

Friends of Lake Davidson

10 minute power point presentation

September 3, 2008

Narrative: My name is Doug Oldenburg. I live on Lake Davidson and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Friends of Lake Davidson – a group of people in Mooresville and Davidson who are deeply concerned about the FUTURE of our lake. I have signed statements here from over 230 people supporting our concerns and urging you to recommend that our two towns adopt – and enforce - a 10HP regulation for boat motors. There are many people here wearing the bright yellow kayak logo who care deeply about our lake, and the Friends of Lake Davidson are pleased to be among them.

Like you, we love this lake and have a vision to preserve it for future generations as a QUIET lake, a SAFE lake, and a HEALTHY and SUSTAINABLE lake.

Narrative: As you well know, Lake Davidson is a very SMALL lake, about 341 acres, only 1% the size of Lake Norman. That small red circle on the map before you is Lake Davidson.

It is also a very SHALLOW lake: Along more than one-half the shoreline, one must go out more than 75 feet to find water 6.5 feet deep.

Narrative: We are grateful that the water quality of the lake today is good. But, what will happen to the water quality when the entire shore line is developed? What would happen to our lake's water quality if the number of big boats on this small lake is doubled or tripled or quadrupled? We believe our water quality would quickly diminish!

Narrative: We believe that Lake Davidson is a very fragile lake because it is so shallow and there is no significant inflow and outflow of water and a very small amount of water exchange with Lake Norman. It is what some call a "Dead End Lake." We are told that pollutants in our lake stay for at least 1.3 years (or 16 months) instead of being flushed out more quickly as they are in other lakes. Our lake has no way to purify itself as river fed lakes do. We want to be sure that this "Dead End Lake" doesn't become a "Dead Lake," unable to sustain aquatic life, unsuitable for fishing, and unhealthy for swimming.

The 2006 Mount Mourne Small Area Plan urged the Mooresville Board to (quote) “consider restrictions on the size, speed and number of water craft allowed on the Lake. . . .” It went on to say that (quote) “Motorized watercraft cause shore line erosion and bring accompanying litter and spills of gas and oil into the Lake.”

We agree!

Narrative: Those of us who live on the lake or near the lake or boat on the lake can testify that at times the noise from trucks and cars on I-77 is loud and intrusive. The Transco Pumping Station often adds to the noise level. We simply don’t need the additional noise of big powerboats and jet skis. We envision Lake Davidson as being a quiet, tranquil lake. Again, it’s only 1% the size of Lake Norman. That’s all we’re asking for!

Narrative: We want Lake Davidson to be a safe lake for fishermen in low-powered boats, for passive water craft, and for swimmers. The Duke Energy grant of \$130,000 to Davidson for a canoe and kayak launch site will mean that more and more people from all around the area will have access to the lake for their passive water craft dramatically increasing the number of canoes and kayaks,
and . . .

Narrative: . . .dramatically increasing the risk of accidents and injury.

A resident of Lake Davidson wrote us saying:

“In the mid 80’s, you could paddle on Lake Norman in relative safety if you picked your time and place well. Not anymore. . . . So we moved to Lake Davidson. But now it too is getting crazy. The skiers no longer stay on their course like they used to. . . . PLEASE give us a safe place to paddle in the area so we do not have to move to South Carolina just to paddle with any kind of safety and security.”(end quote)

Again, the 2006 Mount Mourne Small Area Plan of Mooresville said: (quote)

“Just a few speed boats on a very small lake can cause safety problems.” (end quote) We agree! We already have more than just “a few speed boats,” and we would have many more if not for Davidson’s current 10 hp regulation which some have observed. But unless something is done to limit horsepower for the whole lake, the number of large power boats will increase dramatically with increased safety risks and diminished water quality. It is obvious that large, fast boats do not mix well with small passive water craft or swimmers on a small lake like ours.

An engine builder with KB Racing wrote the following:

“I am writing to urge your approval of a restriction on motor size in Davidson Lake. . . You’d have a hard time finding someone who loves big engines any more than me. The faster the car or boat with big wakes, the more I like it. But I know fast cars don’t belong on Main Street and fast boats with big wakes don’t belong on a little lake. We have Lake Norman for speeding and skiing. Let the folks in small fishing boats and canoes be safe on Lake Davidson.”

Indeed, you will hear personal testimony at this meeting about an incident that happened on August 9th – just three weeks ago – about how a large power boat almost rammed a small john boat on our lake which could well have caused multiple deaths or serious injuries like these pictures from Lake Norman which you see on the screen. Thank God, the accident was narrowly averted with only seconds to spare!

Narrative: A flyer passed out in our neighborhood tried to frighten people by claiming that a 10 HP rule would lower our property values. We believe quite the contrary that property values will diminish **if we don’t** regulate growth and big boats on our lake and this beautiful lake becomes just a polluted pond.

Another lake resident wrote: (quote)

“After living by Lake Norman for 8 years, we finally had to sell (our home) . . . and moved to Lake Davidson. . . .We would really appreciate a 10 hp rule being enforced. There’s enough danger, noise and chaos on Lake Norman without bringing it over here as well. If Lake Davidson allows big powerboats, we will consider selling and moving away from the lakes altogether. Please adopt the 10 hp rule.”

Narrative: We have already mentioned that Lake Davidson is a fragile lake because it is so shallow, and because, unlike most lakes, there is no river or stream flowing in or out of the lake flushing out pollutants. We think that's important. Others will speak (or have spoken) more about the ecology of the lake and the regulations needed to protect its ecosystem. We join in supporting sensible regulations for new developments around the lake, such as adequate buffers and control of surface runoff. But we also believe that an effective and enforced limit on motor horsepower will greatly benefit the health of the lake's ecosystem and preserve it for the future.

Narrative: Some have argued that it is unfair for the two towns to restrict the size of boat motors when there are already about 40 boats on our lake with motors larger than 10 HP. But most of those large power boats are on the Davidson side of the lake and their owners knew – or should have known – that since 1980 Davidson approved every development plan with a prohibition of motors greater than 10 HP at docks. And in 2001, that 10 HP limit was added to the Davidson Planning Ordinance. Those large powerboat owners bought their boats **in violation** of that prohibition and zoning ordinance.

We commend those boat owners on our lake who have complied with the Davidson ordinance, including one whole development with their pontoon or party boats. Boats with ten horsepower motors mix quite well with canoes, kayaks, and swimmers and together provide multiple ways for individuals and families to enjoy our beautiful lake.

Narrative: Just think! We have it within our power to do something quite unique with Lake Davidson! The Catawba RiverKeepers have told us that “Nowhere else in the Catawba River is there a lake, accessible to all, for passive water craft and boat with a 10 HP limit.”

We simply must not miss this opportunity. Is it too much to ask that our small lake - only 1% the size of our neighbor, Lake Norman – be set aside for canoes, kayaks, fishermen in low-powered boats, and all other boats with 10 HP or less. We think not!

We believe it is not too much to ask that this small, fragile lake we treasure so much be a quiet, safe, healthy, and sustainable lake.

And we trust you share that vision and will help make that vision become a reality for the benefit of all both now and especially for future generations yet unborn.

Thank you.

Thank you