

## **e-News 3 December 2010**

### **Holiday Office Hours/Schedule**

For the upcoming holidays, the office will be closed December 24th and December 31st. Theresa will tentatively be on vacation most other days between December 20th and January 3rd; the office will be manned only part-time. Phone calls, e-mails and mail will be handled, based on urgency, by available personnel. We appreciate, and thank you in advance, for your patience and understanding. More specifics will be forthcoming as we firm up our coverage plans.

### **Winter Weather Advisory**

It is winter. Expect snow and ice. Drive carefully.

Snow or snow showers are forecast literally every day for the next 2 weeks, so we can't ignore the fact that winter arrives 'round here well before the official December 21st schedule. Our road crew usually does a super job, and we will have extra help this winter with our recent new hire (Dave Smith). They generally keep pretty good track of conditions, but please, if you spot an unusual or potentially dangerous or unsafe situation, let someone know.

### **2011 Budget and Taxes**

Council held a Budget Workshop in October to review 2009/2010 actual data and to plan budgets for next year. At the November 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting we voted to approve and advertise the proposed 2011 budget which will increase our tax rate (millage) by 3 mils (to 16 mils total) to cover the dam debt. Council expects to formally enact the 3-mil tax increase on December 8th. This will mean an increase of around \$200 next year for the average Indian Lake homeowner.

Last year we spent some reserves to avoid a tax increase; we will do the same this next year (deplete 'cash' reserves further), but use the cash to begin paying down some of the principal on the debt (line of credit).

Somerset County has recently unveiled a 2011 County budget and a tax increase of 1.8 mils (9.08 to 10.88) which similarly is up for approval by year's end. The county increase is touted as costing the average county homeowner \$45, but will cost the average Lake homeowner more than twice that (around \$125). Like us, the County is also planning on spending down reserves, in their case to cover a portion of their deficit.

### **New Stormwater Management Ordinance 156**

Council voted to adopt our new Stormwater Management Ordinance, Ordinance 156, at the November meeting. This ordinance, which will be signed into law at the December 8th meeting, dovetails with (1) our zoning ordinance, (2) the upcoming new Floodplain Ordinance currently awaiting state and federal release, (3) EPA and DEP's Erosion Control regulations, (4) the Phase III dam work, and (5) the Dam EAP, all in order to protect our properties and our watershed from needless damage due to worst-case storms and floods and the potential impact of development. The approved draft is online at the Borough's web site and will be replaced with the signed/numbered version when available. Thanks are due Dan Rullo, Dean Snyder and the Planning Commission for a solid job. It is expected that only major

subdivisions/developments (disturbing more than 5000 square feet of surface) will be impacted by this new ordinance. If you are planning to build, please check it out.

The Borough will need professional help in reviewing submitted plans. If you have or know someone with this expertise, please let us know. We will need to be prepared in advance...

### **Dam Valve**

I mentioned previously that the **upstream** valve was removed and raised to the surface for rework and adjustment. The **downstream** valve (which is working fine and keeping the Lake full) should allow for maintenance on the main, upstream, valve.

The valve was checked and adjusted by the valve manufacturer just before Thanksgiving. The latest plan is to have the valve manufacturer mate the valve (very flat and stiff) to a new 'flange' (stiff and very flat), and then have that flange be in turn mated to the existing (irregular) 'thimble' using a suitably flexible material (possibly an epoxy).

DEP wants this done ASAP out of fear the downstream valve (exposed) will freeze and possibly be damaged. We are trying to do our best, quickly, but not have the time constraint drive another sub-optimal decision/solution. DEP seems content with our sense of urgency.

Councilman Cornez's blog [<http://www.paulindianlake.blogspot.com>] typically has all the late-breaking details on this dam work. Paul is Council's point-of-contact/project manager for this effort.

### **Zoning Hearing Board- Open Position for Alternate**

Lori Miscoe has moved from the Borough and cannot seek another term on ZHB. If you, or someone you know, is interested in serving a term, please let one of us know. Ordinance 144, Section XI, defines the role and responsibilities. Residency is required.

### **Go Steelers!!**

I thank you for your time.

Bob H.

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