

From: "robert sredzinski"

To: "Jim Mikolaizik"

Cc:

Sent: Monday March 15 2021 7:42:27AM

Subject: HLIB Meeting 1/19/21 Re: McKinley's Sandy Shores Discussions

3/15/21

Hello HLIB Board & Alternate Members,

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Bob Sredzinski. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all you folks for your time and dedication to improving beautiful Houghton Lake and its surrounding waters. I am sending this email in response to the last Houghton Lake Improvement Board (1/19/21) meeting. I would like to address some comments made by a few board members regarding the McKinley Sandy Shores (herein I reference MSS) waterway with regard to the ongoing weed and algae discussions. I attempted to submit my comments during the public comments portion of the meeting agenda but unfortunately, at the time, my laptop microphone was not working. I am sorry but I personally feel that some of the comments made during the meeting came across as being somewhat judgemental of MSS and I would like to remark. Any problems associated with the MSS waterway are mutually shared with other canal systems and lakefront properties of Houghton Lake. For what it's worth, we are all in this problem solving together. At the end of this correspondence I will offer some thoughts on alternative options to weed control.

In 1986, I built my second home upon the MSS Estates phase #2 tract. I have permanently resided there for over four years. The property is located parallel to Old Trail Drive and is opposite the wetland areas. For over 35 years, I have witnessed the MSS properties and waterway evolve over time. With that said, I believe that I am in a position to share some insight to the upcoming viewpoints. I will now address three comments that were made . Please note that these comments are not verbatim but relatively close in context to what was stated.

Comment #1:

"All I see are lush lawns and there is a neighbor on the end canal that fertilizes the lawn several times"

With the exception of this one neighbor and whether the statement is true or false...with actually living on the waterway I do not see or believe in the assumption that all residences are fertilizing lawns and contributing to the assumed weed, algae or whatever situation is actually going on. I will share that 90% of the 150 or so residences have seawalls. For those residences that do fertilize I may suggest these seawalls are typically constructed high above the water and quite possibly may not contribute to any fertilizer runoff, but I could be wrong. I believe the witness of lush lawns as stated is primarily a product of watering.

Comment #2

"I go thru McKinley's canal and I see many boats not being moved after I suggested that they use their boats and break up the algae and move the water"

If one travels through the waterway especially during the week with those residences that are downstate their boats are not being utilized. However, several full time residents use their boats on a regular basis. On any given day there is a constant parade of fisherman, occasional tournament fisherman, jet skiers, kayakers, paddleboarders and sightseers using and cruising the waterway system. Anytime there is a high wind event on the lake the waterway always seems to become a destination point for people to cruise and spend some time checking out the scenery. Also these wind events do introduce weeds into the waterway. Especially during this past summer with COVID and the increased number of people in the area the lake proper and waterway have indeed seen high usage. Many times I have to wait to pass through the bridge at Bryan J Drive due to high boat traffic. I think that boat traffic at any rate has resulted in little effect on the algae problem but it does cause more weeds to be introduced into the system. Certainly there are some areas where aeration has been discussed as a possible solution.

Comment #3

"The canal is shallow and this is part of the problem"

Yes and no...to explain I would like to share some history. During the 60's the waterway system was dredged to a plan submitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineering. Please see attached a vintage postcard depicting the completed MSS waterway. The center of the waterway was originally dredged in a "V" shape pattern to a substantial depth with the intent that the deep water would limit weed growth in future years. As with time and development certainly the waterway has seen some fill in. As a youngster vacationing in the area with my parents I was able to witness some of the actual dredging of MSS. Using my boat I have discovered average water depths in the main channels of between 9-12 feet with some areas 16-19 feet or better. In reality, some areas of the waterway are deeper than the lake as a whole. One could observe that the waterway is shallow in certain areas. As you already know this is especially true in some of the finger areas of the system especially where there has been recent development. I believe waterway levels were greatly impacted last season by lengthy hot temperatures, much lack of precipitation and a continued effort to keep lake levels low. These factors contribute to weed and algae growth as we see it today.

Up until 3 or 4 years ago my children, who are grown up now, used to enjoy swimming in the waterway. I will not allow that activity anymore. Sadly at the rate things have progressed my children's children probably will not swim there either. The canal for the longest time possessed a good water quality with minimal weed growth. Over the last three years or so, something drastically has occurred in the ecosystem of the waterway. It never had the presence of algae as we have experienced over the last two years. The brown color of the water resembles the color of a Coke beverage and there still remains noticeable weed growth in some areas. I consider the MSS waterway a great resource and I am certain others would agree as well. It is a great fishery and I feel it's even better than the lake proper. The wetlands areas provide home to turtles, beavers, deer, ducks and birds. The MSS waterway is a resource that must be supported by the HLIB. I personally would prefer a solution other than continued chemical treatment for MSS waterway. Let's try to bring it back to its original quality.

As you are aware there is in existence a McKinley's Sandy Shores Property Owners Association whose primary function is maintenance of the waterway opening. Please note that I am not a

member of its Board and cannot speak for the Board. However, I would like to present the following thoughts for the HLIB consideration going forward.

1. Is it time to revisit the nutrient levels of both Higgins Lake and Lake James tributaries to see if there is any noticeable impact on Houghton Lake water quality today?
2. Consider harvesting the weeds in a small area and sample, record and evaluate the results over a certain timespan. If results prove positive then move forward on a larger scale plan.
3. Consider dredging a small area to remove weeds, sample, record and evaluate the results over a certain timespan. If results prove positive then move forward on a larger scale plan.
4. Could the HLIB direct the future collection of milfoil treatment funds from MSS property owners and earmark those funds for betterment of the MSS waterway either short term or as long as needed?
5. Could the MSS somehow match/compliment funds if the HLIB were to approve of a funds transfer designated to dredging and weed control?
6. Would a special assessment for MSS property owners, combined with an HLIB match be feasible to get something going with regard to weed control?

Thank you for your attention.

Regards,

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