

Windham

LIFE & TIMES

BRAD DINSMORE

The First Meeting of the C.P.I.A.
September 11, 1949 (Part 1)



898-9038 Extension 27
115 Indian Rock Road, Windham

The first meeting of the Cobbett's Pond Improvement Association took place on September 11, 1949. What follows is the interesting minutes taken by Herbert Thomas: At approximately 2:15 p.m. this day more than 100 men and women assembled for the purpose of formation of a Cobbett's Pond Improvement Association. As a sidelight, it must be added that it was a crisp, cool, sunny afternoon wherein those attendance willingly sacrificed several hours of their time at camp to go forward in a movement of utmost benefit to themselves and every cottage owner at the popular summer resort. The hall was filled to such capacity that some had to stand.

M. Dean Burns of Lawrence volunteered to serve as temporary chairman and there was no opposition. He explained the purpose and aims of the organization as being for the mutual benefit of all taxpayers and property owners and for the beautification, quietude and benefit of all residents of the pond. In this connection he also referred briefly to property owners at Rock Pond, Shadow Lake and the west shore of Canobie Lake.

Mr. Burns was then nominated and seconded from the floor to serve as president and the temporary secretary, designated by him at the start of the meeting was empowered to cast a vote in that direction. Mr. Burns said he would work hard in the interests of the group as he stressed cooperation.

Other officers nominated and seconded from the floor, without opposition, were Joseph Morel of Andover, vice-president; Miss Annette Bernardin of Lawrence, secretary and William Trull of Lowell, treasurer. In each instance the unanimous vote was by the indication of the assembly. These officers, it was stressed, are to serve for one year. It was not indicated whether they were permanent or temporary.

A motion from the floor, followed by vote, unani-

mous, it was voted to have a board of directors consisting of eight—to represent, as far as is humanly possible, the various sections of the pond. They are to serve for one year, the limitation being that when resolutions and by-laws are drawn up two new directors will be chosen each year. In this case two would have to be elected for four years, two for three years, two for two years and two for one year—unless otherwise decided.

Motion to assess each member \$5.00 for the first year. Over 400 camps on Cobbett's Pond, it was pointed out. Amended motion made assessment \$2.00 for the first year.

Mr. Burns mentioned as recommendations for action by the group—water control rights, fire department, various improvements around pond, campers "association day" and other things if we have surplus funds. Referring to the water control rights, he said "The tide has gone out now. For what reason? Hot summer, lack of rain and somebody removed boards from the dam. I found conditions there yesterday. The water rights go back to 1759." A question was raised about a former pond association buying water rights. The answer from a camper present was that Mr. Evans wanted \$1,100 "and we didn't buy." Evans then owned the water rights at the pond it was stated.

Mr. Burns remarked, "There has been shoreline erosion from the waves with regard to the water rights condition. Wharves are high and dry. There are dangers to navigation, creating a hazard. The dam was built to hold back the water. The boards should be kept there to keep the water level up and taken out only in the fall so you can repair your walls and do other necessary work. Somebody is removing those boards. That is serious. I intend to have this group send a representative to see Mrs. Cochran of Windham about giving us a right of way to maintain these water rights."

Selectmen Myron Wheeler, William Sykes and

George Butterfield, Jr. of Windham were present at this assembly. Mr. Butterfield said he and his surveyor visited the official place of records in Exeter and found there, certain rights existing in regard to the flooding of meadows around the pond. Mr. Burns suggested a committee to see Mrs. Cochran about putting up the boards at the dam. There was discussion about the state doing something about it. It was voted, on motion from the floor, to have officers and board look into the subject and report to the membership on it.

At this point in the meeting the amended \$2.00 a year assessment for first year motion was passed unanimously.

Then the following nominations from the floor and elections from the floor, without opposition eight people to the board of directors. (It was not made clear as to the section of the pond each individual represented.) The board comprises Maurice A. Fitzgerald, Atty. Paul R. Foisy, Bernard Germain, Bernard J. Burns, Rudolph Hanson, Herbert A. Thomas, Walter Kivlan and J. Lawrence Kay.

Mr. Burns: "Relative to sanitation and garbage collections, residents of some sections of the pond are paying 50 cents a week for such collections. I believe the town should do it and that it should be included as an article in the town warrant, in lieu of taxes received, without extra assessment on the campers. Some of us have seen the garbage and rubbish on the side of highways. I recommend such a proposal with reference to the town handling it. In addition, there should be an inspection of septic tanks and surface drains to see that they are all right and not in any way, shape or manner entering or finding there way into the pond."

It was brought out at this point by one of the selectmen present that the first week of February is about the latest to file an article for the town warrant. *More meeting notes to follow next week—*

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It was brought out at this point by one of the Selectmen present that the first week of February is about the latest to file an article for the town warrant...

It was moved, seconded and voted unanimously that Atty. Foisy of Lowell serve as legal counsel or advisor. Mr. Foisy added—"And without compensation." It was moved and seconded and voted unanimously to have the officers and directors take steps to remedy the water rights condition and bring about a solution as soon as possible. Ten minute recess at this point as pond property owners paid their \$2.00 first year assessment.

Then came discussion on taxes and valuations. Mr. Burns invited the three Selectmen to the platform at the front of the hall and they responded. Questions from the floor followed. One was "Chief cause of increased taxes for 1949."

Mr. Butterfield: "Schools were the major item. The new school and two new teachers one of the reasons; also added fuel and furniture. Our tax was raised \$1,200 by the county. Also, the state last year gave us \$4,600 for our schools and only \$2,500 this year. Our appropriations in 1949 were nearly \$16,000 above those of 1948. Every public beach now has to buy a \$10 license; also the stores and other places operating Sundays. There is a 50 cents charge in regard to dog licenses. We raised excise taxes on automobiles about \$500. All this was done before we even considered the tax rate. We assess in April, according to law. It took us all of April and May this year to do it. This year there was a revaluation of the entire town, including year-round residences. We cannot expect relief immediately as far as education costs go. You can expect relief this year because some things done this year won't have to be done next year."

Selectman Butterfield mentioned that if Rock Pond, Shadow Lake, Canobie Lake and Cobbett's

Pond affiliated or represented on "our budget board you will work with us and we will work with you."

Question from a camper: "I want to know why my taxes were more than doubled?" Mr. Butterfield: "They were probably low compared with your abutters. The general increase was 10% and on some places more. You probably have more land than we gave you credit for previously."

Question by camper: "Are the townspeople assessed the same as we are?" Mr. Wheeler: "All proportions throughout town were the same. By this I mean proportions of increase."

Question by camper: "Are campers with plowing services taxed the same as those whose roads are not plowed?" Mr. Wheeler: "We're only supposed to plow accepted roads."

Mr. Burns: "I think the taxes here can be shaved. In the last ten years it has been a period of spend and spend. The honeymoon is over in all lines of business."

Question by camper relative to filling out notices sent out each spring by the Selectmen. Mr. Wheeler: "Those papers are supposed to be filled out each year. Only 300 of the 1,000 sent out were returned to us, filled out. The valuation in town was brought up about \$200,000 this year. Otherwise the tax rate would be \$48.00 this year instead of what it is."

Question by camper with regard to health and sanitation, and the possibility of garbage and rubbish collections. Mr. Butterfield: "Personally, I'd look on it favorably because I, myself, own some cottages on the pond. The only service we can now give is good highways. Such collections would not be very expensive, in my estimation." Mr. Wheeler: "We've been talking during the last two or three years about rubbish and garbage collections. I'll see that such an article gets into the warrant if your association takes such action."

Question by camper: "Why don't the selectmen spon-

sor such an article?" Mr. Wheeler: "I feel all three of us selectmen would speak in favor of it at town meeting."

Mr. Wheeler mentioned the Turtle Rock road action of some ten years ago relative to its acceptance as a public way. He also referred to similar action in recent years in regard to the so-called Eberhardt road.

Question by camper: "What is the percentage of the entire tax levy that the campers at all ponds and lakes in town pay?" Mr. Butterfield: "Of all the ponds - about. Well I'd want to look it up first. I will send such a report to your association in care of your secretary."

Mr. Burns suggested the directors could look at these records. (Off the record—Mr. Burns mentioned reading about New Hampshire seeking vacation business in competition with other states. Therefore, he added, it will benefit Windham to make its tax rate attractive in order to attract permanent and summer residents.)

Mr. Burns announced that 90 of those present had paid their \$2.00 assessment for a total of \$180 "and a good start."

Subject of speedboats was brought up. It was stated that "a few campers don't believe in laws" in this connection and that the commercial boats on the pond are doing the best that they can." Mr. Burns: "Concord is the place to go for a hearing to remedy this. Everybody on the pond must live up to these rules and regulations and it's up to us, as members of an organization, to attain this end." A camper criticized "the kids for raising the devil in those boats with speedy outboard motors." He said, "They should be educated." Mr. Burns: "The state has no regulations against these speedy boats." The meeting lasted until close to 5 p.m. After the meeting Mr. Burns, "Stressed that a great good can come from such a group, that it is not out to injure anybody and its major purpose are to benefit every property owner on the pond..."