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LNMC MINUTES

April 12, 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 (Absent)

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 March 8, 2021 meeting, there was a motion to approve by Commissioner Scott, seconded by Commissioner Eddinger. Approval of the minutes as presented were passed unanimously.

Reports – LNMC Executive Director

Executive Director Morris Sample reported the following items:

- With the recent lake level increase due to rain events, we have received reports of large natural debris in the lake. Contact local lake patrol if debris is a navigation hazard and they may be able to assist. If man made debris is observed, please contact Duke Lake Services.
- John Gerke and I attended the annual meeting of the Catawba Wateree Water Management Group. Initially this group was concerned with the quantity of water that would be available in the future and led to the development of the Water Use Report for the next 50 years. However, recently the group has shifted emphasis to water quality as one of the main issues. This can impact water treatment facilities and how they are able to handle changes in water quality.
- In a recent meeting with lake patrol officers, the increasing use of rental boats was discussed. Currently the NC requirement for boater education does not apply to operators of rental boats and this has resulted in operators that are not familiar with requirements on Lake Norman. The Marine Commission will be reviewing this issue to determine if there should be some requirements for people that rent boats on the lake.
- 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. Anticipate it will be late summer or fall before in person meetings for large groups will be resumed.

Cornelius Police Department

Sargent Figaro reported officers responded to 9 calls for service during the month of March. These calls for service are on the lake only. The most calls for service were received on Saturday. Calls for service were reported between the hours of 6:00am-12:00pm and 6:00pm-12:00am most often. The average response time to calls for service was 6.7 minutes. Officers self-initiated 621 zone check and 31 crime prevention activities.

- Attempt to Locate - Lake Norman Marine Commission requested us to check the light on channel marker M6 to see if the light was working. Found same not functioning properly and reported same.
- Community Involvement - Cornelius Police hosted and participated in a week long joint maritime training. Agencies attending the training included: Iredell County Sheriff's Office, Catawba County Sheriff's Office, Cornelius Police Department, North Carolina ABC Officers as well as the United States Coast Guard Axillary. Each agency was responsible to plan and conduct a block of training.
- Found Property - Blue sailboat washed up on owner's beach. Duke was contacted and would be towing same.
- Attempt to Locate - Caller states a boat broke free from other side of lake, being swept away, approaching other boats. The owner was located and contacted Towboat took possession of the vessel.
- Attempt to Locate – Caller stated a person fell off a sailboat into the water near Blyth Landing. Found the vessel operator dove off the sailboat in the water. He was not in distress.
- Attempt to Locate – Caller stated a sailboat appeared to be drifting in the water out about 600 yards from Holiday Marina. Located the owner who lived in the Bahia Bay Community. Secured the sailboat at the Bahia Bay Community Docks
- Attended the Lake Norman Marine Commission Education Committee meeting
- Attended the Lake Norman Marine Commission Buoy Commission meeting
- Attended the Lake Norman Marine Commission Marine Commission meeting
- Cleared several dock billets from navigational waters

Iredell County Sheriff

Deputy Church with Iredell County reported they enjoyed the training with CPD. April 2nd overturned sailboat. Were able to right the boat. No numbers to report. Be aware of lots of debris.

Catawba County

Catawba County Lake Patrol – No report

Lincoln County

Lincoln County Lake Patrol No report

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

Ron Robertson reported they were unable to participate in the training event due to the opening of turkey season. Bass fishing is great and tournaments are in full swing. Very few violations with most people being in compliance. Largest hunting and fishing license sales in history. March 11th Queen's Landing boating accident. Launching a pontoon boat to dock at residence. While leaving the cove looking down and ran into the back of the Catawba Queen. The accident was caught on video by Queen's Landing. Charged with careless and wreckless operation and hit and run. Currently planning the "On the Road, On the Water – Don't Drink and Drive" First event May 28th (Memorial Day weekend). 2nd even July 5th at Lake Norman. Media event at Hager's Creek.

Reports – Lake Issues

Duke Energy

Chad Broadway – No Report

Coast Guard Auxiliary Division 26

Steve Riggins reported Patrol Activities with Lake Norman Law Enforcement training Week of March 29, 2021: March 30 and April 1 Patrols conducted with 3 CG Auxiliary vessels present with a total of 9 Auxiliarists involved, including a radio watchstander on-land. CG Auxiliary also gave a presentation on Friday of that week regarding CG Auxiliary capabilities, contact information, and best ways to communicate with law enforcement.

1. The CG Auxiliary will be conducting an About Boating Safely live virtual class via three Zoom meetings on April 20, 22 and 24. The class is full with 17 registrants. Lake Norman-specific regulations and navigation information will be covered in this class in addition to the normal material.
2. A second live virtual class via three Zoom meetings on June 15, 17 and 19 was just opened for registration, utilizing the revised Boating America class material. Lake Norman-specific regulations and navigation information will also be covered in this class.
3. A regular return to on-water operations is planned for this season. Regular Active Duty Coast Guard personnel are planning visits to every CG Auxiliary unit with CG Auxiliary vessels to verify safety procedures, equipment and basic training skills due to the long period of on-water inactivity due to COVID-19. The visits are anticipated within the next month, which are a pre-requisite to the return to normal on-water operations.

Lake Norman – America's Boating Club

No Report

Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec.

Peter Cook reported the swim beach will not be opened at Ramsey Creek park. No special events at this time, but could change as restrictions are lifted. Vice Chairman Powell and Greg Clemmgh were in attendance as well.

Island Habitat Program & NC Wildlife Federation

Billy Wilson reported installed osprey nesting platforms at Marker #3, N1 and T5. The birds took immediately to the platform following installation. The osprey and heron cams are back online. The heron cam is higher definition and has night vision. Ncwf.org and livestreaming on Facebook. April 24th the Town of Cornelius will host Earth Jam 2021 with social distancing measures in place. To be held at Robins Park. Heartwood Tree to sponsor the event Inwc.org website for further details.

Catawba Riverkeepers

No Report

Water Quality/Erosion/Buffers/Illegal Discharge

Mecklenburg County Water Quality – Dave Ferguson reported routine lake monitoring on March 9th. The lake looked great during sampling.

Comments from the Public:

- No Comments

Committee Reports:**ATON Committee**

Morris Sample reported the following since last meeting:

- Marker R5, Light Out
- Shoal Marker south of PYC, on east shore, 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. Will be replaced with poles with No Wake sign and lights as alternative to buoys.

Environmental Committee

Morris Sample reported the stocking of 750 grass carp will be in the next 3-4 weeks. Will send an announcement for anyone who would like to attend. Presentation by the tagging committee sometime this summer. 50 carp will be tagged to allow tracking as they move around the lake. How long do these fish live when there is no hydrilla and where do they go? Hopeful to get some good data. Cooperative effort with Duke Energy and Charlotte Water.

Boater Education/Communication

Commissioner Scott reported a meeting last week. Few in attendance due to spring break. Wrapping up a dealer survey to discuss the rental boats. Suggestions for “Best Practice” training. Group reviewing existing educational material. Trying to get it in a concise format to deliver by social media. Trying to get an emphasis on a theme to help spearhead this material. “Love Where You Lake”. Looking to launch very soon. Positive message to promote responsible boating. Looking for feedback from the commission

Charter Boat Committee

Commissioner Eddinger – All charter boats have been inspected and all passed.

Carolina Grace – Carolina Grace Lake Norman

Divine Intervention – Charlotte Cycle Boats

Catawba Queen – Lake Cruises Queen’s Landing

Lady of the Lake – Lake Cruises Queen’s Landing

Carolina Tiki – Karolina Tiki

NoPkehee – Peninsula Yacht Club

Motion to accept that all be permitted. Commissioner Scott seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

No Wake Buoys

Commissioner Howard reported the committee has continued to meet. Few in attendance due to spring break. Great discussion continued, but has led to more questions along the way. Want to ensure they are being thorough and need more input. Asking the commission to review tonight and give any feedback. Billy Wilson added the commission was provided a draft presented as the work that has been done up to this point by the committee. Shared the draft and how it was arrived upon. Looking for more data over a longer period of time during the recreational period. The draft is a working document. Working with legal support to get it right and use the correct terminology. Attorney Chris Clark explained the importance of the name of the document to include the word “regulations” as the commission has authority to create regulations on Lake Norman. Here to support and assist the committee with the final document for approval. The document will be presented and then a public hearing for comment. Discussion about pending buoy applications. Commissioner Eddinger made a motion to rescind the previous moratorium on No Wake Buoy applications and it passed. The two outstanding applications will be voted on at the May meeting. Commissioner Scott asked how to give feedback on the draft. Billy Wilson recommended sending an email with comments or creating a google doc allowing comments in the margin. Trying to schedule a meeting for the 26th to work through any feedback. Executive Director Sample recommended sending comments to Commissioner Howard to be compiled and reviewed at the next committee meeting.

Rafting Committee

Commissioner Uzzolina – No Report

Applications

No-Wake Buoy Requests

- None

Rafting Applications

- None

Charter Boat Applications

- None

Variances

- None

PERMITS

- None

FERC Applications

- None

Administrative Matters

- Q3 finance report. Currently under budget in most areas which is common during this time as most cost are incurred in Q4. Anticipate coming in pretty close to budget for the year.
- All four counties have received the budget request for 2021-2022.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.

Our next meeting will be May 17, 2021