

ALPOA 2020 Annual Report

A Message from the Board of Directors

Due to constraints resulting from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and in the interest of protecting the health and welfare of our friends and neighbors, the ALPOA Board of Directors has decided to forego the customary, in-person Annual Meeting this year. In its place we are providing the following report to inform property owners of what has transpired in each of the Board's areas of responsibility since last year. Given the unprecedented state of affairs we find ourselves in, we believe this report will fulfill the spirit and intent of an Annual Meeting, as stipulated in Article IV, Section 1 of the ALPOA by-laws.

Property owners who have questions or comments on the information presented here are invited to attend the Board meeting on November 10th at 7:00PM via Zoom. If you wish to exercise this option, you must contact the Board at board@alpoa.org or any Board member to receive an email link to the meeting when it becomes available.

Financial Report

Ashford Lake Property Owners' Association (ALPOA)				
September 2020 Actual - Updated 10-01-2020				
	Year to Date	2020 Budget	YTD to BUDGET VARIANCE	Notes
Assessment Fund				
Beginning Balance	\$ 12,170.46	\$ 12,170	\$ -	
Deposits (Assessment Receipts)	\$ 67,251.59	\$ 71,750	\$ (4,498.41)	Through September, \$67,251.59 in assessments has been received. It is anticipated that ALPOA will receive at least an additional \$4,498.41, as budgeted by 12/31.
Interest	\$ 4.73	\$ 25	\$ (20.27)	
Subtotal Credits	\$ 67,256.32	\$ 71,775	\$ (4,518.68)	
Subtotal Payments	\$ (44,223.86)	\$ (85,100)	\$ 40,876.14	
Ending Balance	\$ 35,202.92	\$ (1,155)	\$ 36,357.46	Currently \$35,202.92 in operating account. It is forecasted, with consideration for additional receipts and expenses, that ALPOA has sufficient cash to meet snowplowing obligations until the 2021 assessments start coming in March of 2021. If we have an extraordinary winter, ALPOA has access to funds in the capital account.
Payment Detail by Category				
Roads - Plowing/Sanding	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 25,000	\$ (22,000.00)	
Roads - Maintenance	\$ 1,962.57	\$ 5,000	\$ (3,037.43)	
Roads - Major Projects	\$ 24,250.00	\$ 30,000	\$ (5,750.00)	
Mowing Dam and Beach	\$ 3,380.00	\$ 6,000	\$ (2,620.00)	
Dam - Maintenance	\$ 10,467.71	\$ 1,000	\$ 9,467.71	Overspent the Dam Maintenance budget by \$9,461.71 to pay for bridge deck painting and concrete repair. This overspend is more than offset by underspend in several other areas.
Other Maintenance	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ (2,500.00)	
Recreation/Beaches	\$ 650.00	\$ 750	\$ (100.00)	
Insurance	\$ -	\$ 7,750	\$ (7,750.00)	The annual liability insurance premium will be due and paid by 10/31/20.
Administration	\$ 513.58	\$ 1,000	\$ (486.42)	
Legal	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ (250.00)	
Community Projects	\$ -	\$ 600	\$ (600.00)	
Communications	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ (250.00)	
Capital Funds Transfer	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ (5,000.00)	ALPOA expects to transfer \$5,000 from the operating to capital account before 12/31, as budgeted.
Returned Checks & Fees	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Total Payments	\$ 44,223.86	\$ 85,100	\$ (40,876.14)	
Capital Fund				
Beginning Balance	\$ 77,646.57	\$ 77,647	\$ -	
Deposits (from Assessment Fund)	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ (5,000.00)	
Interest	\$ 313.50	\$ 400	\$ (86.50)	
Subtotal Credits	\$ 313.50	\$ 5,400	\$ (5,086.50)	
Subtotal Payments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ 77,960.07	\$ 83,047	\$ (5,086.50)	Overall the budget has been underspent by \$40,876.14. After paying the insurance premium and transferring \$5,000 to the capital account, it is anticipated that ALPOA will have spent \$28,876.14 less than budgeted in 2020.

Property Owners	Amount Due	
10	\$ 20,005.00	Delinquent: Previous plus Current
10	\$ 5,800.00	Owing - 2020
15	\$ 3,900.00	Up to Date through 3/1/20
35	\$ 29,705.00	Grand Total Owing
Property Owners	Amount Paid	
96	\$ 53,550.00	Paid in Full - 2020
4	\$ 1,650.00	Delinquent: Previous plus Current
3	\$ 631.59	Owing - 2020
15	\$ 4,100.00	Up to Date through 3/1/20
118	\$ 59,931.59	Total 2020 Assessments Paid
Payments to prior balances	\$ 7,320.00	Delinquent: Previous plus Current
Total Payments Received in 2020	\$ 67,251.59	

As of 9/30/20, ALPOA is owed \$29,705 in back assessments by 35 property owners.

In 2020, ALPOA received \$67,251.59 in assessments from 118 of 130 property owners.

In 2020, most property owners paid their assessments in full, and generally on time. Thus, allowing ALPOA to complete the many projects necessary to maintain the roads, beaches and dam. Having said that, there remain some delinquent assessments as indicated above. Currently, there is adequate cash in the operating account to meet all forecasted obligations, mostly winter snowplowing, until the 2021 assessments start arriving in March. We should also have enough cash to transfer \$5,000 to the capital account, as budgeted. It is expected that we will develop a similar budget for 2021, and therefore expect our annual assessment to remain \$500 per parcel. There is detail regarding the 2020 financial activity in the two exhibits above. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Don Judson, Treasurer.

Committee Reports

Roads & Grounds

The fairly mild 2019/20 winter left our budget and our roads in better shape than usual as we planned our maintenance and major projects for the summer. Reduced costs for plowing and sanding, along with less damage from winter maintenance, left us with ample resources to complete our wish list of necessary repairs and improvements to our roads, drainage and common areas.

Because substantial paving was done in 2019 utilizing funds from the Capital Fund, it was decided to defer further paving until 2021, to focus primarily on drainage, and to use any surplus funds at the end of this year to replenish the Capital Fund. When paving resumes next summer, the tentative targeted areas are the sections between Westview Dr. and Sunset Dr. and between Sunset Dr. and Birchwood Dr., completing all of Ashford Lake Dr.

Phase 3 of the drainage projects mandated by the Ashford IWWC was completed with the removal and replacement of the swale on the south side of Westview Dr.. The final phase will be addressed next year along Farm Dr., assuming that the Town of Ashford completes remediation measures on Campert Lane, cited in the engineer's report and

IWCC directives. Campert Lane is a town road that intersects Farm Dr. and Campert Dr. and is the source of the drainage issues affecting our road and adjacent wetlands. Drainage issues were corrected at the top of Oakview Dr. with grading, swale improvement and the removal and replacement of a collapsed Dr. way pipe that was impeding the flow of water and causing flooding and winter icing in the cul-de-sac. Additional rip rap was added on both sides of the road to control storm water and collect sediment and debris. A catch basin was installed at the base of Oakview where the open pipe feeding the underdrain along Ashford Lake Dr. was prone to periodic obstruction by leaves and debris.

On lower Ashford Lake Dr., a failing drainage swale was replaced with an underdrain. A faulty Dr. way pipe that was causing water to back up and flood the road in extreme conditions had to be removed and reset in this location as well. The upper section of Sunset Dr. was regraded to keep water from running down the center of the road. The sandy area at Sunset Beach was enlarged, leveled and replenished with fresh sand. A speed bump at the south end of Ashford Lake Dr. was reconfigured to enable vehicles with low clearance to traverse the bump safely while still functioning effectively to reduce speeding.

Volunteers: The Board is very grateful to all the volunteers who take it upon themselves to mow and clean swales, clear roadside brush, pick up litter on the roads and beaches, and contribute in any way to the maintenance and beautification of the community. We can't name everyone, but you know who you are, your efforts have not gone unnoticed, and we appreciate all you do. Property owners who are fit and able are encouraged to keep drainage swales in the vicinity of their own property clear and to pitch in wherever a need is perceived around the community.

Roads and grounds consume the bulk of our resources. When volunteers perform tasks we would otherwise have to pay for, the need to increase the annual assessment fee is reduced.

Environmental

Water Testing and Water Quality

Water at both association beaches was tested in mid- July and mid-August. On both occasions the water at the beaches was well within the recommended safe level for bacteria established by the Connecticut Department of Health and DEEP.

The water quality monitoring program with The Last Green Valley (TLGV) & Eastern CT Conservation District that we were part of in 2019 was suspended this year due to Covid-19. Last year's water sample analysis for algae pigments found in cyanobacteria (also called blue-green algae) were below any level of concern, and based on anecdotal evidence and observation, there is no indication that anything has changed.

Although the beach water testing was our only formal measurement of water quality this year, all indications are that the overall water quality of Ashford Lake continues to be excellent.

Canada Geese

Because Canada geese are not only a nuisance, but also a threat to public health and water quality, the association obtains a permit annually from the US Fish & Wildlife Service to destroy goose eggs. As often happens, a pair of geese eluded our detection and successfully nested here this spring. We were fortunate to have only one family of geese and doubly fortunate when they left not long after the young geese attained the ability to fly. Geese like the habitat at Ashford Lake and in past years have remained until late summer or early fall. An increased level of human activity at the lake this summer, along with the deliberate efforts of many to make the geese feel unwelcome, contributed to their early departure. Thank you to the Goose Patrol.

Aquatic Plants

Invasive, non-native aquatic plants are the greatest threat to water quality, property values, and quality of life in lake communities. Protecting Ashford Lake from invasive aquatic plants is critical. Once introduced, most invasive aquatic plants are virtually impossible to eradicate and very costly to control. While Ashford Lake does have an abundance of aquatic vegetation, our lake remains one of the few in the state that is free of submersed or floating invasive aquatic plants. We do have a few stands of non-native, invasive shoreline reeds (phragmites) that we began managing with aquatic herbicides in 2018. This year's treatment by Solitude Lake Management will take place soon, and our permit has been expanded to include the cattails that are obstructing the outlet at the dam spillway.

All residents, particularly those new to lake living, are encouraged to review the information on the ALPOA website pertaining to aquatic plants and how to protect Ashford Lake from the introduction of invasive species.

Septic Systems

Please keep up-to-date on septic system maintenance. Faulty subsurface sewage systems are the main source of groundwater contamination, affecting both wells and lake water quality. Periodic pumping of the septic tank is critical to system maintenance, and deferred maintenance can have costly consequences.

Conclusions

Since our property values and quality of life depend upon a healthy environment and good water quality, it is the responsibility of all property owners to become informed about potential environmental threats and to manage their property in ways that support, protect and preserve the Ashford Lake environment.

Dam

You've probably noticed some work trucks at the bridge that crosses over the spillway. During an inspection of our dam and bridge in 2017, our engineer recommended some bridge repair—to remove rust and paint the girders; to repoint the broken concrete above the girders, and refill cracks in the concrete walls of the spillway. All the concrete work is complete, as is all the scraping and repainting of the girders under the bridge deck. The concrete walls have been repaired and repainted, as well, eliminating the unsightly graffiti. We continue the battle with Mother Nature to keep the spillway and

the slopes of the dam cleared, and the grass mowed. Don Judson and Sue Orcutt conducted an owner inspection on August 22 of this year that resulted in a few regular maintenance items, which are being addressed. The dam is stable and functioning as designed.

Community Watch & Safety Committee

While things are usually quiet, peaceful and uneventful in our community, we are not immune to criminal acts. Two instances of vandalism occurred recently. In the first, several road signs were stolen. The second, more serious act involved spray painting graffiti on the walls of the spillway and on several rocks in that area, apparently by local teens. The Board offered a reward for information leading to the identity of the vandals, but no one has come forward. The signs will be replaced and the graffiti has been painted over, but we need residents to be observant and report all such activity to the CT State Police and ALPOA Board of Directors.

As always, "If you see something, say something."

Several "Please Drive Slowly" signs were placed in key areas to address the problem of speeding, which persists despite speed bumps and signage. Because our roads are private, the State Police cannot enforce our speed limits, so it is basically up to individual drivers to heed the rules and drive responsibly. We hope the additional signs will be effective reminders.

Additional new signage included social distancing reminders at the beaches, a 10 PM Beach Closure sign at Sunset Beach and signs to display parking passes.

The Board sent beach parking passes to all residents in an effort to address the seasonal problem of non-residents using the lake and beaches. Notices were placed on cars not displaying a pass stating that the beaches are private, reserved for residents and accompanied guests, and that all others are trespassing and subject to citation by the CT State Police. The intent was to deter reasonable people in a non-confrontational manner. Clearly the plan couldn't be effectively and consistently implemented due to insufficient manpower to monitor and follow up, but it was an earnest attempt to augment the clear and ample signage that some people brazenly disregard. The Board's efforts were undermined, in part, by some residents who failed to utilize their parking pass or who invited friends to use the lake and beaches unaccompanied. This problem has been reduced significantly from what it was in years past, but it hasn't been eliminated.

The Board will continue to work diligently to protect the privacy and rights of ALPOA members who use the beaches; but we need help from the community. It has been suggested that a community watch subcommittee be formed to deal exclusively with beach matters. We'll prepare a plan going into next season and hope to recruit enough community members to support it.

In all matters pertaining to illegal activity, including trespassing on ALPOA common elements (lake, dam, roads, beaches), property owners may contact law enforcement directly and are encouraged to do so. While the Board is happy to report any incident

and appreciates being informed, when time is of the essence, call the CT State Police, Troop C, at (860) 896-3200.

Recreation

The annual Chili Fest and Spring Clean-Up/Pizza Lunch had to be canceled this year due to the pandemic. However, there was a great group of people who participated in the 4th of July Boat Parade!

Please let the Board know if you have ideas of other community activities.

Communication

Welcome Baskets

Seven welcome baskets were delivered to new ALPOA members in 2020. The baskets contain products from local businesses, a beach pass, a copy of the latest newsletter and an ALPOA Welcome Guide.

Annual Newsletter

An annual newsletter was included in the January mailing.

Website

Thank you to Carrie Dyer who has volunteered to manage the ALPOA website for many years. She recently handed this over to Paul Stansel.

Facebook

Dylan Armentrout, an ALPOA member, has started the Ashford Lake Property Owners Community. It is a private Facebook group but not an official ALPOA Facebook page. Carrie Dyer posts information and announcements for ALPOA.

Election of Officers

The following member's Board terms expire on October 2, 2020: Tom Barry, Mindy Carpenter, Jeremy Edberg, Ann Milner, Denise Pillion and Walt Wassil. Jeremy has indicated that he will not be able to continue on the Board due to work and time constraints. All others are willing to continue for another 2-year term. That means there is one vacancy for which nominations may be made. Please contact Ann Milner at amilner@snet.net by October 30th to express your interest.

Tom Barry, President	860-208-4027	Jeremy Edberg	860-455-8741
Jason Pufahl, Vice-President	860-420-9897	Harry Marshall	860-808-7199
Don Judson, Treasurer	860-306-7117	Sue Orcutt	860-817-5329
Ann Milner, Secretary	860-477-0757	Denise Pillion	860-617-3642
Mindy Carpenter	860-481-5180	Paul Stansel	860-518-4182
Lisa McAdam Donegan	860-429-0554	Walt Wassil	860-301-0223