



Indian Lake Borough

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

JUNE 2013 NEWSLETTER

BOROUGH HIRES ADDITIONAL POLICE OFFICER

The Borough will be adding yet another member to the Indian Lake Police Department roster. Pending the formal approval of Council, I have been authorized to begin the process of adding Officer Michael Jacobs to our roster and he will soon be on patrol in the Borough. His addition will provide us with additional weekend coverage through the summer to allow for some needed weekend time off for our other officers. If you see him, be sure to welcome him. Mr. Jacobs comes to us with over 5 years' experience as a member of the Jackson Township and Stonycreek Township Police departments.

WALKING THE ROADS OF INDIAN LAKE

Many, especially on weekends, enjoy walking the roads of Indian Lake – and why not – it is a truly beautiful and peaceful environment. However, it seems a few reminders about how pedestrians should share the roads with vehicles are appropriate. Remember to walk on the side of the road opposing traffic. Keep pets on a leash in compliance with Borough Ordinances. Finally, when walking in a group, please avoid walking abreast so as to block the entire road. With a 30 mph speed limit in the majority of the Borough there are a number of places where approaching vehicles have limited ability to react when encountering a group that is blocking the entire road. I encourage as many as possible to use our hiking and biking trail but if you wish to use the roads, please do so in a manner that recognizes the shared vehicular and pedestrian use of our roads so that we can avoid any pedestrian-vehicle encounters that would cause injury to anyone.

LAKE DRAWDOWN

There have been a number of justified concerns expressed over the planned draw-down this year. Some of you plan to bring those concerns to Council and you should. As you prepare to do so, please keep an open mind and consider the following, which is intended to help you to focus your inquiry on issues and possible solutions so that the discussion may be productive and helpful.

While I have no vote in the matter and cannot speak for the members of Council, I am certain that none of them are insensitive to the concerns regarding the loss of the Labor Day weekend. I also know that no member of Council wants anyone to lose this popular weekend on the lake. That said, the decision at this point is based on the advice of our Engineers (CME Engineering) who have done a truly superb job for the Borough in getting us this far with the Dam remediation effort. It is my understanding that CME is presently advising against any delay in the draw-down at this time. Unfortunately, I am told that Mr. Isgen of CME will not be able to attend our next Council meeting to explain his concerns but hopefully a knowledgeable member of his staff will be able to attend. Regardless, the plan for the drawdown at this moment appears based on a worst case scenario given that there is much that Council does not and cannot know at this point.

1. **We don't know when the first freeze will occur.** The work in the area of the spillway needs to be done before freezing temps arrive. As I understand it, the excavation of the entry to the spillway requires us to install a temporary water line across the spillway. The current water line goes underneath this area and will have to be dug up, replaced temporarily with an above ground line, and then a new permanent line will need to be re-installed once the excavation is complete. This waterline serves about 80-90% of the homes at Indian Lake. If the work on the entrance to the spillway is not completed before freezing temperatures arrive, we will have a big problem that will impact most lake homeowners. While it is possible to insulate the waterline, the bigger concern is what DEP will do relative to permitting the work to be completed after the arrival of freezing temps.
2. **We do not know how long the excavation work will take to complete.** It is impossible to determine at this time how long the proposed excavation and water line replacement will take. This is because it is not possible to anticipate with precision what the contractor will be faced with once they start excavating the entrance to the spillway. They may get tangled up with significant rock formations; we may have delays with DEP inspections, getting approval to put the water-line back in, etc. Since no portion of this project has gone off perfectly, Council must plan for a worst case scenario. That said, I would expect the anticipated construction time to be a topic of discussion at the pre-bid conference with potential bidders. I think the timeline has this as occurring in late June or July. Once Council has that information, I would expect that the draw down schedule will be re-visited.
3. **Cost.** Council is no doubt considering the cost impact that compressing the available work time will have on the cost of the project. Going too far out of budget on this project presents problems that are difficult to deal with. We just can't simply borrow more money. As you will recall, we increased our borrowing limit to accommodate the anticipated project costs to completion. To borrow more than our current borrowing limit would require a referendum, which is not something we can put to the voters at the drop of a hat. Even if we could, there are the tax consequences to consider. As a result, Council will no doubt be seriously considering the cost implications of delaying our start date.
4. **Drawdown Time-Frame:** While I am told that we can potentially draw the lake down as much as 1 foot per day (assuming no significant rainfall), we have been requested by Lake Stoneycreek to slow our drawdown process so as not to flood their lake. To avoid the potential risk of suits for damage, Council has agreed to monitor the Lake level at Stoneycreek and modulate the rate of the drawdown accordingly to preclude flooding. As a result, I am told that it may take 3 weeks to get the lake down to a level that would permit construction to commence. If there is significant rainfall, then this process will take longer. Because the Marina needs at least 3 weeks to get boats out of the water, in order to permit full access to the lake to all for the Labor Day Holiday, we would have to delay the start of the draw down by at least 3 weeks to permit the Marina to remove boats. Then add the 3 weeks to draw the lake down and we would have a construction start date that would not begin until sometime near the middle or end of October. Since our first freeze will no doubt occur sometime in November, we would only have potentially four to six weeks to complete the spillway portion of the construction. No one can predict at this point whether that will be enough time. We certainly don't want to risk having to complete work in

the spring as that will no doubt impact the cost of the project as well as potentially jeopardize a significant portion of the boating season next year.

Given what Council does not know and cannot know at this point, it would appear prudent that Council prepare for the worst case. Since, the draw down permit from DEP does not permit us to start the drawdown before September 3rd - that becomes the worst case by default. In order to begin the draw down on that date, the Marina will need to begin removing boats at least three weeks prior. Council's publication of this date as the PLANNED draw down date so that residents and property owners can prepare accordingly seems to be common sense at this point. I am certain that if Council becomes satisfied, based on receipt of additional information, that a three week delay in the start of the drawdown is feasible and will not increase the project cost, then they will notify us all accordingly and we will all breath a collective sigh of relief and will enjoy the labor day weekend on the lake (weather permitting).

In the end, I am compelled to agree that preparing for the worst case now in the hopes that a delay might be feasible is the best approach. If Council instead planned for a draw down beginning three weeks after Labor Day and then had to revise the schedule to draw the lake down sooner at the last minute, there would be justifiable intense criticism for not anticipating and preparing property owners for this possibility.

I encourage everyone to attend the Borough Council meetings so that you can be more informed of the issues that Council is faced with. There you can ask questions and gain an understanding of all of the potential impacts that this decision involves. For those that cannot attend, e-mail your questions to Council so that the members of Council will be apprised of your thoughts and can provide you with an appropriate response. You can communicate your thoughts and questions directly to members of Council by e-mail at Council@indianlakepa.us

In the end, while we may not like the impact of the decision that Council may be forced to make, I will work to ensure, and am confident in any event, that the Council will make the best call for all concerned. I am sure that Council will continue to pass on information through the Council newsletter.

/s/

Michael Miscoe

Mayor, Indian Lake Borough