the Internet to monitor the harvesting boats via GPS tracking. Mr. Christ felt that the map should be an Exhibit part of the contract. How close does the harvesting come to the shore? Harvesting can be done in one foot of water depth, but the parameters that have been set up are from the end of docks. Is there a chance that the work will exceed $52,000? Will anything extra be an additional charge to the City? No. Individual property owners could request bottom clean-up at the shoreline for an additional charge to them.

Mr. Christ was concerned about the designation of 120 acres and felt that something should be in the contract that insures that the work is not limited to 120 acres if, in fact, more area needs to be harvested. He felt that the contract needed to reflect that the contractors will remove all weeds over 6 feet no matter what the acreage is. He proposed additional language to Dr. Cabot’s motion that the contract shall read: ‘HLWC will be harvesting the Lake surface, approximately, but not limited to, 120 acres of area to a maximum depth of 6 feet on Lake Angelus as determined during our onsite inspection.’

Councilmember Jenaras seconded the motion proposed by Dr. Cabot with the additional language to be included in the contract. Motion carried unanimously.

Mike and Linda Daniels offered their property for off loading the weeds into the dump truck. The Kresge property was suggested and the Kresges will be contacted. Dr. Haines will contact
Forrest Milzow about using his property. There are difficulties with all of these sites due to the narrow roadways and shared driveways. Anne Cusmano felt that money should be set aside for the repair of whatever site(s) may be used for the removal and composting of weeds. Dr. Cabot suggested having the contractor tour the Lake to choose sites for removing weed refuse. Chris Cortez felt that residents need a message about this work to understand what will be going on and that this is a “new era” for the Lake as it is not a one-time thing. All the questions and issues that have been discussed should be touched upon in such a communication.

There being no further discussion and no other agenda items, Councilmember Cabot moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40. Councilmember Haines seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved: Respectfully submitted,

Lee McNew, Mayor Rosalie Lake, Clerk