

Minutes Brewster Ponds Coalition, December 3, 2015

Board members present: Tom Vautin, Dawn Walnut, Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Rick Kuzman, John Keith, Gwen Pelletier, Konrad Schultz (by Skype). Communications member present, Judy Pirani.

Minutes of the November 5, 2015, Board Meeting were approved unanimously.

CONFIRMATION OF EMAIL VOTES: None during the previous month.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer, Tony Ortiz, submitted a report, copy available on request. The report showed total deposits for 2015 of \$13,240 and additional receipts of \$850 through Credit Card and Paypal contributions that have not yet been deposited into the bank account. Tony also submitted an outline of a procedure for receipt of donations from individual pond associations when they have been approved by the Board for an association with BPC. He included with the outline a proposed spreadsheet that will be used to track donations for specific pond associations. Gwen inquired if the Board had ever formally approved the policy for pond association relationships with the Board. She had not been able to find in the minutes that there had ever been a vote of the policy discussed at the August meeting. John indicated that he had sent a draft to the Board and thought it had been voted.

Copies of report attached.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

- ❖ **Communications:** Konrad submitted a written report, copy available on request. In summary, the response to the Annual Report and Annual Appeal have been positive. The committee is discussing ways to enhance both for next year. To date the donations have totaled approximately \$8,000 from the appeal letter. Konrad encourage each of us to continue to call donors to thank them for their support and encourage personal involvement. Committee is exploring using “Instagram” as method to communicate with members.. The report included an outline for the January newsletter. Judy Pirani reported that she had followed up as requested by the Board with Scott Nagle, who had designed the Annual Report on his own time, separate from the work done by students at the Technical High School in Harwich to produce the Annual Report. Scott responded that he would happily receive a gift/contribution for his effort on our behalf. The Board confirmed the authorization last month for a check of \$100 to be delivered to Scott and thanked Judy for doing so.
- ❖ **Education:** Dawn and Karen submitted a written report, copy available on request.. The report includes an outline of potential events for the year, with the first workshop being “What is a Healthy Pond”, to be at the Museum of Natural History in March. Discussion included possible speakers. We also agreed that there will be other specific targeted events during the summer with a focus on specific ponds with pond associations.
- ❖ **Membership:** Rick submitted a written report, copy available on request, indicating work he is doing to summarize how people are choosing to donate, i.,e, Pay Pal, checks, etc.,

and work he is doing to consolidate information and to respond to donors with decals and hats.. Re the check that had gone missing, Rick reported that he had talked with donor and that the check had been found by the Brewster Post Office. During the discussion of work of the committee, the Board recognized that Rick needs help. Rick indicated there had been 5 donors who indicated an interest in volunteering. He will pursue and Gwen offered that she may be able to assist, but not until late January. Judy Pirani offered to help with getting the “welcome letters” to donors with decals and hats. Other items clarified included that Konrad manages deposit of Pay Pal donations to the BPC bank account and that he will notify the treasurer of such. He will also follow-up with donations made through credit cards. Tom indicated he would complete the application with STAPLES for the tax exempt account and that he will renew the BPC mail box with the Post Office, due by December 31, 2015.

❖ **Current Projects**

Americorps development of template for Conservation Commission application for RDA, the simplified application for projects with limited impact on waterfront properties. John reported that he, Jan McGann, and Gwen Pelletier had a second meeting with Aaron Brisley, the Americorps Volunteer for this project with DNR. The goal is to have a RDA for Elbow Pond by the end of the winter. John said that members of the Elbow Pond Association have already agreed to assist with the project and to provide funds.

Administrative

- ❖ **HAY House** owned by BCT. Tom made site visit with Hal Minis. Tom’s analysis is that the remote location of the property causes it to be inconvenient for meetings and for storage of our signs. etc. Board members agree with him; however, agree that it could be useful for a retreat in the future. We concluded to continue Board meetings at the Library.
- ❖ **Google Apps.** We agreed that it is an excellent tool and that we have a learning curve to be able to maximize use of it. Tom set up a master calendar for BPC events and meetings that is accessible to all Board members.
- ❖ Karen shared with the Board information about CARE FOR CAPE COD AND THE ISLANDS, a nonprofit whose leader is Jill Talladay and which provides support for organizations working on environmental issues. The grant deadline is December 31 and grants of \$1,000 have been made to local organizations. During a brief Board discussion about applying for funds for BPC, we concluded the Elbow Pond project would be an appropriate project. Karen and John volunteered to work together on an application for funding for the Elbow Pond project and to submit it by the deadline.
 - Tom and Judy reported that they had attended CAPE COD PHILANTHROPY DAY and learned of foundations to which we could apply in the future for specific projects.

MAJOR INITIATIVES AND NEW PROJECTS

- **Town of Brewster Proposed Septic and Stormwater Regulations**

- ❖ Report from 12/3 meeting with Sue Leven, Town Planner, and Mark Nelson and Tara Nye, consultants with Horsley Witten.

John Keith reported that a primary focus of the meeting was on **the Mill Ponds project**. Much of the discussion focused on the two treatments being considered, macrophyte removal and alum treatment. John reported that Sue Leven's primary objective appeared to be to have BPC advocate for Town budget items for ponds. John reported that part of the discussion centered on phosphorus balance and the source of the phosphorous, whether it was in sediment from past historical practices or from current sources entering the pond. The question has not been answered and It is important to know that answer in order to determine treatment. There was also discussion about both alum treatment and more regular macrophyte harvesting. There was general recommendation by Horsley Witten that regular macrophyte harvesting would be desirable and the Town owning the equipment would make that possible. Horsley Witten also recognized that for alum treatment to be effective there needed to be follow-up monitoring. All agree that something needs to be done both in ponds and properties abutting ponds to halt and improve impairment of the ponds. In discussion by our board, BPC concluded that our position should be one of support, but that we see these efforts as only a beginning, that we have concerns that more information/research is needed re phosphorous sources, monitoring and analysis after remediation treatments, emergent contaminants from household chemicals and drugs, stormwater run-off, We agreed our position is to support funding for remediation activities for ponds and that specifics will be addressed in meetings and hearings as the Town moves forward.

- ❖ **Regulatory Issues being discussed Saturday, December 5, at Town sponsored meeting relative to proposed Board of Health Septic System Regulations and a proposed Town By-Law on Storm Water.runoff.** We agreed that the BPC position is that we support action in both areas, that the Town needs to be moving forward on both preventing stormwater runoff into ponds and waterways and septic system improvements that limit filtration from septic systems into ponds and waterways..We acknowledge that it is a complex issue that is difficult to boil down to simple rules and objectives. We are concerned that the septic regs as currently proposed do not address problems that exist now, only when property changes hands which could be many years from now. Relative to storm water run off, we think it is a good beginning but like to see it stronger. We agreed our basic position should always be that we are "the voice of the ponds"! Our concern is improving impaired ponds!. Tom said that he would attend and represent BPC at the meeting on Saturday. Taking points from our discussion, he will draft a letter to be presented at the meeting Saturday and will circulate it by email to Board members tomorrow for our review and consideration.

- **Strategic Plan for 2016**

- ❖ Given the hour and the need for a significant discussion on our plans for 2016, Tom suggested that we make this agenda item the focus of the January Board meeting. He noted that with increasing new members and donations, we need to advance our goals.

The big themes should be

- ➔ Action and Advocacy: how to engage members and volunteers
- ➔ Developing a structure of committees, more than just the board
- ➔ Develop specific goals for the next twelve months
- ➔ Develop actions that will involve members
- ➔ Develop a vision around larger issues

WRAP-UP

Tom summarized the meeting

- ❖ Complimented committees for written reports
- ❖ Karen and John approved to submit application to “Cape Cod Cares” for \$1,000 for Elbow Pond Project
- ❖ Tom will draft talking points and send to Board members which he will present for BPC at Town’s public meeting Saturday on proposed BoH septic regulations and Planning Department proposals for Storm Water Runoff by-law.
- ❖ Tom will connect with Tony to get check for P.O. Box fee and will also deliver to him checks that Rick collected in mail this week.
- ❖ Relative to Gwen’s concern re Board approval of a “Policy for Pond Associations” relationship with BPC, John indicated he would resend the proposed policy he had written in September; Tom would research his records to determine if we had taken an email vote on the proposed policy.
- ❖ The January Board meeting will focus primarily on
 - Board positions to be filled: Need someone who has experience with grant writing and a treasurer to replace Tony Ortiz.
 - Strategic Plan for 2016

Submitted by
Gwen Pelletier, Secretary