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LNMC MINUTES

January 11, 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
(this meeting has been recorded and is posted at lnmc.org)

Lake Norman Marine Commissioners:

Michael Hughes	Chairman
Dennis Eddinger	Mecklenburg County
David Scott	Catawba County
Rick Howard	Iredell County
Christopher Uzzolina	Lincoln County

Staff:

Morris Sample	Executive Director
John Gerke	Asst. Ex. Director
Angela Palmer	Administrator

Call to Order

A quorum was declared and the meeting was called to order by Commissioner Michael Hughes at 7:00 pm. All in attendance rose to salute the flag and repeat together the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

After a review of the minutes from the November 9, 2020 meeting, there was a motion to approve by Commissioner Eddinger, seconded by Commissioner Uzzolina. Approval of the minutes as presented were passed unanimously.

Reports – LNMC Executive Director

Executive Director Morris Sample reported the following items:

- Received several calls about hunting. Wildlife advised that hunting is allowed on Lake Norman but you can't hunt from shoreline below the 760 elevation if water is down. Also, none of the counties surrounding Lake Norman have a minimum distance from residence for discharge of firearm. It is legal if discharge does not strike a person or structure.
- With lake levels lower, 4.2 feet down, there are many places not marked with shoal markers that may be too shallow to navigate. Please exercise caution when navigating in unfamiliar areas or near the shoreline. Also be aware of low water temperature and danger of hypothermia after a short period of time in the water.
- Received a call about draining water to lake. In checking with Charlotte Water, Mecklenburg county does not allow drainage of any water that contains any chemicals into surface waters. This would include swimming pools with treated water.

- Company that conducted our government audit has informed LNMC that they no longer will conduct those audits. We will be requesting quotes from auditors approved to perform government audits soon.
- LNMC meetings will continue to be on zoom until further notice. The restriction on meeting attendance will have to be removed before we go back to in person meeting.

REPORTS - ENFORCEMENT

Cornelius Police Department

Officer Figaro report Mecklenburg county does have a 500' rule for discharging a firearm on the lake. Also, the island off of John Connor is private and you are not allowed to hunt on that island. Officers responded to and initiated 3 calls for service, completed 396 zone checks and 10 Problem Solving Activities during the month of December. These calls for service are on the lake only. The most calls for service were received on Sunday. The average response time to calls for service was 6.3 minutes while the average enroute time was 3.0 minutes.

- 911 Hung- Officers located the vessel near Channel Marker R1. One of the occupants had accidentally dialed 911. They advised everything was ok. They were able to hang up the call. No further police action taken.
- Assist Citizen - Caller advising he is in a sailboat stuck in the mud across from the Morningstar Marina. Another boat was able to pull him out

Iredell County Sheriff

Lake Patrol with Iredell County – Deputy Church reported 2020 totals – responded to 1700 calls for service. 7 impaired drivers, 443 traffic stops, 295 civil disturbance calls. The bulk occur between April-September. Conducted 7647 security checks. 29 investigations with 50% being larcenies. Assisted 121 vessels (usually broke down). 133 navigational hazards removed (usually black floatation)

Catawba County

Catawba County Lake Patrol – No report

Lincoln County

Lincoln County Lake Patrol – Officer Calhoun no report

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

Ron Robertson - No Report

Reports – Lake Issues

Duke Energy

Chad Broadway reported the lake level is at 95.8 which is slightly above target. Lowest target level will be late January. Removed a significant amount of manmade debris during the high water event. Duke does not remove any natural woody debris. This is deferred to local law enforcement.

Coast Guard Auxiliary Division 26

Steve Riggins reported due to COVID-19 there has been no activity on the lake or around the lake. The Coast Guard Auxiliary will be conducting virtual boating safety classes for 2021.

Lake Norman – America's Boating Club

No Report

Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec.

No Report

Island Habitat Program & NC Wildlife Federation

Billy Wilson requested approval of a fish island habitat contingent upon all other agency approvals. Partnering with the Lake Norman Shrine Club collecting Christmas trees and deploying in Lake Norman. \$20 donation to collect trees and all proceeds go to the Shriners. This will be located just south of Stutts Marina. Collected approx. 160 trees and will be anchored with cinder blocks. This will result in approximately 45 fish attractors and will take place within 2 weeks of all approvals. Commissioner Eddinger made a motion to approve, 2nd by Commissioner Howard. Following a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Catawba Riverkeepers

Michael Lindsey – No Report

Water Quality/Erosion/Buffers/Illegal Discharge**Mecklenburg County Water Quality**

Dave Ferguson reported

- Routine lake monitoring for November conducted on 11/16/20
- Average water temperature on day of sampling = 67.6 F
- Lake level on day of monitoring = 98.1 ft (target = 96.5 ft)
- Average water clarity on day of monitoring = 2.6 m (8.5 ft)

Comments from the Public:

- No comments

Committee Reports:**ATON Committee**

Morris Sample reported the following since last meeting:

- Marker D7, Light Out
- Marker M3, Light Out
- No Wake Bridge buoy to be added at I-77 bridge east of Williamson Rd. Bridge
- No Wake Bridge buoy to be replaced at railroad bridge leading to Lake Norman Marina
- No Wake Bridge buoy to be replaced at Hwy 150 bridge at Mountain Creek Marina
- No Wake Bridge buoys at Buffalo Shoals bridge are missing and will be replaced. May be replaced with poles with No Wake sign and lights as alternative to buoys.

Environmental Committee

Morris Sample reported working with DEQ for plans for the spring stocking of grass carp. It looks like we will be moving forward with the mortality study. Using acoustic tags to track the grass carp.

Boater Education/Communication

Commissioner Scott reported a meeting last week with 14 people in attendance. Exploring how we could use billboards for media. Working on developing a focus group around social media. Core educational courses are a concern due to Covid. Glad to hear about virtual education from the Coast Guard Auxiliary tonight. The next meeting is February 16th.

Charter Boat Committee

Commissioner Eddinger reported that this will begin in the next week or so sending out the applications for permits and inspection procedures. A meeting will be scheduled for March. There is a group interested in renting house boats on the lake.

No Wake Buoys

Commissioner Howard reported Billy Wilson is co-chairing this. Diversified group interested that bring a lot to the table. There have been 3 meetings so far. The group reviewed the history of No Wake Buoys on the lake. 96 buoys have been approved and 88 have been installed. Why the need exists – 1) to promote life safety and 2) to protect property. There are 13,000 properties on Lake Norman. Concern about the magnitude of managing buoys for these properties. It is unclear how many “illegal” buoys are on Lake Norman. Working to determine this number. Looking for answers of how to manage and enforce buoys. Looking for input and to move forward. The goal is to have the next meeting and come away with a recommendation to bring to the committee. Commissioner Scott requested that the committee come up with a solution to address the illegal buoys head on.

Rafting Committee

Commissioner Uzzolina – No Report

Applications

No-Wake Buoy Requests

- None

Rafting Applications

- None

Charter Boat Applications

- None

Variances

- None

PERMITS

- Ski Slalom Course Application from Lake Norman Waterski Club – 4 courses presented – Commissioner Eddinger made a motion to approve, 2nd by Commissioner Uzzolina. Following a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.
- Mt Creek Park (Catawba County) application – Gary Wirth presented work consisting of a kayak launch, observation/fishing pier and hiking/biking access bridge. Mt. Creek Park consists of 600 acres. The bridge offers 12' of clearance at full pond as required by Duke Energy. This project is currently in design. Duke Energy has advised that the bridge is in an environmental area and the kayak launch and fishing pier are just north of future residential areas. Commissioner Uzzolina inquired about access to this area and it will be open and free to the public. Boat launching will be prohibited in the park. Catawba County purchased 18 additional acres. The map presented to the commission only showed 1/3 of the area. There is a Facebook site and a county site to see more regarding the plans for this area. Could the kayak launch be ADA compliant? Not likely given the topography, although there will be ADA access to it. The fishing/observation pier will be ADA accessible. Commissioner Howard made a motion to approve contingent upon other agency approvals, 2nd by Commissioner Uzzolina. Following a roll call vote the motion was approved unanimously.

FERC Applications

- None

Administrative Matters

- 2021-2022 Budget Resolution – No changes to the draft budget presented in November. There is an increase in the requested amount from the counties. Commissioner Eddinger made a motion to approve, 2nd by Commissioner Scott. Following a roll call vote the motion was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16pm.

Our next meeting will be February 8, 2021