

Big Bass Lake Community Association

Strategic Master Plan –September 26, 2020
2020 - 2024

Big Bass Lake Community Association, Inc.
Northeastern Pennsylvania
Clifton Township, PA – Lackawanna County
Lehigh Township, PA - Wayne County
Covington Township, PA – Lackawanna County



In short, strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it, with a focus on the future.

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**The purpose isn't to produce a
Plan, but to produce results!**

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Brief History of Big Bass Lake

Big Bass Lake is a year-round, private, recreation-oriented community that is owned and governed the Big Bass Lake Community Association, Inc. (BBLCA), for the mutual benefit of its members.

The Community was started in 1971 and the Big Bass Lake Association was incorporated in 1971 with membership being mandated by a deed covenant. The governance of BBLCA changed from developer control to members control on July 1, 1990 via a settlement agreement between Big Bass Lake Inc. (Larsen Family) and Big Bass Lake Owners.

Big Bass Lake consists of all of the amenity areas and units on approximately 1900 acres containing 1,129 improved lots, 549 undeveloped lots owned by members, 17 owned by Big Bass Lake, Inc. (original developer) and 21 lots owned by BBLCA. The number of units that can be developed by BBLCA is 1,756. BBLCA now has 1,678 total units. At least 75% of the members voting in person or by proxy are required to amend or repeal this maximum number. There are 8 approved entrances on twenty eight miles of roads all maintained by BBLCA.

The BBLCA Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws were revised by majority vote of the membership and recorded in 2014.

The Community Association's broad purpose is described in the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation below:

Amended and Restated

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

BIG BASS LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Article 1. Name. The name of the Corporation is **Big Bass Lake Community Association.**

Article 2. Duration. The Corporation shall exist in perpetuity.

Article 3. Applicable Statute. The Corporation is organized pursuant to the provisions of the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1988, as amended; it is governed as well under the Pennsylvania Uniform Planned Community Act as the community association in a planned community that existed before the effective date of that Act.

Article 4. Purposes. The Corporation does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit, direct or indirect, to its members. In way of explanation and not of limitation, the purposes for which it is formed are:

(a) to be and constitute the mandatory membership association of Unit Owners legally bound by the declaration of covenants, conditions and restrictions, as amended from time to time, (the Declaration) for Big Bass Lake development, a planned community located

in Lehigh Township, Wayne County, and Clifton and Covington townships, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania (the Community); to perform all obligations and other duties of the Association; and to exercise all rights and powers as the community association and successor declarant for the Community, as provided in the Declaration, in the Bylaws and by law; and

(b) to provide an entity for the preservation and enhancement of the Community's extensive common facilities and the furtherance of all other common interests of the Unit Owners in the Community as the mandatory community association in Big Bass Lake, the costs of which are funded by assessment of its membership. Big Bass Lake is a planned community created before the effective date of the Uniform Planned Community Act.

Article 5. Powers. In furtherance of its purposes, the Corporation shall have general powers including but not limited to the following powers, which, unless otherwise limited by the Community's Declaration or Bylaws, may be exercised by the Board of Directors:

(a) all powers conferred upon nonprofit corporations by common law and the statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in effect from time to time;

(b) all powers necessary or desirable to perform the obligations and duties and to exercise the rights and powers set out in the Declaration, these Articles or the Bylaws, including, without limitation, the following:

(i) to fix and to collect assessments, fees, fines, special assessments and other charges from Unit Owners;

(ii) to manage, control, operate, maintain, repair, and improve common and controlled facilities subject to the Declaration or any other property for which the Corporation by rule, regulation, Declaration, or contract has a right or duty to provide services;

(iii) to enforce the Declaration for the Community as successor declarant under the Declaration and Bylaws;

(iv) to engage in activities intended to foster, promote, and advance the common interests of all Unit Owners;

(v) to buy or otherwise acquire, sell or otherwise dispose of, mortgage, or otherwise encumber, exchange, lease, hold, use operate and otherwise deal in and with real personal and mixed property of all kinds and any right or interest in that property for any purpose of the Corporation;

(vi) to borrow money for any purpose, as may be limited in the Bylaws;

(vii) to enter into, make, perform, or enforce contracts of every kind and description, and to do all other acts necessary, appropriate, or advisable in carrying out any purpose of the Corporation, with or in association with any other association, corporation, or other entity or agency, public or private;

(viii) to adopt, alter and amend or repeal any Bylaws as may be necessary or desirable for the proper management of the affairs of the Corporation so long as the Bylaws are not inconsistent with or contrary to any provisions of the Declaration; and

(ix) to provide any and all supplemental services as may be necessary or proper.

The foregoing enumeration of powers shall not limit or restrict in any manner the exercise of other and rights and powers which may now or later be allowed by law; and the powers specified in each of the paragraphs of this Article 5 are independent powers, not to be restricted by reference to or subject to inference from the terms of any other provision of Article 5.

Article 6. Membership and Voting. The Corporation shall be a membership corporation without certificates or shares of stock. The Corporation shall have one class of members consisting of all Unit Owners in the Community and their successors in title. The Unit Owners may be entitled to vote only one (1) vote per Unit in which they hold the interest required for membership, regardless of the number of owners on a particular Unit. Each Unit shall be entitled to one vote only in all circumstances except as may otherwise be limited in the Bylaws. An owner of multiple Units shall have only one membership. Members may vote in person or by mail ballot.

Article 7. Board of Directors. The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be conducted, managed and controlled by a Board of Directors, unless otherwise restricted in the Declaration or in the Bylaws. The Board shall consist of seven (7) members. The method of election, terms of office, method of removal and method of filling of vacancies shall be as stated in the Bylaws or in state law.

Article 8. Dissolution. The Corporation may be dissolved only as provided in the Declaration, in the Bylaws or by law.

Article 9. Amendments. These Articles of Incorporation may be amended as authorized by the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation Law, but no amendment shall be made that conflicts with the Declaration and provided further that no amendment shall be made that impairs or dilute any rights of members that are governed by the Declaration.

Function of a Strategic Master Plan

A Strategic Master Plan is certainly more than simply a “wish list.” But it is equally not a prescription of what the Association must do, or a fixed timetable of dates, events and funding. Those are the responsibility of the entities that make definitive plans for the Association- the professional management, the appropriate committees, and the Board of Directors. What the Strategic Master Plan attempts to do - in the words of Professor Bryson- is to provide a process, “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions”, by defining those items and goals to which the Association should devote serious consideration in order to fulfill its mission, and to set out both the assets the Association can utilize and the challenges it will face as it conducts that consideration. In other words, its objective is to facilitate decisions, not prejudice them.

BBLCA Strategic Plan

The Board of Directors initially established a Long Range Planning Committee in 2002 to develop a strategic plan. In 2015 the Board of Directors established the current Strategic Planning Committee. That Committee has reviewed the draft strategic plan and surveys from the previous Committee. From 2015-2018 several additional surveys were distributed to the members and committees for input. In 2018 a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was done by the Board, Committees and Management. The combination of the previous draft plan, surveys and SWOT analysis was used to create the draft Strategic Master Plan.

Once initially reviewed by the Board of Directors, the Draft Strategic Master Plan will be released to the Association Members for their review and comment. Town Hall meetings will be scheduled to solicit additional input. After any updates are made to the Draft Strategic Master Plan based on input from Association Members, and the Board of Directors approves a final version of the plan, it will then become a working document to guide the Association. Recommended actions will ultimately be expanded and criteria to measure the accomplishment level of the goals will be developed.

The goal of the Strategic Master Plan is to provide a roadmap to the future that permits the Association to be more proactive and more efficient. The Strategic Master Plan will chart the course for Big Bass Lake reflecting the needs, desires and aspirations of the Big Bass Lake Members so necessary to the continued and future success of the BBLCA. This plan outlines specific goals for 2020 through 2024 and will be reviewed annually.

BIG BASS LAKE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Mission Statement

To promote a high quality of life and to protect property values through the prudent use of resources, for the benefit of all who live, visit, or work in our community.

Vision Statement

Big Bass Lake Community Association provides a high quality of life through enjoyable living and recreation in an environment that is safe and is maintained in as natural a state as possible. This is accomplished through the prudent use of natural, human, and financial resources, utilizing committed volunteers and staff, enforcing equitable rules and regulations, performing careful planning and development, and developing good relations with the surrounding community. Those who benefit include property owners, their families and guests, renters, employees, and the people who live and work in the surrounding community.

Values Statement

BBLCA believes that to excel and remain one of the premier communities in Pennsylvania, it should provide an environment where both the members and staff can thrive in mutual respect and promote the atmosphere where all can prosper.

Operational Pillars

- Maintenance of Common Areas, Facilities, and Amenities in a pristine condition
- Adherence to the BBLCA Repair and Replacement Reserve Program
- Aggressive collection efforts for undeveloped lots
- Better and increased marketing

Community Definition

BBLCA is the non-profit organization that drives the Big Bass Lake Community, an Active Family Oriented Year-Round Recreational Community. This Strategic Master Planning process was undertaken to protect and enhance lifestyle matters and property values in the Big Bass Lake Community.

BBLCA members are motivated by the character of the natural environment in which their property is located, and accept, for and among themselves, the principle that the development and use of BBLCA must preserve that character for its present and future enjoyment by other owners. Some of the principles that we have adopted are:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| • Nature predominates | <i>not</i> | building |
| • Rural setting | <i>not</i> | suburban |
| • Exteriors simple | <i>not</i> | showy |
| • Design/ARC guidelines | <i>not</i> | “anything goes” |

Common Areas/Amenities Update

Strategic Goal

*To ensure that our members' needs are met by updating common areas and amenities as needed.
Complete by May 1, 2021.*

Discussion:

The Board of Directors has approved a study and concept plan development for our Recreation/Fitness Center. The current Reserve Program has established funding for the upkeep of all current common areas and amenities.

Recommended Actions:

- Appoint Recreation Center Update Sub-Committee:
 - Review the concept and analyses plan for the Recreation Center that will be completed by D'Huy Engineering (expected by September, 2020).
 - Evaluate the D'Huy Engineering plan to determine the most feasible possible options regarding the future of the Recreation Center.
 - Schedule town hall meetings, prepare and present the findings of the Recreation Center review, and recommended project options to the membership.
 - Draft preliminary execution plans for at least two alternatives, including financing options, and timelines, for BOD evaluation by January 2021.
- Once the Larsen Dam Project is completed, and a decision is made regarding the Recreation/Fitness center, the Strategic Planning Committee should review what other large projects may be desired for the membership. This could be accomplished by using surveys, outreach and communications, etc.

Environmental Stewardship

Strategic Goal

Maintain BBLCA lakes and common areas in pristine conditions. Complete by May 2021.

Discussion:

The BBLCA has three lakes, three dams, as well as several trails and parks that should be maintained using best practices to afford opportunities for recreation while emphasizing environmental preservation and protection.

Recommended Actions:

- Update the 2010 Lake Management Plan and communicate finding to members.
- Update Lake Management Plan every ten years.
- Document and assess current and future use of all BBLCA common property by end of 2021.
- Establish a tree planting program for common property by end of 2021.
- Utilize state and/or educational resources to evaluate BBLCA plant and animal health every three years beginning in 2021.
- Maintain the common areas/amenities (including lakes) in accordance with the various plans.
- Review the annual lakes and dam reports and make any strategic recommendations.

Financial Planning

Strategic Goal

To maintain and regularly update the current BBLCA Repair and Replacement Reserve Program that was established in 2007 and provides stabilized funding for proper maintenance and repair for all common facilities and amenities. To establish a list of new items with a cost of less than \$20,000 that is included in the annual budget. Complete by May 1, 2023.

Discussion:

By establishing an industry standard Reserve Program in 2007, the BBLCA has been able to maintain its current assets at a level that is desired and expected from the BBLCA membership. The BBLCA has struggled with identifying and funding new low-cost amenities. For the past ten years or more the BBLCA has usually added new items valued at approximately \$20,000 per year through the annual budget. Although usually successful and well received, these new items historically have not been evaluated from a strategic perspective.

Recommended Actions:

- The BBLCA should continue to update the Reserve Program with an on-site review every 3-5 years.
- Establish a priority list of small projects (less than \$20,000) by utilizing prior survey data and updated feedback from members.
- Solicit input from the membership via surveys and town hall meetings to determine the priority of each project and when it should be included in the annual budget.
- Monitor and update this list on an annual basis.

Governance

Strategic Goal

To update our Covenants/Declarations and various rules booklets. The Covenants/Declarations should be updated to today's standards, laws and wants/needs of the community. The various rule booklets should be updated, consolidated and written in a more positive manner.

Complete by May 1, 2023.

Discussion:

The Board of Directors has established a Covenants Revisions Committee to develop revised Covenants. The Board of Directors approves all ARC and General Rule revisions.

Recommended Actions:

- The Covenants Revisions Ad-Hoc Committee should produce a projected time line and plan for review, comment period, distribution, and final vote plan for the approval of the Revised Covenants.
- The Covenants Revisions Committee should continue to work on producing a draft revised Covenant. Once the draft is finalized, - sent to the Board of Director for review, and approved for distribution by the Board, - additional town hall meetings, distribution, and communications with the members should be scheduled. These ongoing activities will help to solicit further input on the proposed draft Covenants.
- After extensive opportunity for the members to comment on the draft proposed Covenants, and following additional changes to the draft proposed Covenants by the Covenants Revision Committee, the Board of Directors may make revision to the draft document prior to submission to the membership for a vote. It is important that the Board of Directors agree upon and support the final proposed Covenants that are ultimately sent to the membership for a vote.
- Once the revised draft is approved by the Board of Directors the Covenants should be sent to the membership for a vote.

The ARC Rules and General Rules should be updated during this process to ensure consistency and alignment with the final proposed Covenants. The Board of Directors may want to assign this task to the Covenants Revisions Committee or establish a separate Committee to undertake this effort.

Land Inventory and Beneficial Use

Strategic Goal

Develop an inventory of all property contiguous to BBLCA. Monitor the availability of lands immediately adjacent to Big Bass Lake and in the general vicinity of Big Bass Lake and be aware of and consider opportunities to preserve the commercial or undesirable development, enhance the assets and amenities of the Association. Complete by May 1, 2023.

Discussion:

There are numerous parcels of land surrounding BBLCA, some of which have been considered by BBLCA for purchase. Some have been developed into commercial parcels (Covington Industrial Park) which has caused pollution, noise issues and other undesirable conditions for BBLCA. It is important to the long-term planning process for the Association to develop a comprehensive inventory of all neighboring property, monitor available property and to assess the potential use for that property.

Recommended Actions:

- Assess the potential future use of these properties in six categories:
 1. Desired for the future for potential expansion of current amenities
 2. Desired for the future for potential addition of amenities
 3. Required or desired in the future as open space
 4. Required in the future as buffer land
 5. Desired for the future expansion of BBLCA units
 6. Desired for the control of potential negative impacts to BBLCA
- Monitor closely the condition, use and availability of properties nearby or bordering BBLCA and evaluate the cost, financing and potential benefits of acquiring them.
- Develop a “Right of First Refusal” policy and procedure.

Marketing/Branding

Strategic Goal

Develop a marketing and branding plan based on what attracts New Property Owners to Big Bass Lake and how New Members can be recruited. Work toward the goal of having Big Bass Lake be recognized as one of the Top Three Planned Recreational Communities in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Complete by May 1, 2021.

Discussion:

The continued operation, growth and financial stability of the Big Bass Lake Community Association is dependent on maintaining a strong real estate market. Attracting members will provide vitality for the Community. Big Bass Lake primarily draws Property Owners from Pennsylvania, Northern New Jersey and the New York Metropolitan Area. It is important to understand what attracts New Property Owners to Big Bass Lake, how to inform prospective buyers about the unique benefits of Big Bass Lake and how to influence them to purchase and participate in the Community. The Big Bass Lake Community Association needs to determine its “brand” and strive to continually promote this brand. Otherwise outside forces will seek to determine and define the brand.

Recommended Actions:

- Create a Membership/Marketing Task Force to study and coordinate the Marketing of Big Bass Lake.
- Utilize the Communications Position to be the liaison to the Membership/Marketing Task Force and handle the website, newsletter and related membership/marketing duties for Big Bass Lake. This position would also be tasked with overseeing communications with Members in order to maximize the use of email and social media to promote events and to assure the accuracy, completeness and professional quality of those communications.
- Take steps to maximize email and social media as key promotional tools for marketing Big Bass Lake.
- Establish a Referral Program to encourage existing Members to actively promote Big Bass Lake with their family, friends and colleagues.
- Continue to meet with Real Estate Agents annually to educate the Real Estate Community about all that Big Bass Lake has to offer.
- Research having a number of Open House Events and invite the Real Estate Agencies in the Community to participate as a means of promoting the Big Bass Lake Community.

Recreation

Strategic Goal

Evaluate the recreation programs that are currently taking place and develop a plan to add/delete programs in order to provide a balanced program for the Property Owners of Big Bass Lake. Complete by May 1, 2023.

Discussion:

While recreation programs are an important part of the “culture” of Big Bass Lake, it is important that the programs be worthwhile and meeting the needs of the residents of Big Bass Lake.

Recommended Actions:

- Evaluate the quality of the recreation programs currently being offered as well as the usage of these programs as a means of determining the programs that should be continued.
- Look at programs that are being offered in other areas to determine new programs that would be an exciting addition for the residents of Big Bass Lake.
- Develop a minimum of one high quality family-oriented event each month during the non-summer season.
- Plan activities and events that appeal to all members, multigenerational and for other member categories.
- Budget and plan for BBLCA’s 50th Anniversary Event that will occur in 2021.
- Develop an implementation plan for recreational offerings by January 2021.
Study programs that might be offered for resident groups that are not served by the current recreation program offerings.

Relationship with Townships, Counties, and Surrounding Communities

Strategic Goal

Develop a plan to strengthen the Community's relationship with the residents of the surrounding communities, as well as with the three townships and two counties that BBLCA is located.

Complete by May 1, 2022.

Discussion:

Develop and strengthen the Community's relationship with the three townships and two counties that BBLCA is located in. A united front when negotiating with the Townships and Counties provides strength and leverage. A better relationship with neighboring townships and the counties opens the door for the townships and/or counties offering services and benefits to the BBLCA membership such as recycling services, parks and recreation.

Recommended Actions:

- Establish a township/county task force that can monitor issues and mobilize members for attendance at meetings, or other action as needed.
- Explore the ways the community can work with local government to provide full-time emergency services which is essential for the safety of members health and property.
- Continue to send the General Manager or his designated representative to local township meetings.
- Explore holding event(s) that includes inviting the neighboring community non-members.
- Continue to encourage management to develop and maintain a positive working relationship with local township and county officials.
- Continue to perform charity work in the community and emphasize the positive impacts of this work.

Technology

Strategic Goal

Identify member services and operational systems that can be improved through the use of technology. Complete by May 1, 2022.

Discussion:

The community utilizes technology for operations, members' services, security services, communications and all aspects of day to day operations. The BBLCA need to utilize technology to benefit the operations and membership/guest services.

Recommended Actions:

- Identify member services that can be improved through the use of technology such as rental sign ups, member/guest/visitor sign ups and processing at the gates, members' card access/E-Z pass or license plate recognition type systems for easier access, and event sign ups.
- Perform a technology infrastructure and use analysis and address any systemic issues that would prevent future uses of technology.

Undeveloped Lots

Strategic Goal
Develop a plan to review and make effective decisions on non-developed lots. Complete by May 1, 2021.

Discussion:

As of 11/1/2019 the BBLCA House/Lot distribution is as follows:

Houses	1129
Lots	317
Multi Lots	201
½ Lots	10
BBLCA	21
Total	1678

Big Bass Lake has 549 undeveloped lots as of November 2019. 201 of the undeveloped lots are designated as “Multi-Lots” which are owned by a member who owns another lot or house.

The BBLCA has over \$2 million in uncollected debt from lot owners. According to Attorney Fisher who represented Big Bass Lake, Inc. over 100 lots are unbuildable in BBLCA. BBLCA currently has ownership of 21 lots. Throughout the years the BBLCA has taken ownership of several lots as well as several access/buffer strips for various reasons. Some have been designated as common areas other have not. Members have offered to donate lots to the BBLCA. Some have offered to donate lots in return for settlement or payment of past dues owned.

Recommended Actions:

- Develop a list of all undeveloped lots with ratings on condition, desirability, use as common area or not, potential current and future collection ability, and past due taxes owed if applicable.
- Review list and establish which lots may be best candidates for dues settlement cases, negotiate settlement in return for BBLCA obtaining lot for common area, potential resale, and/or partner with builder to obtain lot for home sale.
- Develop a checklist with objective criteria that could be analyzed for each member request to donate a lot to BBLCA.