

**Minutes of Karth Lake Improvement District Board  
Regular Meeting 6:30 PM, Tuesday, January 10, 2023  
Approved April 11, 2023**

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

The meeting convened at: 6:30 PM.

**Present:**

**Board Members:** Aisha Elmquist, Chair; Renée Marino, Secretary; Gary Gerding; Kathy Johnson; Linda Hansohn; Susan Johnson  
**Staff Liaisons:** David Swearingen, Public Works Director

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** The agenda was approved as written.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the previous meeting on October 11, 2022 were approved as written.

**4. PUBLIC INQUIRIES:** None.

**5. OLD BUSINESS**

**5.1. Karth Lake water level modeling and management process progress report.**

**Renee Marino**

**5.1.1 Background: Renee Marino's Hypothesis:** a revision to the pump management policy can reduce water level bounce (i.e., range of high and low levels), which can improve lake quality and its environment while appropriately mitigating risk of damage to shoreline properties.

**Action from 10/11/22 Meeting:** Renee to continue working with RCWD to get hydrologist modeling launched. David Swearingen to check on constraints for DNR gauge repositioning. Renee to work with DNR to get the gauge relocated in the spring of 2023 and to include other volunteers in weekly gauge readings. Renee to ask RCWD and DNR for their response to Como lake level management article introduced by Susan Johnson.

**Discussion:** Matt Kocian of RCWD responded after our last meeting to say that the hydrologist has started on the modeling and may reach out to Renée with questions if he has any. Renée has not heard further. Regarding the Como Lake article, Renée has not reviewed or shared it with others so this issue, as well as the DNR gauge relocation topic will be deferred until the next meeting.

**5.2. Plan for 2023 removal of excess lake weeds and debris and control of invasive purple loosestrife. Susan Johnson and Board**

**5.4.1 Background:** Holt has scheduled another lake weed removal day in 2023 for lake property owners interested in participating. After the Purple Loosestrife infestation event in 2022, it will be important to monitor and mitigate new growth in the near future, since seeds from the plants removed in 2022 will most likely continue to germinate for several years going forward.

**Action:** Discuss 2023 plan and identify volunteers for 2023 efforts.

**Discussion:** Susan Johnson requested that this be addressed as two separate topics because they are different in nature. Specifically, she understands that the removal of excess lake weeds and debris is not a specific board action but, rather, a voluntary program in which participation has been decided by individual property owners. Historically, about 50% have chosen to participate. Had it been a board action, the cost of removal would have been assessed to all members by property tax levies with no option to opt out. As a board, we recognize that weed removal is important and beneficial to the health of the lake and encourage it. Since it is beneficial but not necessary, it is not considered it to be an official board action.

For purposes of documenting this issue in the minutes, Susan described an alternative approach that has been considered in the past to address voluntary efforts related to the lake. Namely, the board has considered the creation of a Karth Lake association legal entity, but concluded that organizing and managing such an association would be costly, difficult and unlikely to succeed.

Rather than establishing an association, board members have found that the Arden Hills Foundation has been a valuable vehicle for voluntary donations of funds designated for specific voluntary projects in and around Karth Lake. Proposals for each project are submitted to the Foundation and have regularly been approved.

By contrast, the removal of invasive species such as Purple Loosestrife, Curly-leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Watermilfoil should not be optional. According to the DNR, if identified, such species should be removed. Anything that would be a danger to the health of the lake should be considered to be a board issue, consistent with the KLID mission of advising the city on its management of the health of the lake.

The Purple Loosestrife removal efforts in August of 2022 were met with nearly unanimous cooperation by property owners to remove identified plants or allowing volunteers to remove the plants. The DNR has enforcement mechanisms for removal of invasive species, but the positive experience of 2022 suggests these plants can be managed through cooperation rather than enforcement.

In 2023, Purple Loosestrife removal efforts may be hindered by the ability to identify the plants before they bloom in late summer. However, a DNR pictograph linked to from the City of Arden Hills' website shows how to identify and eradicate the plants before full bloom. Last year's effort was a crisis response. This year's effort can be more deliberate. Planning for that effort can be addressed in the next meetings.

### **5.3. Sediment Growth: David Swearingen**

**5.3.1 Background:** Karth Lake's sediment levels have risen through the years. Several steps have reduced the rate of new sediment inflow including installation of grit chambers on all street sewer inflows including within the BMP#1 Phase I structure. Board members asked whether sediment growth could be measured

going forward. David discussed how the city is measuring sediment growth in several filtration ponds in Arden Hills and suggested that a similar measurement system might be developed for Karth Lake.

**Action:** Continue to discuss the possibility of measuring and monitoring sediment growth going forward.

**Discussion:** David Swearingen said the city hopes to get funding to perform a sediment growth study of Karth Lake in 2025 in preparation for the 2026 PMP (Pavement Management Program) of Amble Drive and adjacent roads. The city's 2024 PMP for the Colleen Drive area includes a sediment study of related drainage ponds and dredging work. This will be the first time the city will combine pavement and drainage/dredging work, so should help prepare for the Karth Lake work. The sediment growth study of Karth Lake would likely include a bathymetric (lake depth) survey and a design depth. This may result in a recommendation for dredging some areas of Karth Lake.

The city cleaned grit chambers around Karth Lake last fall. They noted that some are old and should be upgraded to an improved design in the 2026 PMP.

Further steps on hold pending study grant proposal opportunities in late 2023.

#### **5.4. Open Meeting Policy. Susan Johnson and David Swearingen**

**5.4.1 Background:** The City of Arden Hills' position as of the April 2022 meeting was that, going forward, all KLID board meetings should be in-person only and not offer a remote attendance option. The board was concerned that such a policy could prevent board members and the public with immuno-compromised health status from attending. Steve Scott presented this issue at the City Council meeting on October 10, 2022. The City Council agreed that Zoom attendance at the October 11, 2022 meeting would be allowed. The longer term policy would be fully explained later. This issue is therefore not resolved.

**Discussion:** Per Susan Johnson, Minnesota's open meeting laws relate to allowing the public to observe meetings remotely but does not apply to board members. The City of Arden Hill's policy is compliant with Minnesota's open meeting laws, but does not guarantee that board members can attend remotely, except if the board member is in a public place that allows others to physically join them. That defeats the purpose of keeping an immuno-compromised board member safe from harm. Board members can attend remotely only during a time of emergency if the board member has a medical reason that necessitates remote attendance. Since COVID-19 is no longer considered to be an emergency, the latter condition no longer applies. Susan plans to work with legislators in an effort to remove the phrase from the open meetings statute that this policy can only be done during a state of emergency. As written, she feels that the policy violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), so amendment to the open meeting statute might be possible. Aisha Elmquist said the Council on Disability Rights might be a good

organization to connect with on this issue. Linda Hansohn said that if someone were homebound but wanted to participate in the board, it might be undemocratic to prohibit their participation.

This topic is resolved for now until relevant laws are amended.

## **5.5. Possibility of initiating a new study to identify status and refresh list of BMPs for future management of Karth Lake: KLIDB and David Swearingen**

**5.5.1 Background:** The most recent Karth Lake study and BMP identification was performed in 2009. The board would like to identify a plan to be included in a follow-up assessment of Karth Lake's current health and opportunities for improvement (BMPs). David Swearingen suggested that current or future grants received by RCWD might be extended to include Karth Lake.

**Action:** Continue to discuss new lake study funding possibilities.

**Discussion:** David Swearingen noted that Kyle Axtell no longer works with the RCWD. There was some discussion of identifying a new point of contact for the City.

RCWD has received funding from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MNPCA) to address flooding resiliency. Since Karth Lake will flood if not pumped, David feels a proposal to apply some of the MNPCA funding to study Karth Lake would be appropriate.

As mentioned earlier, the 2026 PMP project will be written to include a study of drainage to Karth Lake in 2025. The city plans to apply for RCWD's \$300 K. annual water quality budget (a funding source for the BMP#1 project) to help fund this 2025 study. This study should encompass multiple topics including rain gardens, grit chambers, the BMP#1 drainage from the walking path to the lake, sediment growth and the retaining wall replacement.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.1. Plan process for next election of KLID Board Members and Officers whose terms have expired.**

**6.1.1 Background:** The terms for four board members expire in 2023: those for Aisha Elmquist, Renee Marino, Linda Hansohn and Tony Peleska. The process for announcing the April 2023 election and requesting candidates to fill open positions involves the drafting of a letter to Karth Lake Improvement District members (which are, by definition, Karth Lake shoreline property owners). The City of Arden Hills then sends that letter to members by regular mail.

**Action:** Agree on the process and general content for drafting this letter to KLID members.

**Discussion:** Only 2 positions are open: Linda's and Tony's. Renée's and Aisha's terms are through 2024, not 2023 as stated on the agenda (the website is correct). The main focus is to be inclusive and attract new participation. Kathy said about 4-5 houses on the south side of the lake will be sold soon, as the owners have died

or are no longer living there. Many current board members got involved soon after moving in. There was a general discussion about how to identify new homeowners so the board could reach out to them. The city has a tool to quickly pull a mailing list of addresses, but it not pulled on a regular basis. Homeowner names can also be accessed from the interactive property tax maps, but there is no automated way to be notified of a new owner. Communication within the education topic below could also help increase awareness for 2024 elections. Although the preference is to attract new board members, Linda is willing to continue on the board if she is needed. Aisha agreed to reach out to Tony to see if he could do the same.

For the 2023 elections, we should prepare a new letter to KLID members that David Swearingen can send to property owners. Renée to send last year's letter to the board for their input, then Kathy Johnson agreed to draft the new letter and Renée to finalize and send to David.

## **6.2. Identification and onboarding of new City Council liaison and other communications with City Council.**

**6.2.1 Background:** Several new members were elected to Arden Hills' City Council in November 2022. A new liaison will likely be appointed by Mayor David Grant to the KLID board. Last year's onboarding of liaison Steve Scott included a walking tour around the lake. At the last board meeting, the idea of an annual tour of the lake was discussed and broadly supported.

**Action:** Discuss possible ways to educate new City Council members and the new liaison about Karth Lake and the history and prospects for its management. Discuss the possibility of a 2023 walking tour of the lake, including when, for what audience and by whom.

**Discussion:** The new City Council liaison has not yet been appointed. Hold this topic until that happens. The City Council has a big learning curve right now, but the KLIDB might want to make a presentation to the City Council at some point in the future. The last one was made over 10 years ago. This topic is on hold.

## **6.3. Education of lakeshore owners about disposal of leaves into lake.**

**Discussion:** This topic should be expanded to a broader educational and outreach goal and help increase interest in the KLID. A communications plan could include face-to-face door-to-door outreach, a flyer, events, the website and other methods. Gary shared a previous flyer. Kathy agreed to start drafting a new flyer. Any flyer could be linked from the website. This topic will be addressed further at our next meeting.

**7. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 6:30 PM at City Hall.**

**8. ADJOURN**