

Otter Tail County COLA – November Newsletter

Membership update

Your membership committee has been working throughout the summer and into this fall on three projects that I wanted to update you on.

How to form a lake association and resource guide

This guide includes tips on how to get started forming a lake association including, sample organizational structure, sample bylaws and articles of incorporation, and a Q&A of common questions you may have as you are forming your association.

The resource guide is for both existing and newly formed associations. It contains many standalone helpful tools including mission and vision statements, press releases, using social media and Roberts rules of order to name a few.

Benefits of belonging to COLA

This is an informational and recruiting tri-fold brochure that is intended to be used to recruit individual members and existing associations that are not current members of COLA.

Identification of existing Associations that are not current COLA members

While we are proud to have most associations as members of COLA, we are not satisfied. Our goal is to have every association in the County be a member of COLA. We have done some data mining and are in the process of verifying the integrity of the data we have gathered so our executive group, along with a member of the Board, can contact those that are not members. If you know of an Association that is not a member of COLA and you have a contact in that association, we would appreciate hearing from you.

Upcoming Events

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING [Click Here](#)

November 30, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.

Public input meeting for all Otter Tail County lakes

7-9 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 8, at the Lake Region Electric Cooperative, 1401 S. Broadway, in Pelican Rapids.

President's Letter

The mild Fall weather continues, and many of you have closed up your lake cabin for the year, and are looking forward to Winter. For us remaining who have not started our Winter vacations, it has been a busy time for lake issues. The discussion of the Star Lake Casino has gotten attention throughout the county. While the details and specifics are pretty limited at this time, we are all interested what this major development will do for the county tourism, and

The first two projects above are near completion and in the near future we will have them on the website.

Pat Prunty,
Membership Chair

Recent Development-Otter Tail County Proposed Ordinance revisions impacting shoreland owners

We recently became aware of a proposal by the County Commissioners to consider adding one ordinance and adopting changes to two other existing ordinances by January 1, 2016. A well-attended (approximately 75 people) informational meeting was held on November 2nd. In addition to the County Commissioners and 4 members of COLA's Board, the meeting attendees includes representatives from lake associations, individual lakeshore property owners, representatives from the Resort industry and the DNR. The meeting lasted for 2 hours and the Commissioners received many comments. The proposed changes appear to be significant and your Board is working hard to understand them.

Below is a high level summary of the discussion at the informational meeting.

Dock and Riparian Use Ordinance

Newly proposed ordinance intended to establish standards for where you and your shoreland neighbor can place docks, lifts and boats. The intention is to reduce conflict between neighbors. Meeting participants were generally in favor of the ordinance, but there were some questions as to the exact meaning of the ordinance.

Sanitation Code Ordinance Revisions

Most discussions were centered around a new requirement to have soil suitability testing (boring) done at the start of a septic system installation. Some participants viewed this as an unnecessary incremental cost since soil suitability testing is currently required upon final inspection. Other participants thought it was cost effective to do the tests both at the

as importantly, the negative impacts to Star Lake. [\[Click Here For More\]](#)

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beginning and at the end to avoid getting all the way to the end of the project and then finding out the system installed did not pass inspection.

Shoreland Ordinance Revisions

Most of the discussion centered around the elimination of the current cluster development requirements and replacing them with the state minimum standards for planned unit developments. It is clear the purpose for the change is to promote tourism and economic development. Some believe Otter Tail County, which does not have separate commercial versus residential development/density standards, puts the County and its resort industry at a competitive disadvantage. Others believe the changes are going too far and have a negative impact on our lakes and rivers.

The DNR representatives informed the group the DNR believes the state minimum standards go too far in terms of Development and have on their website a recommended set of standards that they encourage Local Units of Government to consider before they adopt changes. The County Commissioners agreed to review and consider the recommended changes.

The County Commissioners agreed to do a comparison of the proposed state minimum standards for planned unit developments to the requirements of other Counties which have a significant number of lakes.

The meeting concluded with the Commissioners thanking everyone for coming and indicated there may be another informational meeting in advance of a public hearing prior to adoption.

Comments from the meeting have been published and may be seen at [Dave S insert link to what Jeff sent out]

Another informational meeting has been scheduled for November 30th. Details of the informational meeting and the proposed revised Shoreland Ordinance can be obtained at the Otter Tail County website.

Your comments can be sent directly to your Commissioners. (We would appreciate if you would copy COLA so we can consider your thoughts and comments).

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