

# CITY OF WHITEFISH

## LAKESHORE PROTECTION COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Wednesday, November 8, 2023

**Place:** City Council Conference Room

**Recorded By:** Nelson Loring

**Members Present:**

Toby Scott  
Nancy Schuber  
Daniel Wood  
Peggy Brammer

**Members Absent:**

Vacant  
Don Harring  
Roger Rowles

**Staff Present:**

David Taylor  
Nelson Loring

**Public Present:**

Kurt Vomfell  
Jared from Flathead County Planning

1. CALL TO ORDER  
**Summary:** Toby Scott, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. AGENDA CHANGES  
**Summary:** None.
3. APPROVAL OF September 13, 2023 MINUTES  
**Summary:** Members reviewed the minutes of September 13, 2023.

**ACTION:** Schuber made a motion to approve the minutes of September 13, 2023. Wood seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

4. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT  
**Summary:** None
5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS  
**Summary:** None.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARINGS & ACTION

### A. WLTA 23-01

Summary: A request by the City of Whitefish to review a major code revision to the Whitefish Lakeshore Protection Regulations in order to promote natural shoreline restoration and dynamic gravel beach installations over rip rap, retaining walls and hard armoring as well as other changes and minor housekeeping amendments.

David Taylor summarized the staff report for members, noting key points:

- Riprap had been encouraged by the city, but it is not the best practice scientifically.
- Any beach fill below low water would require a floodplain permit. Wind and boat traffic contributes to erosion.
- Studies show that bioengineering is a better alternative to rip rap.
- Definitions, graphics, permit requirements, and other housekeeping items have been changed.
- Timeline for administrative permits were added, dead tree removal were clarified, surveys may be required for constructed area calculations, hazardous material kits are required for mechanical equipment, AIS inspections will be required at private and public boat launches. Swim beach restoration has been extended to once every 10 years. Unregulated buoy placement had been clarified as well as preventing inhabited house boats.
- Nonconforming building standards have been clarified to match the floodplain regulations.
- Neighbors will be notified of variances.
- Definitions related to
- Maintenance definition has been clarified.
- Dynamic gravel beaches need a qualified professional to design them.
- Real value definition clarified to match floodplain regulations.
- Vegetated rip rap has been added as an option that is preferred to rip rap.
- 2:1 ratio for fill is now the preferred slope for fill
- The dead tree definition has been updated.
- Environmental assessments rather than environmental impact statements are required for variances.

Kurt Vomfell presented on the dynamic gravel beaches he has worked on in the lake, noting key points

- Adjacent properties had reflected wave energy onto the homeowners beach, causing erosion.
- The dynamic gravel beach is working well on multiple sites.
- It is not inexpensive, but it is the environmentally friendly option.
- Boring is the preferred method to install waterlines.

Kurt noted that the waterline portion of the Lakeshore code had not been updated. Staff made note of that.

**Recommendation:** Staff is recommending approval of WLTA 23-01.

Members discussed the application with Taylor, clarifying the following items:

- Taylor clarified that the regulations could be amended to make boring for a waterline to be the preferred method.
- Taylor clarified that violations or penalties are set by state law and we can not increase it.

The committee was happy the amendments were brought forward, and they all supported the changes to help

protect the lake.

**ACTION:** **Schuber** made a motion to approve WLTA 23-01. Brammer seconded the motion. Scott made a friendly amendment to make boring waterlines the preferred method of waterline installation. Brammer seconded the motion. The friendly amendment was approved unanimously. The motion was approved unanimously.

The application will go before City Council on December 4.

8. STAFF COMMENTS / GOOD AND WELFARE

**Summary:** Staff noted that the Whitefish Lake Institute did not have anyone available to be on the committee, but they would send someone to the meetings in an advisory capacity.

9. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

**Summary:** None

10. ADJOURNMENT

**ACTION:** The meeting is adjourned at 6:48 pm.