

# Michael P. Lowery

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**Resignation: Surface Water Quality Committee** Selectmen's meeting: 09/23/2019

Selectmen:

My history on the Surface Water Quality Committee:

In 2007 when I was appointed to the Surface Water Quality Committee, Dudley Pond was in trouble.

I built the consensus for using non-chemical methods first, then herbicide as a last resort. I

successfully presented to Conservation and achieved the Order of Conditions for 2008.

For the last twelve years, I have been principally responsible for keeping Dudley Pond in reasonably good condition.

In 2008 I encouraged the Dudley Pond Association to begin contributing 25% of Town's costs for weed management in Dudley Pond - based on the differential benefit accruing to those who live near this wonderful resource. For ten years, my wife Karen surrendered her summers to organizing the Dudley Pond Run which raises money for this reimbursement. **This year DPA contributions supported \$45,000 of work** on a town-owned waterbody - about the same as the total SWQC budget. In the last eleven years, DPA has contributed: \$79,967.20 toward weed control in Dudley Pond.

I made personal contributions to the Dudley Pond Association for weed control of \$500 in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and \$1000 in 2019.

I have spent countless hours presenting to other committees, writing reports, posting notices, studying the septic around the pond, communicating with other towns and groups on weed management in Lake Cochituate, taking water samples, laying/removing sandbags, liaising with residents on pond status, flooding, and pond treatments-- SWQC has no staff – we actually do the work or supervise it.

But - your 8:40 agenda item is not about the condition and future of the Dudley Pond. Rather, it includes my name and uses words 'disclosing ... a financial interest'.

I have not disclosed a financial interest, I disclosed that I live on Dudley Pond, and I *leave it to your board* to decide what constitutes a 'financial interest'. You decide if it needs to be filed.

How do Michael Lowery's 'financial interests' merit 10 minutes on the Selectman's agenda?

At your September 9 meeting, "L. Miller and C. Karlson discussed possible perception of conflict of interest for committee members who live on bodies of water. L. Miller recommended that members file a disclosure with the Town Clerk". 2

I identified the proper form, modified it, completed it, and emailed it to Ms. Karlson. It does not appear in your packet for public inspection. I provide it here for the public record.

My submission advised you that waterfront property could lose 13-19% of its value due to weed infestations. I brought the documents on which that estimate is based.

**My ‘financial interest’ has been working to protect the town’s property the value of my property and that of more than 130 abutters from a potential 13-19% estimated loss of \$11,000,000 to \$16,000,000 and an associated reduction of over \$200,000 to \$290,000 of annual tax revenue to the town.**

If that is ‘a financial interest’ then consider it disclosed.

I asked myself: Why did this come up now instead of any of my 11 preceding years of service? I can imagine only two reasons:

- • Either an abundant emphasis on scrutiny & process over trust and achievement, or
- • Because I asked the Selectmen for emphasis on matters the Board of Public Works believed important, and I requested moderation in the new purchasing processes affecting DPW productivity and morale.

– neither of these explanations encourages volunteers.

From my perspective:

The Board of Selectmen has turned inward to a concern over governance and process. Time and legal resources are being spent renaming the Board of Selectmen and expanding its scope of control by enlarging the powers of the Town Administrator. Meanwhile, some external issues are not getting needed attention.

When a Selectman's agenda allocates 10 minutes to publically discussing Michael Lowery’s ‘financial interests’ based on his address, then its time for him to end his 12-year run on the Surface Water Quality Committee. Thank you for your support in the preceding years. I resign my appointment to the Surface Water Quality Committee effective October 1, 2019.

Michael Lowery