

Crystal Lake & Watershed Association
Annual Meeting
Saturday, July 20, 2024
Congregational Summer Assembly Community Building
Frankfort, Michigan

MINUTES

Attendance: ca. 120 present; 159 electronic votes, 118 votes returned by mail; total of 277 eligible votes.

Call to order:

President Sue Brown called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. The Secretary reported that the votes received constitute a quorum of voting members.

Election report:

The draft minutes from the 2023 annual meeting had been reviewed and posted on the CLWA website. The formal actions taken were the election of new board members and officers.

The Secretary reported the results of the 2024 election, which was by mail and online ballot. The minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting were approved and the slate of officers and board members put forward by the Nominating committee was elected.

Officers for two-year terms (to 2026):

President – Susan Brown (for reelection)
Secretary – Ellen Herscher (for reelection)

At-large board members for three-year terms (to 2027):

Catherine (Tassie) Boshier (reelection)
Mary Ferens (reelection)
Susan Kirkpatrick (reelection)
Barbara Leonard (reelection)
Coleman Schindler (reelection)

President Brown thanked the Nominating committee for its work over the past year. She introduced the board members present and thanked the board of directors: they are all volunteers, and it is their work that enables the CLWA to function.

Keep Crystal Clear event:

Coleman Schindler described the 4th annual fund-raising event to be held on August 2. It is being organized by the CLWA “junior committee,” led this year by Lukas Szniewajs. He encouraged people to attend and bring their friends and neighbors.

Presentation of Crystal Circle Award:

President Brown described the significance of the Crystal Circle Award, which honors those who have made exceptional contributions to the Crystal Lake Watershed Association, those whose energy, intellect, experience, and dedication have helped the organization advance its mission in significant ways. She announced that the CLWA Board of Directors unanimously voted to present the award this year to Secretary and Education/Communion Chair Ellen Herscher, who “embodies the essence of being a CLWA board member.” In making the presentation, Development Chair Barbara Leonard described Herscher as “an unsung hero of the organization” who shines the spotlight on...its accomplishments...and works tirelessly to educate the public about preserving the health of the lake.”

President’s report:

Brown’s report began with an explanation of the Crystal Lake Watershed Overlay District and the zoning ordinances associated with it that have been adopted to protect the water quality of Crystal Lake. The ordinances regulate development and other activities in the watershed that could harm the water quality if carried out improperly. The townships are responsible for enforcing these ordinances through their Planning Commissions and Zoning Boards of Appeals. The CLWA has no role in enforcement, but as private citizens and through its Land Use committee monitors activities and advocates for lake-friendly land management.

The CLWA has been active in protesting aspects of the Sunkissed Hills development in Benzonia township where zoning and permitting regulations have been violated by the developer. Currently it is closely monitoring the Special Land Use application of Camp Nearby in Crystal Lake Township, which is undergoing thorough review by the CLT Planning Commission. Brown encouraged members of the public to get involved by becoming informed and attending meetings of the local responsible authorities.

President Brown then reviewed the recent work of the various CLWA committees, who have been very active over the past year. The Development committee chaired by Barbara Leonard has led the adoption of a new Association Management System that is enhancing membership services and CLWA operations. Members are encouraged to log in to their individual account and fill out the information that will indicate their preferences.

Education and Communication, chaired by Ellen Herscher, has continued its program of publications, educational and public events. Responsibility for the annual Walkabout for middle school students has been assumed by Debbie Smith. New to communications is a

periodic email to members, facilitated by the new AMS system, that is providing timely updates and information.

The Land Use committee, chaired by Tom Kucera, has been busy monitoring activities in the Overlay District, as already described. It is also encouraging the remaining townships (Lake, Benzonia, Beulah Village) to adopt the updates to the Overlay zoning ordinance that strengthen its provisions, as Crystal Lake Township has already done.

The Water Quality committee, chaired by Hugh Walton, is hard-working on several fronts. Several years of treating invasive Eurasian watermilfoil have made significant progress, reducing this infestation from over 7 acres to about 2.5 acres now. New threats to look out for are Curly-Leaf Pondweed, Hydrilla, and Starry Stonewort. Quagga mussels were recently detected, and the committee is doing further study. The CLWA staffed boat wash at the Mollineaux Road launch site aims to keep these additional invasives out of Crystal. Thanks to CLWA's intensive lobbying, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has permitted the resumption of the successful swimmer's itch control program this year – unfortunately it will likely not be before 2025 when the effects of relocating merganser broods will be seen in the reduction of swimmer's itch cases.

Walton introduced a video prepared by CLWA Lake Biologist John Ransom. It explained the CLWA's water quality monitoring program and demonstrated the new digital database that Ransom has been developing with Ray Canale of the U. of Michigan. [VIDEO AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING ON THE CLWA WEBSITE]

Treasurer's report:

The financial statement for 2023 was distributed and is posted on line. Treasurer Bruce Gerhart reported that the CLWA continues in healthy financial condition, with its budget growing every year. He presented charts showing the distribution of last year's expenditures. Last year fifty percent went toward water quality initiatives and the boat wash operation. The approved budget for 2024 is \$254,474, which includes an increase in water quality expenses. Gerhart also explained the three separate CLWA accounts, their purposes, and how they are invested. A new initiative was the establishment of an Endowment Fund with the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation.

Questions:

Questions from the audience mainly concerned development around the lake, especially the status of the proposed Camp Nearby development. Land Use committee members explained that the application for this project is still not complete, since the Crystal Lake Township Planning Commission has requested more information about aspects of their plan. They also urged members to support updates and enforcement of zoning ordinances, attend township Planning Commission meetings, and look for posted permits on new construction.

Other questions concerned power boats operating too close to shore, swimmer's itch avoidance, and E coli alerts.

In closing, President Brown stressed that all CLWA's work is supported by its membership and donations and she thanked the members for their support.

Adjournment:

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Herscher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ellen Herscher, Secretary

(Minutes approved by mail and electronic ballot July 19, 2025)