

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

September 2, 2015

SPECIAL MEETING

NOT APPROVED

Committee Members Present: K. Graves, D. Fanton, A. McGraw, T. O'Grady, N. Ungermann, C. Crandall

Others Present: M. Alger, M. Bird, B. Budinger, M. Burke, S. Burt, P. Curran, D. Decker, K. Dirlam, M. Dorrett, G. Hanchett, D. Healy, B. Heaney, R. Hollis, K. Hooker, C. Jessup, J. Johnson, K. LaForge, T. Miner, G. O'Connor, D. Pullen, B. Riehle, T. Ross, W. Rutkowski, R. Scott

Media Present: D. Donohue, *Olean Times Herald*; B. Quinn, *Wellsville Daily Reporter*

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. by Resource Management Committee Chairman Karl Graves.

Rushford Lake Recreation District

Legislator Graves read a statement of purpose and a resolution requesting Rushford Lake Recreation District to Improve Public Access and Launching Fee Schedule. Approval was granted on a motion by Legislator Graves, seconded by Legislator Fanton, and carried. **Refer to Board of Legislators Meeting**

Legislator Graves opened the floor for discussion giving an opportunity for visitors to speak.

Jim Johnson stated there are four fisherman who started this campaign. They would like the gate to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and to have reasonable fees of \$5 - \$7. Mr. Johnson commented that he saw on social media that a plane landed on the lake and Rushford Lake District Board Chair Joseph Manna thought it was wonderful. There was no mention about invasive species. Mr. Johnson stated the resolution is a great idea, but he is concerned the same thing is going to happen in May. He suggested a memo of agreement or some sort of legal binding agreement with the Rushford Lake Recreation District Commissioners would be helpful so it would not happen again. Legislator Graves stated they were not going to let the issue go. They will keep working on it until a conclusion.

Glenn O'Connor discussed the financing behind the lake. Mr. O'Connor did some research and reported in 2009, a \$654,000 grant was given to the Department of Environmental Conservation to stock the Lake with Trout. Mr. O'Connor stated every year Rushford Lake is stocked with \$15,000 worth of Trout. Mr. O'Connor stated they have been locked out for the summer, but the gate will be open after the Labor Day Holiday. He doesn't want to see this happen again next spring. Mr. O'Connor noted Rushford Lake has tax exempt status. He stated by having tax exempt status they have to give back to the public. He noted he doesn't see how they are doing that.

Mark Dorrett stated he was an Allegany County resident, sportsman, avid fisherman, and hunter. He looks at this issue as a New York State taxpayer who also pays federal taxes. Mr. Dorrett stated the waterway belongs to all of New York State and since Federal tax money is used, it belongs to everyone in America. Mike Burke, clarified that the federal money Mr. Dorrett was talking about comes from the Core of Engineers. The Core of Engineers are

frequently called in to review the Rushford Lake Dam. Mr. Dorrett stated it is beautiful here and the County is blessed to have that waterway and the Genesee River. Mr. Dorrett stated Senator Cathy Young has been helpful in bringing tax dollars to Allegany County, which is one of the poorest counties. Mr. Dorrett stated in his community, people are building new homes. He stated taking Rushford Lake away is not going to benefit anyone. Mr. Dorrett wanted to thank the local representatives and Senator Young's office for trying to do the right thing. Mr. Dorrett reported he also contacted Congressman Tom Reed's office about the issue and asked them to join the fight. Mr. Dorrett asked the County Legislators to reach out to the Federal Government and Agencies for help.

Chairman Crandall stated he attended a July 17, 2015, meeting at Senator Young's office. The Commissioners from the Rushford Lake District, fisherman, and representatives from the Department of Environmental Conservation had a conversation on public access to Rushford Lake including the gate, fees, and the concern of invasive species. As a result, there was a discussion about a boat wash station and how other areas around New York State addressed the invasive species issue. At the conclusion of the meeting, The Rushford Lake Commissioners were going to address access to the lake by taking the gate down and getting the fees in line with other fees across the state. Senator Young explored the boat washing station and secured funds within two weeks. Chairman Crandall commented this resolution takes a good position for the County since it is the largest body of water and the County spends money on tourism. Rushford Lake can't have facilities limited and shut down. Chairman Crandall commented on the concern of property taxes for residents living around the lake. They are paying higher taxes, but Chairman Crandall wanted to clarify the County tax rate is the same for everyone. The rate is set when the budget is adopted. Equalization rates may vary from township to township. Rushford Lake residents have higher assessed property. Chairman Crandall stated they also pay an extra tax for being in the Recreation District. The rate is \$3.30 per \$1,000 for being within that District. Chairman Crandall noted he supported this resolution and it is a good position for the Board to take. Chairman Crandall added at the July 17 meeting, he was asked what the Board position is on this issue. He stated the Resolution would answer that question.

Legislator Ungermann stated he was from Cuba and wanted to make a comparison using Cuba Lake. He stated Cuba Lake completed a \$1 million boat launch. The Department of Environmental Conservation was contracted to install it and since then, it has been used heavily. There is no charge. Legislator Ungermann stated airplanes land in Cuba Lake too. Cuba Lake tries hard to make it a public lake by expanding the area for swimmers, putting in a sewer to help keep it clean, and make improvements. Mr. Ungermann concluded by stating Cuba Lake is still public access.

Legislator Decker stated he also lives in Cuba. He has heard the comment that fisherman don't need to be out there at the crack of dawn. Legislator Decker stated when he is walking around Cuba Lake early in the morning around 4:30 a.m., cars are going over to the launch to put their boats in. Even in the winter, people are ice fishing early in the morning. Legislator Decker commented to restrict access to Rushford Lake is appalling, and he is 100 percent in favor of the resolution.

Legislator Pullen from District One, stated he drafted Chapter 78 of the Laws of 1981 as the attorney for Caneadea and the Town of Rushford. He looked at it from the town viewpoint as a success. He stated people get really agitated about their lake. He stated he understands the concerns here, but noted there are restrictions at any facility. Legislator Pullen stated he doesn't

know the answer. Legislator Pullen stated some facilities close at night because of vandalism. He stated he doesn't believe the fisherman and sportsman are the reason for the vandalism. Legislator Pullen stated there needs to be a balance and urged something be worked out. Mr. O'Connor commented by stating Cuba and Silver Lakes are either free or \$5, and the lakes are open all the time. He stated he could not comment on vandalism but he has not heard about any incidents.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m. following a motion by Legislator Fanton, seconded by Legislator Ungermann, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Scott, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators