

Minutes, Brewster Ponds Coalition May 7, 2015

Board Members Present: Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Rick Kuzman, Tony Ortiz, Gwen Pelletier, Tom Vautin, Dawn Walnut. Konrad Schultz (by Skype)

Minutes for the April 2, 2015, meeting were approved unanimously.

Karen thanked everyone for their participation for the Brewster Ponds Coalition in the Beautify Brewster Day and complimented Tom Vautin for organizing BPC participation in the event. Tom reported that 23 people participated for us and that our team was credited with collecting the largest amount of trash! Tom also reported that he had ordered 15 hats with our logo, as discussed at the last meeting, with the plan to give to those who joined our team. However, since there were more people than hats, they were given to Board members only. We discussed the possibility of using hats in the future as recognition for significant donors or other types of recognition.

## MONTHLY REPORTS

- CLERK—Gwen Pelletier
  - She reported that the Mass Department of Revenue has approved ST-2 status, which exempts nonprofit organizations from paying sales tax in Mass. In order to get the exemption, an ST-5 form must be presented at the time of the sale, accompanied by a copy of the ST-2 form. A vendor cannot exempt the Mass sales tax without those forms. Tony and Gwen both have the forms and can provide if anyone other than Tony is making a purchase or paying a bill..
  - She distributed sets of letters to pond front property owners for Board members to help address and asked that they be returned to her ASAP for stamping and mailing.
- COMMITTEE REPORTS
  - MEMBERSHIP—Rick Kuzman
    - Two new members, Margie Cummings and Eldridge Family. One contribution of \$25. Although applications were available, no new members joined day of Beautify Brewster. Rick will not be on Cape for May 16 “Pond Friendly Landscaping” program and will need someone to handle the membership table.
    - Discussion re membership, types, expectations, benefits, categories of donors. This was a wide ranging discussion, with a recognition that we need to come to grips with this topic. There are basically two types of donors to recruit, activists who will participate and advocate and donors who will provide financial support. In the activist category, we should consider creating a “legislative committee” to be responsible for reviewing local (both town and county) proposed regulations, warrant articles, as well as state or federal legislation that affects ponds. It was agreed that we will have this topic on a future agenda and begin to make decisions after we see the response to the “dear pond abutter” letter. In June we will discuss basic membership levels and services and in August focus on the big picture.
    - We acknowledged that is important to establish our identity as an organization working to protect and improve the health of our ponds and that we not be identified as an “arm of the Town” or working for the Town. We will not always necessarily be in agreement with proposals from the Town.

- Moving forward with membership levels, Rick offered to begin working on a template for donor levels, creating categories. Discussion around this issue acknowledged that we need to be able to recognize donors by level of donation, defining what donations will do for the organization, show where the money is going—development of and speakers for workshops, equipment for pond testing, consultation services for pond front property owners.
- Tom Vautin informed the committee that the PALs program, which provides volunteers for pond testing, may be interested in having BPC take over the management of that program. We agreed that it would be a logical activity for us. Tom will investigate the possibility
  
- EVENTS AND EDUCATION---Dawn Walnut and Karen Malkus-Benjamin Reviewed upcoming programs.
  - May 16, Pond Friendly Landscaping, Brewster Ladies Library 10 AM
  - June 6, Identifying Pond weeds, First Parish Church, Brewster, 10 AM
  - July 11, Participation in Brewster Conservation Day, Drummer Boy Park, Karen to provide THE BIG FLUSH, a model toilet and septic system. Discussed possibility of stickers, “I GOT FLUSHED! By Brewster Ponds Coalition, with Logo
  - August, to be determined. Possibilities: Alternative Remediation Strategies, Bike tour of ponds with education component at each pond; Kayaking on a pond with education component; alternative septic systems.
  - September 18-20 Participation in Celebrate our Waters sponsored by Orleans Ponds Coalition. Agreed on having an information table in the main tent for CoW at Depot Square in Orleans. Considered suggestion by Dawn to have signs at Town Landing for Brewster Ponds with education about each pond.
  
- COMMUNICATIONS---Konrad Schultz
  - Good PR coverage for Pond Friendly landscaping workshop this week.
  - Website: Volunteer page added. Need to make decision re DONATE page.
  - Slide show for use at beginning of meetings completed and available.
  - May 15 deadline for PR for June 6 Weed-watchers workshop.
  - JP Ludwig on schedule for taping May and June workshops
  - Judy Pirani has joined Communications Committee. Has Social Media experience.
  - Konrad submitted to Town Planner Sue Leven questions developed by BPC Board members, primarily John and Konrad, about proposed Septic Regulations. Sue was submitting them to Mark Nelson, Horsley and Witten consultant to the Board of Health.
  - Brewster Conservation Trust requested a brief article about BPC for their upcoming newsletter. Konrad submitted an article to Beth Finch.
  
- TREASURER-Tony Ortiz
 

Submitted reports showing the following:

  - Balance 12/30/ 2014: \$1889.94
  - Current Balance 5/7/2015: \$1593.58
  - Income 2015: \$ 700.00
  - Expenses 2015: \$ 956.36

Reported that he has submitted the IRS tax filing for 2014 and completed Mass tax filing for 2014, waiting for President's signature.

Dawn reported that she had paid the videographer for the first two workshops a total of \$600. The Board voted unanimously to approve reimbursing Dawn Walnut \$600 for the videos.

#### PROJECTS:

- Letter to Pond Front Property Owners: To be mailed as soon as we have completed hand addressing.
- Comments on Horsley Witten report to Town on Mill Ponds. John and Karen are developing comments to be submitted.
- Board of Health proposed regulations re septic systems. Comments submitted to Horsley Witten.

#### OTHER ITEMS:

- **Development of a Strategic Plan:** Conclusion that we need to develop this as a full board, not having a subcommittee work on it. We need to develop a well-articulated strategy and relate it to development of resources, both financial and membership. We agreed to stream-line business reports for the June meeting and begin discussions leading to development of a strategic plan. Our first discussions should be about why we care about ponds and what our goals are.
- **What is our political role,** in particular relative to articles for Town Meeting or other Town Committee information and how we share/post/sponsor information from other groups? This issue is based on continued requests to post notices on our website and/or to publicly support issues. Often these requests come by email between meetings and ask for immediate posting. Our discussion centered on whether we are taking a position or relaying information. We concluded that any position we take should relate specifically to our mission—protecting and improving the health of ponds in Brewster. Tom offered to draft a position for review at the June meeting.
- Karen reported that she had recently attended a conference, “The Future of Water in SE Massachusetts”. Topics included fund raising, new water monitoring tools, Storm water, Herring, drinking water, waste water, toxic algae and climate change. She said one issue was about the use of technology in monitoring---cell phone pictures for instance are so easy to use to document changes over short and long term. She suggested we begin to think about what BPC can do to assist in monitoring.

NEXT MEETING: June 4, 2015 6 PM, Library

Submitted by,

Gwen Pelletier, Clerk