

Minutes, Brewster Ponds Coalition November 5, 2015

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

Minutes for the October 1, 2015, meeting approved unanimously.

CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY EMAIL DURING THE MONTH

- Opened STAPLES Business REWARDS Account; Also submitted and approved non-profit account at Staples.
- Ponds map posted in Library with BPC information. Thank you, Konrad
- Approved participation, with Brewster Conservation Trust, in Blueberry Pond Project for prevention of run off into Blueberry Pond through property owned by the BCT. Approved inclusion of BPC in letter of application by BCT. Approved \$1,000 commitment to create Video of the project.
- Approved development of annual appeal letter by Communications Committee.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

On a motion by Rick Kuzman, seconded by Karen Malkus-Benjamin, the following were elected as officers for this year: Tom Vautin, President; John Keith, VP; Gwen Pelletier, Clerk; Tony Ortiz, Treasurer. Tom assumed leadership of the meeting and thanked Karen for her leadership this past year. He also thanked all the Board members for our teamwork during this our first year.

UPDATES

- Gwen reported that she had filed the required annual report with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- Rick reported that apparently a check from a donor became lost in the transition of payments between him and Tony when envelopes were left in Tony's mail box. If the check has not yet been located, the Board asked Rick to please call the donor to let them know to stop payment on the check.
- Rick reported that five people signed up for membership at the Annual Meeting on October 29 and that he has sent "welcome" letters to them. During a discussion of follow-up to new or renewing members the following points were agreed:
 - For large donors who would receive a hat, they should be called and an attempt made to meet with them.
 - New members should be called or get a personal email
 - The official record of members will be kept at the BPC Google account for all Board members to be able to see. Rick will post new information and maintain. There will be a column where each of us can make notes after conversations.
 - Dawn will give to Rick the return address stamp for BPC for his use in mailings.
- Annual Meeting Review. Board made the following observations:
 - For election of officers, it would be helpful to have a hand out with information about the nominees.
 - At the Annual Meeting, a nominating committee for the next year should be named.
 - We should pick a date now for the next Annual Meeting. We should also develop an "annual calendar" with events that we know we will repeat from year to year.
 - Because there was no microphone, the speaker was difficult to hear some of the time.
 - We should recognize partner and supporting organizations, perhaps with awards.
 - Consider making it a bigger event next year with a speaker focused more specifically on pond issues.
- Communications

- Konrad reported that the annual appeal letter process has begun with the first mailing to property owners with pond frontage and pond views already mailed. A second mailing to all Brewster addresses will go out the week of November 9. He stressed the importance of follow-up phone calls to people we know and businesses we frequent. An email will follow with guidance for telephone calls, indicating which board member should call whom, and some suggestions for the conversation.
- Use of the membership database on the Google Account will be important. Konrad will work with Rick to set it up with color coding for Board member's use.
- Copies of the Annual Report will be distributed at the Library and Town Hall as well as at events throughout the year.
- Konrad met with Paul Gasek and Chris Seufert recently. Chris is a videographer with whom we might be able to coordinate. Chris also "threw out the idea" of BPC possibly creating a "Brewster poster".
- January newsletter is being developed.
- Judy Pirani reported that she monitors the BPC Facebook page; recently she posted a new cover of a pond with fall foliage and it has had 50 likes!

- **Financial Updates**

- Judy Pirani reported that she had coordinated with Tony Ortiz and payment had been made to Curly Printing for the letters and mailing. She gave the copy of the paid receipt to Rick who will turn it over to Tony.
- Konrad suggested that we thank Scott Nagle for the extra work he did in developing the Annual Report, with both a thank you letter and a check for \$100. During a discussion there was consensus to do so, however, there was concern that to do so could put him in a potential "conflict of interest" since the printing was done by the Cape Cod Tech printing department under his leadership and the design work was done by him personally and his company. On a motion by Gwen, seconded by Karen, the Board voted for Judy Pirani to have a conversation with him to let him know we would like to do this but are concerned whether it would be a problem for him. Judy agreed to do so and report back at the December meeting.

- **Projects**

- John indicated that he will continue to reach out to "pond groups" in order to talk about pond health and things neighbors can do. He spoke recently with Sam McGee of Griffiths Pond and would like a name of a contact person for Cobbs Pond. Tom suggested that we should look at lists of abutters to ponds and attempt to identify someone to connect with us. The conversation at this point turned to our possible involvement with ponds that have no public access. We agreed that should not deter us because toxic blooms and other impairments are public health issues.
- Blueberry Pond Project. Konrad added the additional information at this point that the work to be performed is not within the perimeter that will require approval from the Conservation Commission. He also noted that neighbors are contributed to the cost of the project.
- AMERICORPS/VISTA position with Department of Natural Resources. John reported that the BPC committee for overseeing this project (John, Gwen, and Jan McGann) had met with Aaron Briesly, the AMERICORPS member on Tuesday of this week. The end result will be a small scale demonstration project, applying for a variance from the full blown NOTICE OF INTENT from the Conservation Commission to allow limited work on pond front property and in ponds. The goal is to develop a "template" for the application to assist pond front property owners in taking action to help their impaired ponds. The location of the proposed demonstration project is Elbow Pond. (John pointed out that the location of the project is the opposite side of the pond from his property so he would not be a direct beneficiary.) Aaron has reviewed the proposal approved by DNR and AMERICORPS, is now beginning research and becoming familiar with the Conservation Commission regulations, and has made a site visit to the location. Focus will be on run-off control and nuisance plants. There is public access through property owned by the

Elbow Pond Association. Aaron is also researching to clarify ownership and who the applicant would be.

- ❖ This is an excellent demonstration project for volunteer action.
- ❖ John indicated that Aaron is also writing a description of the project that could be posted on the website.
- ❖ Time frame for actual implementation is projected for May and June.
- ❖ Development of a template for a larger NOI for the Conservation will follow this project.

➤ **GOOGLE DOCS**

Tom has established a GOOGLE DOCS site for BPC. The site will allow shared copies of information for board members, some of which will be for “read only” and others will be set up for sharing and use by multiple members of the Board. Consensus is that this will be a useful tool for us and that it will take time for us to get used to using it. Karen used it for sharing the agenda for this meeting. It will also be useful as we proceed with the database of membership and following-up on donations.

➤ **Board of Health: Proposed Septic Regulations.**

Karen reported that she has been following meetings of the Board of Health as they discussed the proposed septic regulations. Discussions have included use of a model for phosphorus analysis, changes in what causes a system to fail and requiring correction of systems not up to the revised standards upon the sale of the property. She understands that on the November 17 meeting, the Board may vote to take the proposed new septic regulations to a Public Hearing. She also said that the Comprehensive Water Planning Committee would be hearing the proposed regulations on December 1. We also acknowledged that the decision on the changes would be Board of Health Regulations, not a Town Meeting decision.

➤ **USE of BCT Hay House**

Konrad and Tom have both had conversations with Hal Minnis about the possibility of BCP using space at the HAY HOUSE on Red Top Road, owned by BCT. Tom agreed that he would meet with Hal for a site visit to the property and report back to us about the space and possibility.

➤ **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

During a wide ranging discussion, the Board agreed on the following as issues for us as an organization and board:

- ❖ Developing our membership
- ❖ Fund raising
- ❖ Continuation of education program
- ❖ Development of projects at ponds with volunteer participation
- ❖ Board Development
- ❖ Committee Development
- ❖ Continued programs to engage people
 - Winter indoor on Saturdays
 - Spring/Summer outdoor trainings or remediation activities
- ❖ Positioning BPC as an information source.

Tom asked that we come to the December meeting with ideas for developing our strategic plan and for programs for the coming year relative to the ideas above and these other topics discussed:

- ❖ Using volunteers to verify items like catch basins and houses on the Horsley Witten maps
- ❖ Possible nominees for the Treasurer and the open Board position.

Submitted by

Gwen Pelletier, Clerk