



Lake Norman Marine Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2026

The Lake Norman Marine Commission met in Regular Session on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in the Community Room at the St. Peter By-the-Lake Episcopal Church; 8433 Fairfield Forest Rd. Suite #1; Denver, NC 28037

Members present were Barbara G. Beatty, Richard C. Gaskins, Timothy Holder, Jason Ralston, Cameron Sloan, Gregory Truesdell, and Billy Wilson. Also present were Catawba County Manager Mary Furtado and Centralina Regional Council staff support to the board Megan Upchurch.

Member absent were Kristian Hernandez and Mark Mullen.

1. Call to Order. Commission Chair Truesdell called the regular meeting of the Lake Norman Marine Commission to order at 7:00 p.m., noting a quorum was present.

2. Public Comment. Steve Riggan of the Coast Guard Auxiliary introduced himself to the Commission and provided background an insight into the local auxiliary’s efforts and offered their support to the commission for future needs, such as boater safety and inspections, support with special programming related to Lake Norman, vessel safety checks, and potential other needs as they arise.

3. Approval of Minutes. Commissioner Holder made a motion to approve the Regular Minutes of the January 15, 2026 Lake Norman Marine Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beatty and passed unanimously.

4. Partner Reports

- Town of Cornelius and Iredell County Lake Patrol officers provided a debrief of activities on the Lake between the January and February meeting.
- In absence of Mecklenburg County Water Quality’s Dave Ferguson, Ms. Furtado shared an update on the lake’s water quality monitoring reports noting key factors and influence on changes in the water quality based on recent rain. During this update, Commissioner Gaskins inquired about a recent sewage spill in the lake to



which Ms. Furtado noted that a request would be made that information be provided by Mecklenburg County at the March meeting.

- Chad Broadway with Duke Energy Lake Services provided updates regarding the lake's water levels, indicating the community is entering into stage 0 drought protocols. Mr. Broadway additionally noted that a lake barge is currently under evaluation for removal by multiple parties. In the meantime, Mr. Broadway requested for the Commission to contact him directly if they receive any inquiries related to the barge.
- Catawba Riverkeeper – Not present. No report.
- NC Wildlife Resource Commission – Not present. No report.
- In absence of NC Department of Environmental Quality's Rob Emens, Ms. Furtado provided an update on an invitation to participate in the DEQ Technical Advisory Group, which meets annually to develop a treatment plan and accompanying budget for invasive species management and removal. Ms. Furtado requested NCDEQ keep her informed on the details of the Technical Advisory Committee until the committee structure is established and commissioners are designated for participation.
- NC Wildlife Federation – Commissioner Wilson provided updates on the local and state chapters for the NC Wildlife Federation. Mr. Wilson noted upcoming event happenings, provided a reminder and insight into the Federation's adopt an island program, and shared how NC Wildlife Federation has expanded the program's capacity and reach through county coordinators working in each of the Lake Norman counties.

5. Legal Services Proposal from Chris Clarke. Ms. Furtado provided an update on retaining Chris Clake for on call services over the next 12 months, noting Mr. Clarke was the previous LNMC attorney and also supports Lake Wylie Marine Commission. Ms. Furtado noted that services provided beyond the standard staff attorney responsibilities will be revisited and contracted outside of the current proposal. Commissioner Holder made a motion for the Commission to authorize Catawba County, on behalf of Lake Norman Marine Commission, to enter into a contract with Chris Clarke for legal services for \$2,000 per month. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beatty and passed unanimously.



6. FY26/27 Budget Status. Ms. Furtado informed the Commission that she is working to develop a budget for the commission. Ms. Furtado briefed the Commission on findings from previous budgets and noted that cost were allocated across deliverables, and historical data is scarce on overall budget process. Ms. Furtado further noted that the current year’s proposal for each county is to create a placeholder budget of \$60,000, (which includes both LNMC and Catawba-Wateree annual costs for invasive species removal) with \$148,000 for general operations.

7. Executive Director recruitment. Ms. Furtado updated the Commission on the Executive Director recruitment timeline. The position will be posted by Catawba County and hosted on their website on Friday, February 20, 2026 and in coordination with partners to cross promote. Commissioner Holder requested Catawba County screen the applications for completeness, with only applications meeting minimum job requirements being passed along to the Commission for review. This request was supported by the full Commission.

8. Operational Updates

- **ATONS contract:** Mr. Mozeley and staff of Mozeley Construction provided status updates to the Commission. A survey of the lake’s ATONS was completed in October 2025, which found 55% of the fixtures were non-operational. There are currently 196 lights in total, with 92 of those either non-operational or status unknown. Mr. Mozeley noted there is currently a lead time of about three weeks on receiving new buoys. In the interim, any unlit markers will be lit with blinking yellow lights (available on demand, from an inventory standpoint). Ms. Furtado provided an update on the contract, noting Catawba County will serve as the contracting agency for the LNMC contract with Mozeley Construction moving forward. It was noted that law enforcement representatives and Duke Energy stakeholders are reporting hazards on the lake directly to Mozeley, as are local citizens. Commissioner Truesdell concluded the conversation with a request to law enforcement to be proactive in noting and reporting ATONS issues to the contractor.
- **No Wake Buoy Requests:** Ms. Furtado stated that applications for No Wake Buoys have historically been reviewed by a committee, as were permit applications for rafting events, charter boats, and rental boats. During bylaws discussions, the Commission did not establish any standing committees.



Historically, there had been eight committees. Given the volume of activity coming at the Commission with the onset of boating season, Ms. Furtado made the recommendation that these committees be re-established, but consolidated into five from eight, as follows:

- Buoys and ATONS
- Charter Boats, Rental Boats, and Rafting Permits
- Education
- Environmental
- Government / Legislative Liaison

Commissioner Holder made a motion to establish the five committees. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ralston and passed unanimously. Ms. Furtado indicated a committee sign-up sheet would be circulated between the February and March meetings so formal committee appointments can occur at the March meeting. It was agreed by consensus that the committees needed to stand themselves up relatively quickly as we approach boating season.

9. Large Non-Project Use Applications: Request for Comment

- **NCDOT STIP Project No. R-510A: Williamson Rd. widening:** Mr. Broadway from Duke Energy reviewed the application with the Commission and shared finding and comments from Duke Energy regarding the project. Concerns were raised by Commissioners, Duke Energy, and local law enforcement regarding anticipated recreation access closures during the project period. Mr. Broadway was able to share the project team has been able to reduce the planned navigational closure to 2 weeks over the course of a 3.5-year project. He also shared NCDOT committed to provide a 45-day advanced notification to all residents and law enforcement partners before navigation is shuttered. Commissioner Truesdell inquire about the emergency response plan during the extended closure period as well as if this area would be a viable option for a safety zone to which Mr. Broadway noted that all equipment would be moored during this period. Law enforcement in attendance requested that signage be made available during the closure to help them with enforcement efforts. Commission decided to not submit formal comments. Commissioner Holder made a motion to provide concurrence with the proposed



project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beatty and passed unanimously.

- **Lake Norman State Park Fishing Pier Reef Project:** Commissioner Wilson addressed fellow Commissioners on behalf of North Carolina Wildlife Federation regarding a habitat enhancement project proposed by the organization at Lake Norman State Park fishing pier. Project funding is coming from the Duke Energy Catawba–Wateree Habitat Enhancement Program. Commissioner Wilson noted the Federation has installed a total of nine rock reefs throughout Lake Norman over the past two decades. At the end of his presentation, Commissioner Wilson requested concurrence from the Commission to proceed with the project. Commissioner Holder made a motion to provide concurrence with the proposed project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beatty and passed unanimously.

10. Rafting Event Application. Ms. Furtado presented a brief overview of an application for a proposed rafting event submitted by Charisme Dhanani of Around the Lake Boat Tours planned to occur on June 20-21 in the vicinity of Dog Island in Lincoln County. The applicant was in attendance and provided additional information from the event held previously in June 2025. Sgt. John Isaacks of Lincoln County Lake Patrol and other law enforcement officers in attendance shared additional information from their perspective regarding incident response and any issues related to the June 2025 event, noting most incidents occurred away from the event location and indicating event organizers proactively communicated and worked in strong coordination with law enforcement to quickly address any issues that arose. Denver Fire Chief Jay Flynn requested EMS and Fire be included in communications regarding event coordination. Commissioner Holder made a motion to approve the event, conditioned upon event coordinators working with law enforcement, Fire, and EMS as appropriate to plan for the event. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gaskins and passed unanimously.

11. Ordinance Enforcement: Charter and Rental Boat Registration. After providing a brief overview of both sets of regulations, Ms. Furtado shared that in discussions with Duke Energy’s Mr. Broadway, it had come to light that certain provisions in the regulations were in conflict with the recently revised Shoreline Management Plan. Mr. Broadway has indicated his willingness to coordinate feedback on behalf of Duke Energy, redline the current



regulations, and provide that feedback to Ms. Furtado, at which point this discussion would be brought back before the Commission.

12. Open Discussion. Commissioner Truesdell welcomed and noted that Mecklenburg County Commissioner Elaine Powell was in attendance. Citizen Kevin Guessy of Iredell County addressed the Commission regarding concerns about roadway parking issues related to charter and rental boats and rafting events. Mr. Guessy noted safety issues for emergency medical access in neighborhoods impacted by charter and rental boat companies and rafting events due to parked cars blocking traffic ingress and egress, and requested the Commission consider these issues when approving or denying permits.

14. Adjourn. With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m. after a motion by Commissioner Holder, which was seconded by Commissioner Ralston, passed unanimously.