

LITC Property Owners Asso. Winter 2010 Newsletter

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Board Officers	Board Members	Committee Chairs
President: Charles Schaffer	Ron Ferrara	Social: Pat McGonigle & Sue Ferrara
V. President: Michael Foran	Ann Kahwaty	Greenspace: Mary Henzi
Treasurer: Charles Schaffer	Vance Cullen	
Secretary: Stacey Guthrie		
Ass't Treasurer: Tony Costa		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The results of the **election** are as follows: Ann Kahwaty and Tony Costa are new BOD members and Stacey Guthrie has been re-elected. The budget passed with no increase in dues deemed necessary for this next year.

Addition to the Rules and Regulations, under Property #14: As of February 12, 2010, all **detached outbuildings, garages sheds** or other such structures must be constructed according to the current LITC building requirements found in the LITC Declaration, Bylaws, and Rules and Regulations. No detached structure, as described above, may exceed one story in height, nor have horizontal dimensions greater than thirty (30) feet on any side (2-1/2 car garage size). Exceptions to this regulations are subject to BOD approval through the current appeal procedure. Any secondary structure as defined above, must be located on the same lot as the primary original homestead dwelling or, in the alternative, must be located on an adjacent lot that has been combined with the homestead lot.

The Rule and Regulation has been adopted by the Board of Directors and reviewed by our attorney. It will become effective on February 12, 2010. Any member with questions or concerns should contact the clubhouse office no later than February 11, 2010.

Now that the season is here, please remember there is **no parking on LITC roads** in winter. This permits the plows to clean the roads with no interference.

If you haven't had a chance to **clean out your culverts** this fall, please make the effort to do so as soon as the weather permits. Keeping them clean enable the runoff

of snow melt to stay in the ditch and not flood onto the road. This helps preserve our road surfaces and keeps the roads safer.

For those of you who ride ATVs or Snowmobiles, please review the following rules which were adopted last year.

* Only members, tenants and guests occupying the home of a member of LITC may use a snowmobile/ATV in the community and then use shall be subject to the Rules and Regulations of Lake in the Clouds Property Owners Association.

* All provisions of the Pennsylvania State “Snowmobile Law”, its Definitions, Registration, Operations, Equipment and miscellaneous requirements, shall be observed in their entirety, by any and all owners and operators of a snowmobile in the community.

-It is the responsibility of the owner and operator of a snowmobile/ATV in the Community to make him/herself aware of the Pennsylvania “Snowmobile Law”, and to abide by its provisions.

-It is the responsibility of the Member of the Association to make his/her guests and tenants aware of these Rules and Regulations regarding snowmobile/ATV operation in the community.

* The Lake in the Clouds Recreational Vehicle Registration Form must be completed and on file in the community office. Lot numbers at least three inches in height must be displayed on both sides of the vehicle.

* Riding of snowmobiles and ATVs is limited to the hours between 2 pm to 10 pm from Sunday through Thursday, and 2 pm to 11 pm on Friday and Saturday, or such other periods that may be authorized by the Association.

* The use of snowmobile/ATVs is permitted for utilitarian use on the lakes at any time with recognition of slow speeds and intended purposes. Utilitarian is described as ice fishing, barbecuing and social gatherings.

* A courtesy zone of 20 yards around all pedestrian activity and the shoreline (except when exiting and entering the lake) will be observed at all times.

* Anyone operating a vehicle must be properly trained, of age, capable of handling the machine, and wearing appropriate safety gear.

On June 11, 2009 in Pike County District Court Stephanie Abusio, former administrator for Lake in the Clouds, pled guilty to charges of **misuse of LITCPOA funds**. All monies, including court costs, were paid in full to the court at the sentencing on August 26, 2009. The court dispersed these funds to LITCPOA in September.

After Mrs. Abusio resigned her position as administrator in June of 2008, discrepancies were found in the financial records. Our accountant did a forensic audit, verifying suspicions of misconduct. Upon legal advice, any discussion of these accusations were to be done in closed sessions at Board of Directors meetings until the case was adjudicated. The Board immediately implemented new financial control procedures to prevent future misuse of LITCPOA funds.

October General Meeting Minutes

- I. PRESENT:** Charlie Schaffer, Vance Cullen, Ron Ferrara, Mike Foran, Pat Hall
Absent: Stacey Guthrie (Pat McGonigle substituting), Rich Everett
- II. ELECTION COMMITTEE:** P. McGonigle, J. Hahn counted votes; resulting in the budget passing and two new board members: Tony Costa and Ann Kahwaty
- III. MINUTES OF MAY'S GENERAL MEETING:** are posted on the web site and were in the summer newsletter. With one correction (Pereira property is E30/31), minutes were accepted.
- IV. TREASURER'S REPORT:** see attached. C. Schaffer reported:
As of 9/30/09: checking: \$ 26,310.47
Savings: \$ 8,411.94
Total available: \$ 34, 722.41
Treasurer's report was approved.
- V. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
- A. FINANCE AND BUDGET:** There is no dues increase in the 2010 budget: \$475 for a house and \$400 for a lot without a house.
2008 dues are still being collected: 5 people remain outstanding and are being pursued through legal means. 2009 dues: 43 people remain outstanding, 20 in Monroe and 23 in Pike. After one last try at contact, they will be taken to court. Quarterly statements were sent on or about 9/30, with a 3- month interest reflected.
- LITC suffered a theft. 16 months ago in May, the LITC previous administrator was asked to resign due to poor attendance. Following this, C. Schaffer checked the bank statement and found irregularities. Our legal counsel was then consulted and told us that the Board should not comment on the case while it was under investigation and until it had been resolved. The State Police and our insurance company were both contacted (we have employee-theft insurance coverage). We have a yearly review done by our accountant, but that just looks at the major categories on the computer. That review does not dig deeply enough to catch the changes that were being made illegally. At this point, the accountant, two of his staff and four volunteers worked two days doing a forensic audit of every transaction that was done by the administrator over the past four years. This revealed a theft of \$23,300. After the audit was completed, the State Police were contacted and a criminal complaint was filed. Our insurance company was contacted and told there was a possibility that we would be filing a claim for employee theft (later we told them this would not be necessary). The State Police took several months to investigate and charge her, but at the hearing in Hawley, she pled guilty. In June 2009, a second hearing took place where she pled guilty again, a sentencing in August where she was sentenced to pay full restitution plus costs, for a total of \$31,325.49. (LITC had a choice to insist on jail time, but chose to be reimbursed the total costs, instead). This has now been paid back to LITC and is in our reserve account (which now totals \$39,737.43). In addition: she has been placed on one year's probation, for which she has to pay a monthly fee; was fined \$400; is prohibited from having any contact with LITC POA; had to submit to a DNA drawing; and carries a 3rd degree felony on her record. As a result of this incident, several office procedures were changed immediately to ensure a stricter security and a new administrator was hired. **Question : did this affect her real estate license?** Since this did not have to do with our case, we don't know the answer to that question. Clarification from community: people with a real estate license may not have a criminal record. **Question: are the LITC checks signed by more than one person?** Yes, by two people. **Question: are background checks, including FBI, done prior to hiring?** It is unknown if this was done when that person was hired. It was felt that a background check on the current administrator was not really necessary since she is also the head secretary for the Barrett Township Police Department & Board of Supervisors, and was a past student of C. Schaffer's. However, in the future this will be done with all new hires.

B. BUILDING & GROUNDS: Club house revitalizations are finished (99%): new carpet, cleaning, rearranging of furniture, phone lines rerouted, painting, doors and woodwork stained, heat registers, floor repair, new chairs, new curtains, some electrical outlets replaced. Thanks to R. Ferrara, S. Ferrara, D. Schaffer, P. McGonigle, M. McGonigle for their work on this, (other volunteers were on standby). Two new armchairs were donated by the Welchs. Curtains were donated by L. Severnson and D. Cummings. A chair cart was purchased and the McGonigles picked it up – saving over \$100 on shipping.

Generator has been put thru the annual fall test and found to be in good shape. The test timer is now set for Thursday about 5:15pm. This insures that, in an emergency, the clubhouse is available for refuge.

Club house basement needs to be cleaned out, hopefully in November.

Final grass cut has been done. P. Hall, M. McGonigle, C. Schaffer, R. Ferrara, & V. Cullen have used the tractor to cut roadside grass a total of 22 hours this year (64 total since purchase). We are now several thousand dollars ahead because of this purchase (rather than having to contract this out as in the past). R. Ferrara has been maintaining the tractor and will winterized it in Nov.

There are two piles of branches in the parking lot. These will be chipped up soon and free for the taking. We intend to run this program at least another 6 months.

A new “happening” sign will be installed on the East side entrance as soon as possible.

The front sidewalk to the club house will be paved sometime soon. This will be paid for out of the capital improvement fund (current balance is \$1900+).

C. CONSTRUCTION: Logger Rd – completed with move-in scheduled for this week; Raspberry Dr – outside completed; Timber Rd & Noah Ct – exteriors are finished and landscaping is underway; East side – exterior is secure & driveway under-pipe is replaced; Skyline Ct – outside is completed. There have also been some recent purchases of homes and lots. The Wilsons, new owners of house on the corner of Raspberry, introduced themselves and were welcomed.

D. DAM: The emergency plan was completed, once again, and sent into Harrisburg several months ago. Hopefully, by the May meeting we will be able to report on the outcome.

A dry hydrant is being installed in Lake in the Woods for use by the fire companies responding to calls in the community and along 447. LITC bought the needed equipment and Panther Trucking is installing this at no cost. Community members should check with their insurance companies on possible discounts because of this.

The dam is inspected twice a year – once by DEP and once by our engineer, Mr. Schonegle. Mr. Schonegle requested that the grass on the dam crest on the far side be cut. The crest has been seeded and will be allowed to grow a little longer next year in hopes of deterring the geese.

Quarterly reports have been completed and submitted.

E. LAKE ECOLOGY: interesting year for lake water. Due to the lowering of the lake last year, this year’s growth was significantly different than in the past. The treatment company was very attentive to this and applied different types of chemicals to the shore-based plants that had a foothold in the water. We believe that this will allow a return to normal next year. This will result in our usual twice a summer treatment for Lake in the Clouds and an assessment for Lake in the Woods for pond weed. Please remember that a certain amount of plant life is healthy for the lake. This usually shows itself more in the shallow areas. As for the water itself, it’s clear and the fishing is good.

Question: there was a lot of green algae this year, does anyone know what that was? The treatment company said it is short-lived and only seen when the water is unusually cold. **Question: on LITW the algae gets severe when the bladderwort starts to die. Since the bladderwort was heavy, the algae floated on the top of it as it died.** LITW was not treated for bladderwort last year and the company will be directed to assess it this year for treatment. **Question: this year Timber Lake had an exceptional amount of bladderwort and prevented use of the lake. Mr. Catozzo is willing to pay to have this lake treated.** The LITC Board will take care of any treatment needed.

Beach had to be closed again this year several times due to high levels of ecoli. During the summer months, the water is tested weekly and a failed test results in a closed beach and this is posted. This happened four times. After consulting many different experts, we believe that this is a result of geese excrement. **Question: are the other lakes tested?** No, because there is no swimming area on those lakes. **Question: other PA lakes also have geese problems, do we know what they do?** This has been researched extensively, with no answer found yet. The effects of most things that have been tried last about 2 days and the geese return. Geese must be affected for 7 days before they change their habits. The only successes have been by using domesticated foxes or border collies. **Comment: a golf club had a difficult**

problem and purchased a border collie with much success. Comment: perhaps a motion detector with a recording of barking dogs would work.

F. ROADS: most holes will have been tarred and chipped soon in preparation for winter; Thanks to the road crew: C. Schaffer, R. Ferrara, L. Caulkins, J. Benincasa, D. Catozo, B. Freudenburg, T. Costa, C. Berrenco, and I. Spector. Thanks also to L. Caulkins for the donation of two large street brooms.

The twin pipe project by the boat dock was completed in a day by Panther. Members who live on the far side were only inconvenienced for one day, with no known problems. Pictures of the project are available. DEP and Pike County Conservation both approved the project prior to the start. Tar and chip will probably be done next year.

G. INSURANCE: no claims to date.

H. RECREATION: Golf – has been a good program and we'll try to get one more outing in this year. Tennis – 2009 was the fourth year of the youth-tennis program and a second participant has decided to take this up in school. The basketball/tennis fence area was tightened up and repaired; the macadam was patched; and the courts were relined.

The recreation facilities are here for all to use and equipment is available for the asking. **Question: the bocce court is often not in good shape due to water. Some of us would like to volunteer to relevel the court next year.**

I. SOCIAL: The committee would like to thank the BOD for granting their approval on the revitalization of the club house; the 2009/2010 calendar has started with 38 people attending the covered dish supper/bon fire in Sept.; a large box of winter clothing and two boxes of food were collected last month for CAME charity – at every covered dish supper a collection will be taken for either food or clothing or both. At Nov.'s dinner, however, a box of toys will be collected. The second coffee klatch was held with several people attending. This is a "meet your neighbor" type of event, especially for new members. The schedule for this and other events is posted on the web site. You can also pick up a schedule at the club house info rack. Mugs and magnets continue to be for sale at meetings, events and thru the office. The Ladies of the Lake are still selling shirts and if you are interested, contact Marie Benincasa. Some of the proceeds go toward club house extras. Several informal groups now meet: garden group, exercise group, game afternoon, book club – if you're interested, contact Marie Benincasa. **Question: if not coming to covered dishes, is there a place to drop off donations?** Yes, here in the club house during office hours.

J. GREENSPACE: Thanks to the BOD for approval of the goals and objectives – these are now posted on the website. In brief, these state that our purpose is to improve the quality of life for residents and wildlife within our community. Members are: J. Allen, M. Benincasa, T. Costa, S. Costa, S. Guthrie, M. Henzi. All are welcome to join us. The first project was Look Out Point – thanks to a great work group. We had some expert volunteer carpentry assistance: T. Richie, R. Ferrara made the walkover (still needs to be stained and made skid-proof); C. Schaffer, J. Benincasa, and J. Allen were responsible for the bench construction and installment; L. Foran and her picnic kids group decorated bird houses and they have been hung in the trees; and a path from the road to the top was constructed and mulched. Thanks to all who participated. The next project will be the area at the corner of Maple Syrup and Logger Roads. A proposal is in the works and will be presented to the BOD for approval soon. The properties owned by LITC which are wetlands have been identified. A proposal will be made to the BOD regarding those that are appropriate to become greenspace. The first of these are two pieces that are on the East side.

K. PICNIC: It was a very successful event this year with about 100 people attending. Suggestions and comments are welcome for next year. Thanks to all the volunteers who made it such a success and who helped with the clean up.

V. OLD BUSINESS: two lots remain on the east side that we have been working on getting cleaned up. The township has all the paperwork completed that will enable them to tear the structure down but they are having difficulty locating the people who own it in order to obtain authorization. The last time something was done like this, the cost to the township was \$15,000. They did state and pass a motion to get the lot cleared up. There is a second lot on the east side with a trashed car on it that needs some involvement. The pile of trash on 447 has been acknowledged by Barrett Township, a letter sent to the owner and has at least stopped expanding.

911 numbers – Green Township has passed a law that everyone in GT must have 911 numbers posted, you can get one at the club house. Barrett has not done this yet as far as we know.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Rich Everett, one of the Board members, has been sick for quite a while. The good news is that Rich recently had surgery which helped considerably. He gained 24 pounds in the two weeks following surgery. He's getting stronger and will soon be able to resume the chemo treatments. You can get his address from J. Benincasa to send a card.

b. **Question: what is the policy on outbuildings?** Currently there is no LITC restriction on outbuilding size or number, only height. Discussion follows on the type of building known as a pole barn and the recent construction of one on Raspberry Dr. It was felt that the BOD should discuss this as a possible change in our regulations governing future building construction. Comment was also made concerning the construction of a metal carport. **Question: what is the leash law in the community?** On property, pet must be under your control, off property must be on leash. Problem with a dog running loose off of Bass Ct. **Question: what is the age that children may be on the beach alone?** No age rule for beach or playground, just in the water.

c. New directory is available. Please let S. Guthrie know in writing any corrections or additions for the next edition (anticipated to be 2011/2012)

d. Election results: budget passed 165:4; three highest vote getters were: Ann Kahwaty, T. Costa, and S. Guthrie. Thank you to Pat Hall for his last four years of service.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: motion made and seconded.

NEXT MEETING: May 2010

Social Event Schedule 2009-2010

Sept. 19	Fall Covered Dish with Bon-fire (donated winter clothing will be collected at club house until 9/16)
Oct. 10	General Membership meeting & pot luck supper
Nov 21*	Thanksgiving Dinner
Dec. 12	Pot luck supper and dice game
Jan 16, 2010	Chili cook-off
Feb 13	Winter Festival and soup supper
Mar 13	St. Pat's Day pot luck supper
Apr 17	Luau supper
May 15	Italian Night
Aug 14	Community Picnic

Please bring the recipe for your dish and canned food for the food pantry donation.

* Please bring an unwrapped toy (Christmas present) for the donation this month.

Clubs and Committees

If you're interested in joining us, contact the following:

Bridge Club	Garden Club	Book Club
Activity Afternoon	Exercise Group	Ladies of the Lake
..... contact Marie Benincasa 676-4883		

Golf outings	- Jerry Benincasa	676-4883
Tennis lessons	- Ron Ferrara	676-4985
Horse Shoes	- John Guthrie	676-4753
Meet your neighbor, coffee and pastry	- Sue Ferrara	676-4985
Pot luck suppers	- Linda Foran	676-3495
Committee meetings and Volunteer opportunities	- Stacey Guthrie	676-4753

Next General Membership Meeting: May 2010