**Assembly Point Water Quality Coalition**

**15 August 2014 Open Meeting**

**Minutes**

Present: Carol Collins, Lisa Adamson, Arlene Lotters, Bob Ervien, Lorraine Ruffing, Rolf & Luise Ahlers, Bob Tully, Shirley Mockel, Evelyn Jaeger, Mary Helen O’Keeffe, Kathy Bozony, Scott Dubin, Bill Mason, Dave Hartmann, Pam Golde, Dave Wilcox, Dede Connor, Pete Sherman, John Hodgkins, Pat Blais.

Carol Collins, Co-Director opened the meeting and explained why some residents of Assembly Point had created the Coalition as a 501c3. Lisa Adamson, Co-Director gave a power point presentation of the activities of 2013-2014 which included planting rain gardens, swimming shorelines to monitor algae buildup, researching septic system records, erecting a bulletin board, working with the Town of Queensbury to strengthen the fertilizer law and applying for and receiving a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin. She ended with a slide on the threats to the Lake’s water quality; namely storm water runoff, fertilizer misuse, leaking septic systems etc. Carol Collins spoke about land use and described what other non-profit groups and public entities were doing to protect the Lake such as the Lake George Park Commission, Adirondack Park Agency, State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Warren County Soil and Water. There is a lack of enforcement and compliance with existing regulations regarding stormwater. Further, lakewide regulations critical to lake protection have yet to be passed, such as stream corridor and tree cutting, and wastewater. Therefore, grass roots groups are necessary to highlight problems and bring about change.

**Discussion from the floor**

Dede Connor asked Kathy Bozony to explain why fertilizer misuse was a threat to the Lake. Kathy said that Lake George is an oligotrophic lake meaning a non-productive lake. However, with runoff and fertilizer misuse it is becoming a more productive lake since nutrients from land use activities are feeding algae to such an extent that decay of algae is absorbing the dissolved oxygen in the lake. The lack of oxygen is creating dead zones in the Lake. Bob Tully gave the example of Lake Erie where algae conditions have worsened dramatically in a short period. Some parts of the lake can no longer be used for drinking water or boating. The algae there contain neurotoxins. He feared that the same thing could happen here; we have all the warning signs.

In a discussion about how to raise awareness, one resident cautioned that we should be careful of our language and avoid words such as “banning”. It is possible to use fertilizers and pesticides in a responsible way. Our messages should be educational rather than judgmental. He also mentioned that our list of things worsening water quality did not include the use of salt in the winter. He said that road construction had been willy-nilly and repairs consisted of just paving over. The ToQ Highway Dept. bears some responsibility for water quality degradation. We cannot take care of the road only our own properties but the group could pressure the Highway Dept. to do the right thing. Dave Wilcox mentioned that the Highway Superintendent is an independent authority and so the Town Supervisor has very little control over the Highway Dept. That is why grass roots pressure is necessary and the Coalition should go in with a plan for corrective action or best practices.

Carol Collins said we had a long laundry list of problems and that it may be necessary for the Coalition to prioritize. Scott Dubin asked which of the agencies was most supportive of water quality. One difficulty mentioned by Kathy Bozony is that most restrictions apply to new construction. Therefore, older properties do not need to take any corrective action.

The detrimental effect of ice-eaters was also discussed and that might be a subject for the next newsletter.

The audience thought it was a good idea to form a best practices working group. It could inform people about the responsible use of their properties, what the ToQ Highway Dept. could do better, etc.

The group thought it was necessary to work as closely as possible with other water quality groups at Cleverdale-Rockhurst, Dunham’s Bay, Diamond Point, Pilot Knob, and the Hague. Assembly Point has changed over the years. It is no longer a close knit community. There has been a high turnover in properties and people no longer know each other. This makes raising awareness of problems more difficult because people have not seen the pristine state of the Lake 50 years ago. The Coalition should re-create a sense of community and build grass roots pressure for change.

Follow-up action by the Coalition:

1. Send out the minutes and post them on the website
2. Form a best practices working group
3. Work with the ToQ Highway Dept. to use best practices on road maintenance and stop using harmful substances on the roads (short term solution)
4. Work on a retrofit plan for Assembly Point Road (long term solution)
5. Monitor algae growth along the shoreline of Assembly Point
6. Report irresponsible fertilizer use to ToQ
7. Support a uniform fertilizer law for Lake George and attend ToQ meetings to revise fertilizer rule and update septic records
8. Showcase projects

Bob Ervien made a motion that the current officers including Carol Collins, Lisa Adamson and Beverly Pozzi continue for 2015. It was seconded by Bob Tully and unanimously accepted by the group. Bob also urged people to volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors.