

Lake Zoar Authority

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Member Towns

Monroe-Newtown-Oxford-Southbury

The regular meeting of the Lake Zoar Authority was held on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 7:00 pm at the Oxford Town Hall.

Commissioners Present:

Barbara McWilliams
Thelma Chen
John Downs
James Galarneau
Tim Glover
Tony Fischetti
Bruce Lafky
Jerry Kozera
John Morin
Lesley Pires
Dick Speer
Avi Veeraghav

Absent:

Call to Order

Chairwoman Barbara McWilliams called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Secretary's Report:

A motion to accept the minutes from the March 4, 2025 meeting was made by Tony Fischetti; seconded by Bruce Lafky; the motion was passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

12 residents from Monroe, Newtown, Oxford, and Southbury were in attendance.

Aiden O'Driscoll from Monroe has volunteered to be a life jacket attendant for the life jacket stand.

Dan O'Donnell of Newtown spoke on behalf of the Lake Zoar Homeowners Rights Association (LZHRA). The organization has submitted a letter to FERC dated March 13, 2025 expressing concerns about misleading information published by FirstLight Power regarding its rights and responsibilities related to the Lake Zoar community. The LZHRA requests that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) clarify FirstLight's license limitations, postpone approval of the Shoreline Management Plan, and extend the public comment period due to conflicting information about land ownership and flowage rights.

The LZHRA disputes claims by FirstLight that it owns most of the land surrounding Lake Zoar and has flowage rights on land owned by private landowners. The association provides evidence from town records showing FirstLight's ownership is far more limited than indicated. They also argue that FirstLight's communications to landowners have been misleading, suggesting that FirstLight has rights to control activities and charge fees for the shoreline.

The LZHRA requests that FERC ensure FirstLight corrects the misinformation, remove it from its website, and notify all stakeholders affected by these inaccuracies. They also seek an extension of the comment period until 90 days after the corrections are made.

The LZHRA requests the support of the LZA in formal writing.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Avi Veeraraghav reported current treasury balances with cash on hand equaling \$81,530.29. Lakeside Marina invoices were paid last week. A motion to pass the treasurer's report was made by Dick Speer, seconded by John Downs, the motion was passed unanimously.

Marine Patrol Report:

Marine Patrol Coordinator Dan Semosky reported he is scheduling the four member towns for patrol shifts on the lake this season. Letters will be sent to the towns encouraging equal participation.

Publicity/ Public Awareness:

Avi Veeraraghav reported he is still looking for volunteers interested in manning the life jacket stands.

James Galarneau reported the info box has been timely managed and the Facebook page has been consistently updated.

Water Quality

Weed Treatment Committee:

Tony Fischetti reported he attended a Nuisance Aquatic Species Monitoring Plan meeting held by FirstLight on March 22, 2025 with local authorities. Pond and Lake was also in attendance. Tony reported that the three main invasive weeds to treat on Lake Zoar are curly-leaf pondweed (most predominant), milfoil, and water chestnuts. Curly-leaf pondweed should be treated in April, and milfoil towards the end of June or beginning of July. Hydrilla has not been identified in Lake Zoar but it has been identified closely in Lake Lillinonah. The Shepaug dam should be surveyed periodically to monitor the risk of invasion into Lake Zoar.

In coordination with the LZA's weed treatment plan, curly-leaf pondweed will be treated April 24 and 25, with a rain date for the first week of May. The milfoil will be studied this year and an alteration to the plan can be considered next season.

Water Quality Monitoring Committee:

Tim Glover reported he and John will be meeting with Dr. Wong's Lab at WCSU to discuss this season's Water Quality Monitoring Program for microcystin testing.

Boats and Motors Report:

Dick Speer reported that there are three missing buoys. Dick will deliver new parts and materials to replace the buoys to North East Aquatic Services. Other buoys require repairs to plugs, cracks, and reflective tape. The total cost is \$700. A motion to approve the repairs for approximately \$700 was made by John Morin, seconded by James Galarneau, the motion was passed unanimously.

Grants:

None.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business:

Chairperson Barbara McWilliams reported that revisions were made to the AIS fee collection system through Public Act No. 23-154. Beginning October 1, 2024, the AIS Stamp fee (previously \$20) is no longer attached to Connecticut vessel registrations. Persons operating a registered vessel on inland waters of Connecticut will need to purchase an Individual AIS Stamp (\$7, printed on Sportsmen Conservation License as a privilege) or a Vessel AIS decal (\$25 + \$5 processing fee, which covers any operator of the vessel) through the Online Sportsmen Licensing system. Out-of-state residents are also required to purchase their AIS Stamp through the Online Sportsmen Licensing system. The stamp and decal are valid for one calendar year.

A motion to approve an LZA letter of support for the Lake Zoar Home Owners Rights Association's request for oversight by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in regards to FirstLight's licensing activities and planned Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) modifications, was made by Barbara McWilliams, seconded by John Morin, the motion was passed unanimously.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by John Morin, seconded by Tony Fischetti, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned 8:54pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lesley Pires
Secretary

The minutes are not considered official until approved at the next regular meeting of the Lake Zoar Authority to be held on Tuesday May 6, 2025 at 7:00 pm at the Southbury Town Hall.