

**East Bay Charter Township – SPR 12-21 SLU 4-21 GO-REC PUD – Public Hearing  
December 16, 2021**

The Rennie Lake Association - Board of Directors - Position Statement

My name is Ralph Bednarz. I'm a lakefront property owner on Rennie Lake at 1380 Autumn Trail. I provided comments to this Commission at the July 6, 2021 meeting regarding the Greilick Outdoor Recreation & Education Center (GO-REC) Sketch Plan review and preliminary Planned Unit Development (PUD) plan discussion. Tonight, I am representing The Rennie Lake Association, Inc. (RLA) as its current president and my comments convey the position of the RLA Board of Directors and members on the matter of the PUD application and the Protect Rennie Lake, Inc. (PRL) vs Rotary Camps and Services of Traverse City settlement agreement ("settlement agreement").

The Rennie Lake Association was incorporated on May 3, 2021 as a State of Michigan non-profit corporation with the purpose of maintaining and enhancing the quality of Rennie Lake for today and for future generations in recognition that protecting water quality is critical to sustaining lake health, and the primary driver of lake shore property values. The RLA is dedicated to preserve and protect the water quality, ecosystem services, and quality of life in Rennie Lake and its watershed through education, leadership and collaboration. The RLA aims to be the recognized leader in evidence-based strategies for protecting Rennie Lake and its watershed while advancing environmental education, sustainable policies, and quality of life. The Rennie Lake Association is not affiliated with the Protect Rennie Lake organization.

The RLA Board has reviewed the GO-REC PUD application and "settlement agreement". Other than the large venue event uses which will be addressed by other Rennie Lake community residents, in general, we do not object to the land use aspects of the PUD under the requirements of the Camp Greilick Conservation Easement so long as the required permits, licenses and inspections are in place and all safety, public health and nuisance requirements are monitored and enforced. **The RLA is not in agreement with the PUD application and the "settlement agreement" regarding public watercraft access to Rennie Lake via the GOREC waterfront.**

You are aware of the recently publicized aquatic invasive species (AIS) infestation in Lake Leelanau. The cost of the Eurasian watermilfoil mitigation is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars per year over a multi-year effort. Lakes throughout the state are facing similar challenges. Once a lake is infested with AIS, the burden of managing and financing the mitigation usually rests with the lakefront property owners - not the State, county or local units of government. The introduction and spread of AIS in a lake can become a significant and expensive annual control issue for the riparians, decrease the riparian's enjoyment of the lake, and negatively impact lakefront property values.

The PUD application and "settlement agreement" would allow for overnight guests to launch public watercraft into Rennie Lake. Due to the risks of AIS, the RLA's position is that access to Rennie Lake via the GO-REC waterfront of public watercraft be prohibited. **The RLA requests that only GO-REC-owned watercraft be permitted on Rennie Lake via the GO-REC waterfront.**

It is our understanding that the Boy Scouts, who leased and managed Camp Greilick from 1955-2016, had their own fleet of watercraft that were used on Rennie Lake. The 60+ year history of this on-site use of Boy Scout watercraft at Camp Greilick should be the basis to limit legal non-conforming watercraft uses by the general public to only GO-REC's fleet of watercraft on Rennie Lake. This is necessary to protect against AIS infestation and the harm they may cause to the Rennie Lake ecosystem and the property values of its residents.

In addition, the "settlement agreement" provides for a boat wash station. We applaud the efforts of the PRL to negotiate wash station language into the "settlement agreement", however the specified decontamination protocol is missing a critical step – drying. The standard for watercraft decontamination of AIS is – Clean, Drain, Dry. Drying is a critical step that is necessary to kill viable AIS that may remain in residual water in the watercraft after washing and draining.

Further, the PUD application permits movement of watercraft between Rennie, Bass and Spider lakes. This is another significant risk to the spread of AIS between and among the lakes. The Rennie Lake community's recommendation to GO-REC management and Rotary Camps and Services on several occasions has been for them to only rent watercraft at GO-REC with use only on Rennie Lake - not cross use on Bass and Spider Lakes or other waterbodies – a request which has been ignored in the PUD application. We believe the risk of the spread of AIS to be too great to permit boats to move between the lakes.

The "settlement agreement" also limits the number of watercraft that would be permitted to be introduced to Rennie Lake at any given time. However, this limit is not based on any formal analysis of the number of watercraft that can be supported by the lake. The RLA requests the Commission require GO-REC to sponsor a formal recreational boating carrying capacity study before any limit on the watercraft is finalized. An evidence-based study is necessary to understand the recreational boating capacity of a 238-acre lake to foster a safe lake environment and minimize overuse conflicts and ecological damage. The RLA is willing to work with the GO-REC management to facilitate this study.

In summary, given past use as well as the risks I have outlined of AIS infestation from public access of watercraft on Rennie Lake, the RLA asks the Planning Commission to:

- 1) Limit all watercraft access to Rennie Lake via the GO-REC waterfront to only GO-REC's fleet of watercraft to be used exclusively on Rennie Lake.**
- 2) Require wash station procedures to include drying.**
- 3) Require GO-REC to sponsor an independent watercraft carrying capacity study before any watercraft limit is set.**

In the regrettable event that the Planning Commission denies our request to prohibit public watercraft from entering Rennie Lake through the GO-REC waterfront, the RLA asks that the Commission stipulate GO-REC conduct annual AIS monitoring in the GO-REC bay and adjacent Rennie Lake waters and require GO-REC post a surety bond in the amount of \$100,000. Rennie Lake is a shared resource of riparian properties of significant value that could be harmed from AIS infestation if public watercrafts are allowed on Rennie Lake via the GOREC waterfront. In the case where public watercraft is permitted

access to Rennie Lake through the GO-REC waterfront, annual monitoring and a surety bond would help ensure any manifestations of AIS as a result would be identified early, and funding would be available to assist in its eradication before spreading.

The risk of harm from public use of the GO-REC private upland property is protected by the Camp Greilick Conservation Easement. The risk of harm from public access and use of Rennie Lake via the GO-REC waterfront is not protected by the Conservation Easement or any other formal agreements.

The RLA Board appreciates the opportunity to comment on the GO-REC PUD application in front of you. We request that you postpone your vote on the GOREC PUD application until our concerns are addressed as well as all of the concerns of the Rennie Lake community regarding GOREC's plan to open to the public as a commercial operation.

The RLA thanks the Commissioners for listening to our comments tonight and for your service to East Bay Township and the residents of the Forest Lakes District.