

Caspian Lake Dam Task Force Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2026

Task Force members attending: Stew Arnold (Chair), Paul Brierre, JoAnn Hanowski, John Schweizer

Task Force advisory members attending: Naomi Ranz-Schleifer

Community members attending by Zoom: Rob Carter, BJ Gray, Cathy Irwin

1:02 pm – Stew called the meeting to order.

Stew reported the following.

- Stew and Chris presented the Task Force’s proposed Maintenance Plan concept along with a study and construction cost estimate to the Greensboro Select Board at the Selectboard’s meeting on September 9th. At the conclusion of the presentation, the Select Board voted to approve the Maintenance Plan concept and work with the Town of Hardwick. The Select Board passed a motion stating that it endorses “in concept the Task Force’s maintenance action plan for returning the Caspian Lake Dam to the state’s “satisfactory” safety rating. Greensboro Select Board also agrees in principle to join with the Hardwick Select Board in creating a Memorandum of Understanding stating that both towns will work together to achieve this goal.”
- The next Greensboro Select Board meeting is on October 14th.
- The meeting scheduled for September 15th with the Hardwick Electric Department was postponed at Commission Chair Scott Johnstone’s request so that the Maintenance Plan could be presented to the Hardwick Select Board for the Board’s review and comment before being presented to the HED Commissioners.
- The meeting with the Hardwick Select Board scheduled for the evening of September 17th was postponed because the meeting agenda was full.
- The Task Force’s schedule has been revised as follows: meet with and report to the Greensboro Select Board on October 14th, meet with the Hardwick Select Board on October 15th; meet with the HED Commissioners on October 20th.
- Stew emailed the proposed Maintenance Plan to Ben Green, DEC Director of Dam Safety and requested a meeting in Greensboro to discuss. Ben responded that he has forwarded the proposal to the Dam Safety engineers and he will follow up about meeting after the engineers’ review.

The Task Force discussed the proposed engineering studies by Weston & Sampson for the dam.

- Paul asked about the funding source or sources for the engineering studies. Since an MOU, which will identify funding responsibilities, is still in the drafting and negotiation process, the contributions of the Town of Greensboro, Town of Hardwick, HED, and potentially the Greensboro Association, have not been identified or agreed upon.
- JoAnn asked if there are existing Hydrology & Hydraulic studies for the dam which would provide the Task Force with the information it needs for the Maintenance Plan without having to pay an engineering firm. John noted that studies may have been done when the dam structure was last worked on in 1967. Paul noted that the Army Corps of Engineers did an inspection of the dam in 1979.
- Paul suggested that DEC's Dam Safety division will want to see an up-to-date H&H study to account for changing precipitation patterns for both short term maintenance work and for long term remedial work on the dam, and that the Task Force and its engineer should also have up-to-date data on precipitation and runoff volumes for the Caspian Lake watershed.
- JoAnn and John suggested that the Task Force ask HED for documents from 1967 regarding work on the dam, including any assessment of its hydraulic capacity and the lake's hydrology at that time. Stew said he would contact HED and make this request.
- The Task Force asked for a copy of the Army COE 1978 inspection report. Paul said he would circulate it to the Task Force, and noted that it's an old PDF document and that the pages are not in order.

John and Naomi discussed the respective property rights of various entities, including rights-of-way and water rights of upstream and downstream property owners, related to the dam structure. John noted that the water rights were sold to Hardwick in 1924. Naomi asked about a lawsuit regarding the dam and property rights. Paul noted that there was a lawsuit in 1926 or 1927, which concluded with a settlement in 1927 in which the owner at the time, the Village of Hardwick, agreed to pay about 40 lakeshore property owners about \$5,000 (about \$80,000 in current dollars) for ice push damage and stipulated, among other things, that the lake level would not be allowed to exceed 8 inches above the spillway when ice was breaking up on the lake.

Community member comments and questions.

BJ Gray asked why HED wants anything to do with the dam. The Task Force responded that it does not appear HED necessarily wants to continue owning the dam, and that the ownership issue has been and will continue to be part of ongoing discussions about future maintenance and repairs of the dam.

BJ Gray asked if there have been studies done on the ledge underlying the dam structure. Stew, John and Paul offered their understanding that the dam is underlain by moraine material (a mix of rocks and soil) deposited by receding glaciers about 10,000 years ago, and that it is the deposition of the moraine, not the presence of ledge or bedrock, that formed Caspian Lake. Stew recommended that BJ talk with Bob Merrill if she would like to learn more about the geologic history of Caspian Lake.

Meeting follow-up.

- Stew will request documents related to work on the dam in 1967 from HED.
- Paul will follow up with Weston & Sampson about the Task Force's proposal to do engineering work and analyses in two phases instead of one, with conducting an up-to-date H&H study as part of the first phase.
- Paul will circulate the 1979 Army COE report to the Task Force members.
- John requested that Task Force members review and comments on a draft of an MOU between the Greensboro and Hardwick Select Boards so that the Task Force will have a final draft to present to the two Select Boards.
- The next Task Force meeting is scheduled on October 15th at 1 pm.

Stew adjourned the meeting at approximately 2 pm.