

Otsego Lake Association Annual Meeting
June 16, 2007 - Thayer Farm

The meeting was called to order by OLA President, Paul Lord. Paul introduced in McIntyre, Otsego Lake Water Shed Manager who had been invited to update us on lakeside septic system inspections and to discuss the creation of a proposed sewer district. Win then introduced Tim Wales of Wales Engineering who has been consulting on the proposed district.

Win began with a review of the septic inspections. He informed us that the Watershed Committee is beginning its third year of septic inspections. To date, 182 of 337 systems have been inspected. Of these, 74 have passed the inspection and 108 have failed. Currently 45 systems have been repaired, 28 have had their design approved, 23 are in process, 10 are in discussion, and 2 have made no response. Win noted that the cooperation from property owners has been extraordinary.

Win then moved on to a discussion of the sewer project. He briefly alluded to the history of the idea of a sewer system for the lake. This previously had not been considered feasible because of expense (probably in the 10 to 20 million dollar range), the fact that the sewage plant in Cooperstown is maxed out in the summer, and the unavailability of grant money at the time.

The current project may be possible in that the proposed district would extend from the Glimmerglass Condos at 5 mile point to Springfield Town line past the Hickory Grove Inn. This area contains 27% of all the cottages on Otsego Lake and had some 50 septic failures. Win said that the owners of the Hickory Grove Inn were amenable to locating the system on their property. He also informed us that he has talked to the state and that when there are more than 5 septic systems sharing a system, a legal entity must be created. There also would have to be DEC involvement and regular inspections.

A public information session was held in May in conjunction with the Otsego Town Board. Win said that the overall sense was that people were in favor of the sewer district. He also said that the response to a flyer that was sent out was 3 to 1 in favor of the district. The first formal step in this process has been taken with the commissioning of an engineering study. (Wales Engineering is in the process of doing this study.) Win addressed the concern that a public sewer system might promote development, and said that this was not likely because the system would only serve homes approximately 700 ft. from the lake.

Win discussed the benefits of the proposed system. Primarily, it would protect Otsego Lake as a source of drinking water. 40% of Otsego residents draw

water from the lake. In having one system instead of 90, the system would be “state of the art”, operated by a licensed operator, checked regularly, and discharge would be monitored by the state.

Costs for the system would include a hook-up cost and annual costs for debt reduction, operation, and maintenance. The positives to this would be: costs could be spread out over time, there would be very little disturbance to property, and there would be an increase in property value. A cost feasibility study has estimated about a 2 million dollar price tag. Initially 60-70 camps would be involved, but there would be a capacity to handle 90. Win stressed that this would not be a cost saving project but rather an improvement project whose costs could be spread out over time. He estimated that hook-up would cost around \$5000 per camp and that the annual debt reduction payment would depend on financing and interest rate. A subsidized interest rate is being applied for which would probably make payments in the \$1000- \$1500 range. Win also noted that because this was a municipal project, the potential for grant money would be higher. The town board has also approved the application for financing of the project.

Win assured the group that replacement systems would not be required to come into the system, but he advised people whose designs had been approved to wait to convert their individual systems until more financial information would be available (probably in August or September).

Tim Wales then took the floor to discuss the “nuts and bolts” of the system. He said that they were still in the preliminary planning stages and that there were basically two major areas of consideration – collection and treatment. As far as collection goes, a way has to be identified to get waste water to the Hickory Grove. Each home will have a small tank and pump which will pump waste to a force main on Rte 80. Tim said that different options were being studied and that an archeological study will also be necessary before plans can be finalized. As far as treatment goes, percolation and soil testing have been done. A restricting subsurface sand filtering system will probably be the best option. It would also remove phosphorous and disinfect waste water. Discharge can either go to the subsurface (leech field) or be treated to such a standard that it could be discharged into the lake or the neighboring Six Mile Stream. Tim said that he will continue to look at other possible sites and other treatment options from a cost perspective. Questions were then entertained from the floor.

Gerry Murello, Assistant Resident Engineer with the Dept. of Transportation, was then introduced to present the second part of our program on “Right of Way” issues. Gerry discussed how issues usually arise from lack of knowledge. He stressed that he would speak in generalities since each property had its own specifics which could only be discussed on an individual basis. Gerry stated that anything done in the right of way needs a permit. DOT needs to review regarding: 1) state benefit – safety of the travel way and

structural integrity of the road, 2) owner benefit – maintenance and longer design life with professional review and engineer stamp of approval. Gerry stressed that his focus was on partnering with homeowners and working together to come up with reasonable solutions while protecting investments.

Gerry also shared that Rte. 80 is often a focus of his work. With 160 years of history, Rte. 80 has many idiosyncrasies. It has been surveyed with variations between 66 ft and 49.5 ft widths. It also had the greatest number of failures during last year's flooding. Gerry discussed the proposed sewer district in that it will have to be approved by the DOT. (Only public utilities are permitted in the right of way.) Gerry then answered questions from the floor and agreed along with Win and Tim to stay after the business meeting for further discussion.

Business: Paul Lord thanked the speakers and called for a motion to accept the minutes from last June's annual meeting. The minutes were unanimously accepted as printed. The treasurer's report was also unanimously approved as presented. Our balance on hand as of 5/31/07 was \$6273.07. We began the year (June '06) with a balance of \$9725.29, had total receipts of \$9319.70, and total disbursements of \$12,771.92. The slate of officers was presented. Paul Lord – President, Mary Clarke – Director Town of Springfield, Scottie Baker – Director Town of Otsego, Kai Mebust – Director Village of Cooperstown and Burr Southworth – Director Town of Middlefield. The secretary, Burr Southworth, made a motion to cast one ballot for acceptance of the slate. This was passed as moved.

Paul showed the membership the draft of the 24 page Smart Steps for Otsego Lake brochure. He described the publication's goal to help us to better live with minimum impact on our lake. Smart Steps should be ready for distribution around July 1. Paul also acknowledged OCCA's contribution to the publication and reminded the group that our speaker, Win McIntyre, is currently president of OCCA.

Paul also noted that we had partnered with another community group on another major project this year. He introduced Elaine Bresee and Suzy Kingsley from the Lake and Valley Garden Club who have worked with OLA in developing the buffer strip at Lake Front Park in the Village of Cooperstown. Paul also cited contributions by BOCES and the boy scouts in executing this project. Paul spoke about how buffer strips protect shorelines and discussed how this was an on going project which will require a major fund raising effort to complete.

Scottie Baker reminded members that OLA will be represented at the Otsego Lake Festival on July 14. We will be spotlighting the buffer strip project and will need volunteers. Scottie showed the 2007 Festival Poster which sold at the meeting for \$20 (that day only \$10 of which went to the Festival and \$10 to

OLA) A drawing was held for a subscription to Cabin Life magazine, and our speakers entertained additional questions prior to adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Mickie Richtsmeier