

Lake Board Update  
Stony Lake Property Owners Association  
July 18, 2009

- July, 2007: An informational meeting was held at Benona Township Hall to discuss establishing a Special Assessment District (SAD) to fund a Lake Committee. A presentation was given by Professional Lake Management which included a presentation of their lake assessment, process of establishing a SAD, and management options.
- Fall 2007 / Winter 2008: Benona Township continued to work on the project and had meetings with John McKinnon and Chuck Ginebaugh several times. After consulting with Oceana County officials, Benona Township determined that having two townships on the lake would make the process too complicated and recommended that a Lake Board be created. The Township felt that they had no experience in this matter, while the County had lots of experience and was already active with many Lake Boards. The Drain Commissioner's office already had the systems in place to manage a Lake Board. Additionally, a Lake Board would require that an Independent Engineer be hired to evaluate the lake and provide ongoing monitoring.
- August 2008: A letter was sent to all property owners on Stony Lake (front lots and back lots in Benona and Claybanks Townships) at the request of Benona Township. The addresses used were the same as those on the township's tax records. Benona Township required that the letter specifically ask for those property owners NOT in favor of a Lake Board to respond.
- Early/Winter 2009: John McKinnon and Chuck Ginebaugh provided the Benona Township Board with copies of all mailing address, and responses to the letter. Approximately 7 property owners sent in letters Not in favor of moving forward with a Lake Board.
- Early/Winter 2009: Benona Township approved a Resolution to create the Lake Board due to the limited negative responses to the letter.
- Spring 2009: Claybanks Township was presented with the same information as provided to Benona Township, including copies of all negative letters and mailing addresses. Claybanks decided to send out their own letter to confirm the position of the property owners in their township
- May, 2009: Claybanks Township reported back that about a dozen letters were received from property owners, about equally in favor and equally against a Lake Board. The Township was not able to identify which properties were represented in the letters, and how many properties were represented (several letters may have represented one property). The Township requested that an Informal Petition Drive be completed to determine the positions of the property owners.
- July 2009: A volunteer group went door to door to the Claybanks Township properties that have frontage or access to Stony Lake. Phone calls were also made to some property owners. The property owners were given the option to sign either a "for" or "against" petition.
- July, 2009: Claybanks Township was provided with the Informal Petitions that indicated the following: 29 for, 1 against. We estimate that 11 property owners were not available at the time of the petition drive (1/2 of those properties unavailable were vacant lots. Claybanks Township decided to decline approving the Resolution.

Options going forward:

- Do nothing, and let the issue settle
- Claybanks Township property owners can press the Township Board to vote as the property owners requested based on the petitions provided (70% support for a Lake Board).
- Complete Official Petition Drive that would override the vote of the Claybanks Township Board. A Lake Board can be established by either of the following:
  - By the governing body of a local unit of government upon its own motion
  - By official Petition of 2/3 of the freeholders owning lands abutting the lake