Lake Norman Marine Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2026

The Lake Norman Marine Commission met in Regular Session on Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at St. Peter By-the-Lake Episcopal Church, 8433 Fairfield Forest Road, Denver, NC 28037.

Members present were Barbara Beatty, Jarid Church, Tim Holder, Cameron Sloan, and Rob Weller. Richard Gaskins, Jason Ralston, and Gregory Truesdell were not present. Also, present were Executive Director Jim Loftin, Attorney Chris Clark, and Centralina Regional Council staff support to the board Megan Upchurch**.**

1. **Call to Order and Approval of Agenda.** Commission Vice-Chair Beatty called the regular meeting of the Lake Norman Marine Commission to order at 7:00 p.m., noting a quorum was present. A motion was made by Commissioner Holder and seconded by Commissioner Church to approve the meeting agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Approval of Minutes.** The Commission reviewed the minutes from the September 17, 2026 regular meeting. A motion was made Commissioner Holder and seconded by Commissioner Sloan to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Public Comments.** The Chair opened the public comment period and reviewed the public comment procedures, including the three-minute limit per speaker. No public comments were offered.
4. **Partner Reports**
    - **Catawba County Lake Patrol:** Not present. No report.
    - **Cornelius Police Department:** The Cornelius Police Department reported responding to 26 lake-related calls during September with an average response time of approximately four minutes. Officers also noted an increase in debris and navigational hazards resulting from recent fluctuating lake levels and rainfall.
    - **Iredell County Lake Patrol:** Iredell County Lake Patrol reported 101 calls for service during September, including nine alarms, twenty-nine 911 hang-up calls, and 574 security checks. Additional activity included 17 facility inspections, 14 boat inspections, 11 vessel traffic stops, one vessel crash, approximately 310 patrol hours on the water, and 372 patrol volumes.
    - **Lincoln County Lake Patrol:** Present. Nothing to report.

- **U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary:** Representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary reported year-to-date activity including 28 patrols totaling 156 hours, 13 boating safety classes serving 205 students, and 441 vessel safety checks. Staff highlighted a boating safety class held on September 19 at Denver Fire Department with eight graduates, seven of whom were youth under age 17. The Auxiliary also announced participation in a boating safety outreach booth at the upcoming Haunted Cove event.
- **North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission:** Representatives reported that boating activity has slowed seasonally and noted the opening of the three-day duck season.
- **Fire Partners:** Present. No Report.
- **Water Quality Report:** A representative was unable to make the meeting, and instead Ms. Megan Upchurch informed the Commission that the water quality report was included in the meeting packet. It was noted that sampling data had been collected prior to the recent storm event and should be considered in that context.
- **Duke Energy Lake Services:** Representatives from Duke Energy reported significant rainfall throughout the Catawba River basin, with some areas receiving over nine inches of rain. Lake Norman crested near elevation 99.4 feet and had receded to approximately 98.8 feet at the time of the meeting. Duke Energy provided updates on reservoir operations, drought-response protocols, ongoing Stage 2 low inflow restrictions, anticipated winter drawdown levels, and increased debris impacts resulting from recent flooding and reservoir spills. Duke Energy also recognized local law enforcement agencies, particularly the Cornelius Lake Patrol, for assistance in responding to debris hazards and loose vessels following the storm.
- **Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation:** Representatives reported significant cleanup efforts along the Henry Fork of the Catawba River, including the removal of more than 1,100 tires and nearly 39,000 pounds of trash. Staff also provided results from the recent River Sweep event, which included 140 volunteers on Lake Norman and nearly 500 volunteers basin-wide. An update was provided on the Floating Classroom program, which is expected to serve approximately 2,000 students by the end of November.
- **NC Wildlife Federation:** Not present. No report.

5. **Executive Director Report.** Executive Director Jim Loftin provided updates on the Commission website, highlighting development of interactive features to communicate aids-to-navigation maintenance and no-wake zone information. He reported that processes with Centralina Regional Council continue to move forward and that the Commission's financial operations are functioning successfully. Mr. Loftin also welcomed

new Commissioner Robert Weller and reported on completing ICS-300 emergency management training to support future coordination during emergency response activities.

6. **Non-Project Use Application.** The Commissioners were directed to the application in their agenda packet regarding a non-project use application associated with geotechnical borings for the NCDOT Buffalo Shoals Bridge Replacement project. Discussion focused on operational considerations for barges and work vessels, particularly maintaining navigable channels and proper lighting if equipment remains on the lake overnight. A motion was made by Commissioner Weller and seconded by Commissioner Sloan to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.
7. **Operational Updates.** Mr. Gary Mozeley was unable to attend the regular meeting and instead, Mr. Loftin incorporated the update into his Executive Director update.
8. **Committee Updates.** The Commission discussed the importance of reactivating committee work and encouraging greater member participation. Commissioners were asked to complete committee interest forms, and leadership committed to increasing committee activity moving forward. No formal committee reports were presented. Additionally, the Commission reviewed the proposed no-wake application form and discussed implementation of procedures related to the Commission's Charter Boat Regulations. Consensus was reached to move forward with posting both items on the Commission website. No formal action was required.
9. **Open Discussion.** The Commission discussed filling the remaining vacant commissioner seat. Members agreed to post an announcement on the Commission website and solicit applications from interested candidates. Applications will be reviewed and interviews conducted as appropriate. The Commission recognized Elaine Powell of the Mecklenburg County Commission for her support of lake-related initiatives and public safety efforts. Commissioner Powell addressed the Commission, sharing observations from recent rides with law enforcement on Mountain Island Lake and emphasizing the importance of ongoing safety and water quality efforts. The Commission presented her with a token of appreciation and thanked her for her service. Staff reported that work is underway on the 2027 meeting schedule. Meetings will continue rotating among the four counties, although some locations may change.
10. **Adjournment.** There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Holder and seconded by Commissioner Church. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.