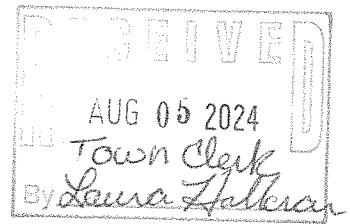


Morris Ordinance Committee
Special Session Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2024



The meeting of the Morris Ordinance Committee was called to order at 4:30 PM by Chairman Eddie Jacob. In attendance were Eddie Jacob, Robin Viola, Laurie Halloran, Connie Trolle, Mike Doyle, Ben Paletsky and Mark Skilton. Also in attendance was Bud Awosting from Camp Awosting (South Bay) and his daughter who helps run the camp.

Eddie Jacob made a motion to accept the July 8 meeting minutes, Ben Paletsky seconded, so voted unanimous, Passed.

New Business: No new Business at this time

Old Business Continued:

Proposed changes to the current Docks, Ramps and Boat Lifts ordinance as well as Water Skiing, Wake Boarding and Wake Surfing by the Board of Selectman.

For those who weren't able to attend the last meeting, Connie Trolle from BLPA presented a detailed explanation of the changes to the ordinance with data on the size of the wakes caused by the wakeboards and wake surfing in the South Bay. This has caused many safety issues as well as damage to docks, shoreline and the stirring up of the bottom of the lake causing algae growth which in turn can become toxic Cyanobacteria. The proposal is to regulate and prohibit this type of activity in the South Bay as well as a bumper of protection around the perimeter of the lake shore, of 200 Ft for water Skiing/tubing and 500 feet No wake surfing/wake boarding. Connie presented Data from other lakes nearby as well as support from the DEP and the Town of Litchfield. A detailed color map was passed around showing the proposed regulated areas.

Connie also spoke about the proposed numbering of docks along the lake in order to help emergency personnel locate a victim. All of the committee members were in agreement that there wouldn't be a problem with it.

Connie also addressed the concern with the enforcement of these ordinances and noted that the DEP/Encon would be enforcing this as well as concerned citizens using the lake by reporting the boat registration to the DEEP. The DEP would in turn impose a fine on the perpetrator.

Michael Doyle from Inland Wetlands presented a letter regarding the Lake Damage from wakeboarding and that the Morris Inland Wetlands Committee endorses the

Bantam Lake Protective Association's efforts to have an ordinance to prevent the creation of those oversized wakes within 500 feet of Bantam Lake Shores. From a wetlands perspective, the concern is the potential for shore and lake bottom damage from these waves.

(Letter is included with minutes.)

He presented copies of the MDNR special report on Wake boats. He explained that there have been many other lakes around the US that are experiencing the same problems as Bantam Lake. The research on that report shows that the operation of wake boats can potentially threaten lake health. Several recent studies show that wake boats can produce waves of 1.7 to 17 times the energy of those created by other comparably sized power boats and these generated waves take much longer to decrease in size to- between 225 feet to 900 feet from the boat. These larger waves can damage property and cause shoreline erosion, decrease water clarity and plant abundance and add excess nutrients that contribute to poor water quality.

(A full copy of this report is included with these minutes.)

Many lakes are adopting an ordinance which is intended to help minimize the ecological and environmental impacts of wake boats.

The Morris Ordinance Committee discussed these reports and for the most part were in agreement with the ordinances of other lakes and applying it to Bantam Lake. The issues with the Wake Boats and Ballast Boats was recognized as a problem. However, Mark Skilton still felt that it would be prohibitive to ban these boats from the South Bay and may cause a problem with potential boaters visiting Bantam Lake.

Robin Viola reminded the Committee that there is a state DEEP law in place about how many feet the boats can be from the shore. She contacted the DEEP regarding it and they advised her that because the South Bay is in Morris, that the town would also have to create an ordinance for that section of the lake as well, if we wanted to expand it to 500 feet. Many homeowners around the lake, the camps and Yacht Club have been a victims of the shoreline erosion as well as safety issues from these oversized wakes being much closer to the shore than the 100 feet state of CT DEEP ordinance.

A discussion followed regarding the towns of Litchfield and Bantam who Connie Trolle stated were on board.

Public Comment:

Bud from Camp Awosting brought forth a copy of the DEEP rules regarding the shoreline rules for wakes. This included data showing that the state law is: **No person shall operate a motorboat, excluding a personal watercraft, at a speed in excess of Slow-No-Wake within 100 feet of shore, or a dock, pier, float or anchored or moored vessel, unless taking off or landing a waterskier.**

He also spoke about the boats and Jet skis turning multiple circles in order to create waves to “hop over”.

The Ordinance Committee then decided to suggest rewording the ordinance to review at the next meeting of August 5th, 2024 and then presenting the changes to the Selectmen’s office for review.

The Ordinance Committee voted on the portion of the ordinance proposing placing numbers on the docks in order to enable rescue personnel to quickly locate an emergency in the water.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 PM