

THE BIRCH LOG

April 2005

WWW.BIRCHWOODLAKES.ORG

“Spring is sprung, the grass is rizz, I wonder where the birdies is?”

Tom Jenkins Sr. - 1950 something

The last board meeting (March) was far and away the best in my memory, but it wasn't perfect. Maybe it is my own paranoia but there was one part that kept me awake for a while.

There were a large number of members in attendance. It looked for a while like the meeting was going to be a board roast. Thankfully, that turned out not to be the case. I did not detect any anger or discontent-- just concern, curiosity, and in many cases, a willingness to help.

The Lakes Committee, headed up by Mike Maher and Tom Andreacci, delivered the best lakes committee report that I have ever heard. Since I chaired the Lakes Committee for five (5) years on two (2) different occasions, I know where of I speak. While there are a lot of balls still in the air, I believe we are well on our way.

The bad part (for me) of the meeting came when a letter was read from one of our residents resigning from the club. The reasons given were essentially that since there is no lake, they could not justify a dues payment. My guess is that they may feel that they are limiting their liability from lawsuits as well. The difficult part of this for me was that I spent some time after the last meeting explaining our position, our corporate status, and the nature of our legal protection. These subjects had been covered ad nauseum at past meetings. I guess they didn't believe me. That is their right, of course.

On the subject of legal issues, the BLCC is a Private Nonprofit 501 C 4 corporation. That status was awarded to us just in time for our grant applications last year. The corporation is responsible for maintaining the 34.4 acres of ground comprised of non-developable, deed restricted land. Most of that land is under what were our lakes. The rest is the ball field, tennis court, basketball court, the clubhouse, the access areas around the lake, and the dams. The BLCC corporate status shields its members and officers from

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Monday, April 11th @ 7:30 PM

At the Clubhouse

The Birchwood Lakes Officers and Directors will be addressing the issues affecting our community. Members are encouraged to attend. The Officers and Directors will be making decisions for you. Why not express your ideas? For detailed info on the meeting format and future meeting dates, go to our website and click on "Board Meetings".

Nonmembers who wish to join the Birchwood Lakes Colony Club are encouraged to come to the meeting. Their application will be taken at the meeting.

personal liability. The club is being defended, in three lawsuits, by Bruce Helies. Our current insurance company, Ohio Casualty Corporation, is paying for Bruce. Other attorneys have told me that he is an excellent choice! Our liability in these suits is the monetary limit of our insurance coverage (one million dollars) and the land, which is relatively worthless due to the nature of its restricted usage.

I think it is very important to remember that the BLCC is much more than just a lake system. The clubhouse provides a center and hub for us to meet and handle business, without which, for example, we could never solve our current crisis. The ball field sees use by the LYAA to teach our children how to participate in team sports. The clubhouse is in regular use as a meeting place for scouting

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2005 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President	John Cirenza	953-8912
Treasurer	Vivian Heiler	654-5507
Secretary	Sandy Scott	953-5640
V.P. Finance	Tom Jenkins	654-0786
V.P. Lakes	Mike Maher	654-4760
V.P. Property	Bill Brown	654-9291
V.P. Recreation	Michelle Swift	654-6268
Financial Sect.	Jim Whipple	953-1937

Directors

Tom Andreacci	11/2007	654-7922
Chris Bradley	11/2007	654-2567
Carol Kontos-Cohen	11/2007	714-2203
Christina Fennimore	11/2006	654-5292
John Rothwell	11/2005	654-4678
Joe Russomanno	11/2005	654-1991
Kevin Wall	11/2006	654-6431

Committees

	Clubhouse	
Chairperson	Valerie Wall	654-6431
Sandy Scott	Kevin Wall	
	Lakes Restoration	
Chairperson	Tom Andreacci	654-7922
	Membership	
Chairperson	Patty Yulick	953-2734
	Communications	
	Website	
Webmaster	Al Homann	953-3222
	The Birch Log	
Editor	Al Homann	953-3222
	Birch Log Distribution	
NW Lakeside Dr	Bill Bielec	654-1761
SW Lakeside Dr	Joe Zurzolo	953-2734
Upper Lake	Sandy Scott	953-5640

The Birchwood Lakes Colony Club

PO Box 382 Medford, NJ 08055
WWW.BIRCHWOODLAKES.ORG

SOFTBALL ANYONE?

Members interested in playing softball Sunday afternoons in May and June, can call John Rothwell at 654-4678. These would be pick-up games with new team captains each week. Games would start at 2 p.m. If the response is sufficient to field two teams, there will be a kick-off BBQ at 1 p.m. prior to the first game scheduled for Sunday, May 1st, 2005. The BBQ will be B.Y.O.Bs (Bring Your Own Burgers, Buns and Beverages). The grill will be ready to go and to honor all the great Dutch softball players of years past, there will be a keg of Heineken on tap.

PAST BIRCH LOGS

Over 25 past Birch Logs are now available on our website including the August 2004 flood issue in full color. To view or print, click on 'Birch Log Newsletters'. This month's Birch Log is also there and from now on, every Birch Log will appear on the website several days before being distributed. Members wishing to receive their Birch Log online need to email a request to AHomann@aol.com

A GOOD COOKIE

A donation has been made to the Colony Club from the fundraiser for dam repair. Many thanks to all who participated by buying Easter cakes/cookies from me.

Victoria Cooper

Victoria's Bakery
26 Cherry St., Medford Village

CLUBHOUSE RENTAL

The rebuilt Clubhouse is back in business sans our beautiful lake. The Clubhouse is in better shape than ever and Kevin Wall informs us he's ready to process reservations. Summer is coming and if you are having a family get together, why not at the Clubhouse? Call Kevin at 609-654-6431.

The Birch Log is published just prior to each monthly meeting and before any special meeting. Materials for the newsletter should be received 12 days before the meeting. Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month, at 7:30 PM, in the Clubhouse. Material may be faxed to 609-953-8429 but the preferred method is by e-mail to AHomann@aol.com. Your e-mail will be acknowledged within 48 hours. If you receive no acknowledgement, call 609-953-3222.

SPRING ED ECK DAY

Saturday, May 7th 2005 - 8am to 12 noon

Please mark your calendar for Birchwood Lakes bi-annual community clean-up day.

Coffee and doughnuts will be served at the clubhouse where a job list will be posted. Some of the jobs will include raking the clubhouse grounds, painting the beach fence and painting the trim in the clubhouse. Members are asked to bring rakes, tarps, shovels, wheel barrows, etc. If you have a job that you feel should be addressed please feel free to call me.

Your Birchwood Lakes Colony Club Board of Directors, Officers and others have been working very hard, devoting many volunteer hours to the enormous task of restoring our lakes to pre-flood condition. Ed Eck Day is a great opportunity for all members of our community to help out, work with each other and take pride in our wonderful neighborhood. Thanks. Bill Brown 654-9291

A SPECIAL BLCC THANKS

I would like to say "Thank You" to the residents for two successful events in March. First, was the St. Patrick's Day celebration. We had a great turnout, plenty of food and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. We even raised over \$200.00 for our lakes! Special thanks to Liz Bilecki, Christina Fennimore, Tom Jenkins and Sandy Scott for all of their help. Thank you again to all who attended, brought something and made a donation to the lakes. You helped make the party a success! Second, was the Children's Easter party. We had over 50 children in attendance. The kids enjoyed lunch, crafts, games and of course an egg hunt. The bunny hop race was a big hit! Thank you to all the parents who brought something to share, we had more than enough food! Special thanks to Liz & Brielle Bilecki, Anne Buchanan, Bernadette & Angela DiGaetano, Leigh Donadieu, Lisa and Erin Hulse, Frank Kenny, Kelly Maquire, John Rothwell and Sandy Scott for all the various tasks they helped me with. A lot of planning and preparation went into this party. Over 500 eggs were stuffed and hidden, not to mention all the phone calls, set-up and clean-up! So, in whatever way you helped me out, "THANK YOU!" I really appreciate it. Events in the works: MAY-Spring Fling (Adults), JUNE- School's out! party (Kids) FYI: Seeking cheap or better yet, free (I mean volunteer of course) DJ for the kids party. Call Michelle Swift with any tips @ 654-6268

DRAWBRIDGE BEING CONSIDERED FOR JACKSON ROAD

At the behest of a number of families in Birchwood Lakes, the Medford Township Zoning Board accepted a petition presented on the residents behalf by attorney Charles Goodlette. The petition was followed by a Microsoft Power Point presentation that contained over 25 charts, photographs, plans, a survey and a cost/benefit analysis spreadsheet. Basically, what the petition lead by Mr. & Mrs. William Beecham was asking, was for Medford Township to include in it's 2006 roads and civic improvement budget, an amount sufficient to create a drawbridge on Jackson Road. The timing of this is to coincide with the widening and bulkheading of Jackson Road. While this raised a lot of questions from the Zoning Board, no-



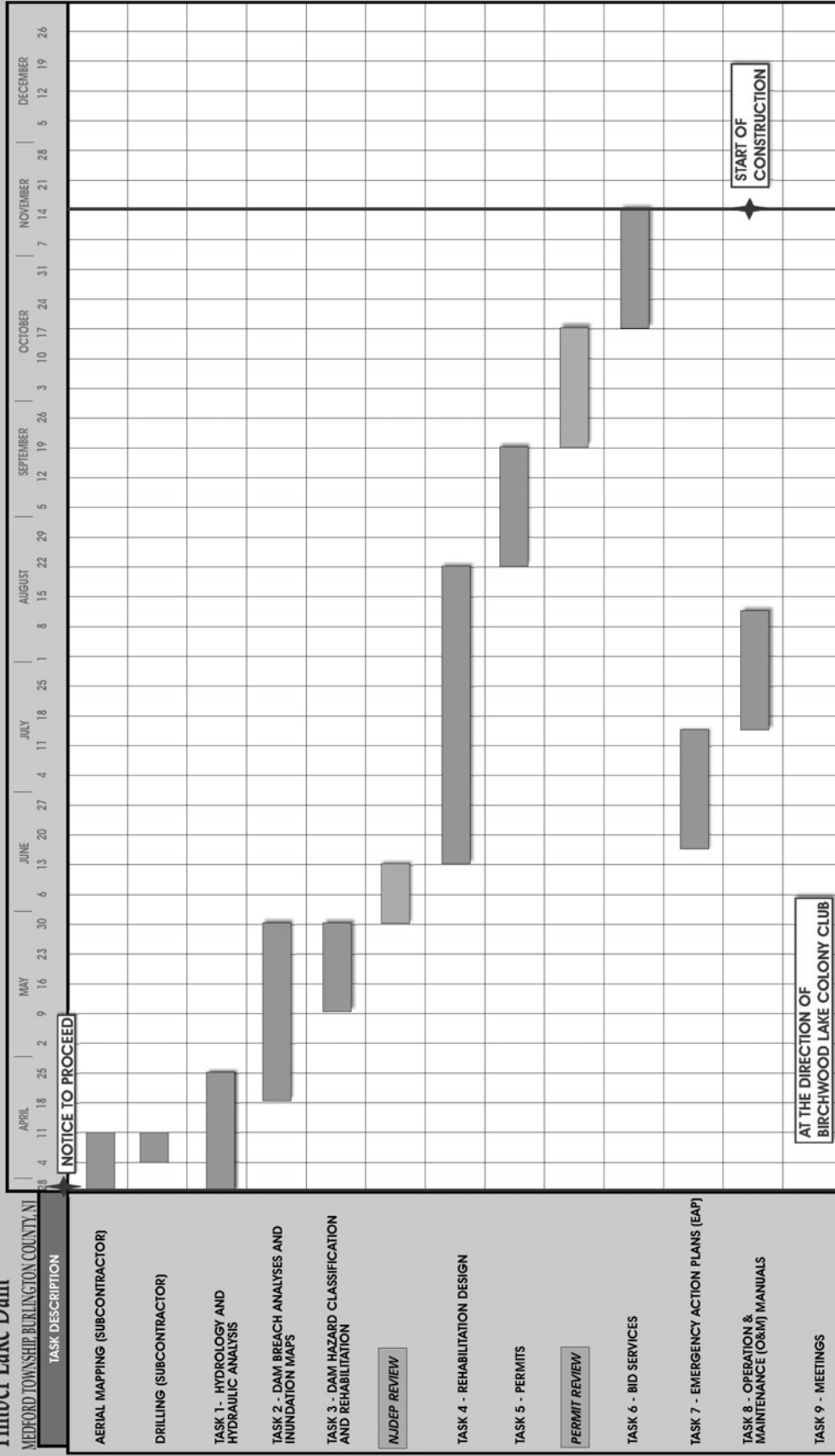
where in the Township code are drawbridges addressed. As the proposal only requested a drawbridge of twenty feet in length (opening) and at a modest cost as a percent of Medford Township's overall budget, it was generally well received. The cost/benefit analysis spreadsheet showed a return on investment that was not inconsistent with the idea itself. Board members warmed to the concept when Mrs. Peter Zappacosta described how her waterfront property would be expected to in-

crease in value (and assessment) if she had direct water access to the Lower Lake for her sailboat. The presentation included engineering drawings of the bridge design. By using balancing weights, two relatively small electric motors could open the bridge in about 45 seconds. The Zoning Board approved a motion to limit consideration of some articles appearing in The Birch Log that were written on April Fools Day.

Birchwood Lake Dam and Timber Lake Dam

MEDFORD TOWNSHIP, BERKINGTON COUNTY, NJ

PROJECT SCHEDULE



NOTICE TO PROCEED

START OF CONSTRUCTION

AT THE DIRECTION OF
BIRCHWOOD LAKE COLONY CLUB

McCormick
Taylor

LAKES COMMITTEE PROJECTS/REPORTS

Mid March ARMCO Construction Company completed the "fix" to protect our spillway and dam box on our Upper (Birchwood) Dam. See pictures. This work was suggested by Birchwood Lakes Colony Club and approved by the DEP and our engineers -again to protect our property and avoid rebuilding the spillway. This weekend's heavy rains are exactly why this work had to be completed.

Finalization of Engineering contract /Mc Cormick Taylor.

Contracts signed and time line: See above. (This schedule may be easier to read on our website. Click on "Lake Restoration, Job #1"). On the upper left, the start date is April 4, 2005. The completion date on the lower right of this phase of the job is November 14, 2005. Although this is an aggressive time line (some say) we want to be aggressive to return Birchwood to its beautiful self as soon as possible.

Individual Bulkhead Repairs: The committee strongly suggests that all lakefront owners take a good hard look at their bulkheads. If repairs are needed consider completing; before you know it we will want to bring the water back and we can not be held up for bulkhead repairs.

Meeting with Medford Township: Mission accomplished. Fact finding meeting held. Results will be covered at regular Monthly Meeting ; April 11, 2005 at the clubhouse.

Sampling of Lake Sediment: Weather permitting, on or about April 4th, Princeton Hydro will be collecting sediment samples at different areas of the lake for analysis for future loan /grant applications and future decisions on project. Sediment samples will be collected using hand augers and shovels. With regard to access of property, the majority of the lake can be accessed by walking the lake shoreline. Access to the lake through private property may be necessary. Princeton Hydro employees will have proper ID .Any questions please call numbers below. Please note many, many meetings of the Lakes committee have taken place and many, many, more are scheduled. Our goal is to "Prepare for Success" . We all want our lakes back! When doing any project around the house(eg. Painting, papering etc.) one always has to go backwards before going forwards. We may have some inconveniences; bushes may have to be removed from common areas ,some construction vehicles on our streets, some early noises, some muddy areas. PLEASE BE AWARE THAT WE ARE AWARE !! When all work is completed we will see that everything is made whole again.

General Meeting: We are scheduled presently to present at a special meeting on June 15th ,2005 the different scenarios of our project. Our dam engineers and environmental engineers will be present for questions. Your vote at this meeting will determine the scope of our lake project. We invite any and all residents of Birchwood Lakes to come to the meetings to find out what is going on. Don't expect to read it in the newspaper, come and hear for yourself what is happening to your lakes. Be informed.

Any questions? Call Tony Giardino @ 609-654-0002 or Mike Maher @ 609-654-4760

Editor's Note: Every month, starting now, there will be a progress report in the Birch Log and on our website.

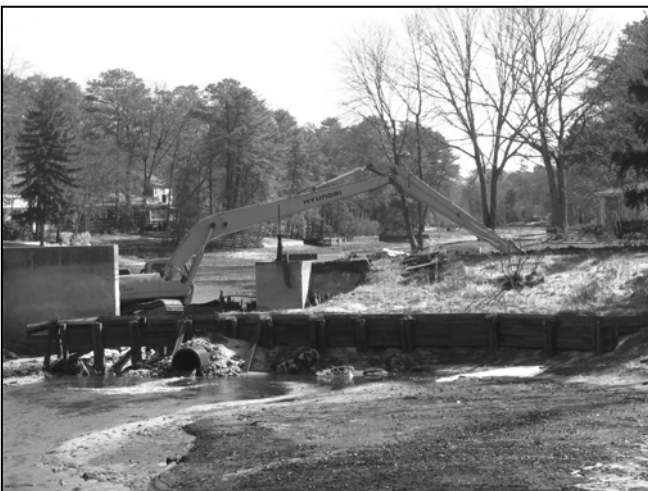
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groups, its highest and best use in my opinion. The Board of Elections uses the clubhouse for all National, State, Local, and School Board elections. The Recreation Committee (lovely ladies that they are) organizes social events all year long that are fun and affordable. A significant part of our dues pays for insurance, which protects our property and us. Another major portion of our dues underwrites the cost of lawn and landscaping care in all of the common areas. Without this important work, being done this year by Bill Brown, the neighborhood would quickly deteriorate. The lake basins provide water for fire protection, even in their current limited state. This is especially important due to our lack of public water. All of this has a positive effect on everyone's property values!

In my mind, the most important usage of our dues will be the eventual result of all of our work: the rebuilding of our dams, the cleaning of our lake bottom, and the eventual return of our lakes to full capacity. This means that for every resident that quits, the financial burden to support the whole community becomes that much more difficult for the rest. We need everyone to be with us in our struggle and we need everyone's understanding and support.

In the end, for me, good won out over evil and I went to sleep remembering the people that came to the meeting: the helpful, hopeful ones - not the single resident that quit and sent a letter. I still have hope that they will change their mind and rejoin. I will welcome them back and try to give them some work. We have lots to do!

New news: The engineering firm has been officially retained and is working on the dam (not damn, sorry I couldn't help myself) solutions. We have constant communications with the Township and Alan Feit's office and they continue to be cooperative and helpful. The Lakes Committee is busily working on acquiring lake bottom samples and managing the dam rebuilding process. There is nothing new on the lawsuits. By the next log we should have some information on our grant and loan applications.



Mike Maher has asked me to advise everyone that the temporary repairs for protection of the spillway on the upper lake have been completed. Some additional tweaking may be necessary and will be supervised by Tony Giardina. Above are two pictures supplied by one of our members. (More pictures are on our website) Mike also asked me to mention that some remedial work on both lake bottom sampling and dam rebuilding tests will begin next week. When you see these kinds of activities and you have questions, Tony has offered to take your calls.

Stay tuned and keep the faith!

Tom Jenkins