

## MINUTES, BREWSTER PONDS COALITION, JULY 6, 2017

Board Members Present: Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Gwen Pelletier, Judy Pirani, Sue Searles, Konrad Schultz, Tom Vautin, Dawn Walnut. John Keith by Skype.

Tom began meeting by recognizing and thanking Corey Bray for his year of service through the AmeriCorps Program to BPC and to the other Brewster partners, DNR and Brewster Conservation Trust.

**Minutes for June 1, 2017**, were approved unanimously.

**Mail:** Gwen informed of mail indicating need to renew BPC domain name. Konrad agreed to research and determine if mail was relevant, i.e. from company providing service to BPC.

**Treasurer's Report:** The report submitted was accepted unanimously as presented. Copy available upon request. Discussion included the following additional comments or questions:

- Konrad indicated he would like to arrange a time to review the report with Gwen to fully understand all of its components.
- Gwen pointed out the detail of the report includes donations made in memory of Carroll Johnson. Tom has written a letter to Jane Johnson; Gwen provides a list of donors to Jane Johnson and writes individual thank you notes to all the donors. Discussion included how to let members know this is an option. It was agreed that, in general, folks who are writing obituaries, are aware of this. By beginning to list in our “donor” list, “donations in memory of”, it will provide a reminder of the option.
- Tom suggested that we should review our budget mid-year and make adjustments if it seems appropriate.

- Karen suggested to the Board that we consider an appropriate way for paying for expenditures for projects, especially if volunteer members are making payments. For example, for the Pond Kit project, she has used her personal credit card and been reimbursed. In one case, a volunteer member also spent more than \$500 on her own credit card. Gwen did quickly reimburse her. However, there was general agreement that we should consider getting a credit card for BPC and/or setting up an account at STAPLES where we sometimes buy supplies. We had decided recently not to get a debit card, which is the only card issued by CC Five; we agree we should revisit the issue of getting an organization credit card.

## **CURRENT PRIORITIES AND ISSUES**

- Brewster Conservation Day: We agreed everyone would be at Drummer Boy Park Saturday, the 8th, between 8 and 8:30 to help set up. Each of us will assist as already assigned and as needed during the day.
- Board Recruiting and Leadership Development:
  - ❖ Konrad reported that he, Dawn Walnut, and Fred Budreski (Nominating Committee members) have met with five people so far. He believes the effort is yielding good possibilities for involvement with activities but no recruits yet for Board position. The discussion re what we need for additional board members opened the conversation to a greater topic of time commitments from Board members and the recognition that we all are contributing in significant ways. Konrad indicated the committee still has a list of approximately 30 folks with whom they anticipate meeting.
  - ❖ Tom reminded that the primary goal of the Nominating Committee is to recruit a member for the vacant 9th Board position and the slate for the nominating committee for the coming year for the August 12 Annual Meeting.

- ❖ Although the Board elects the officers for the following year at the first Board meeting after the Annual Meeting, we decided it would be good to have a sense of commitment at this time. All current officers agreed to continue serving: Tom Vautin, President; Konrad Schultz, Vice President; Gwen Pelletier, Secretary/Treasurer. Committee chairs/leaders also agreed to continue.
- Annual Meeting Plan and Responsibilities

We agreed on the following:

  - ❖ Tom will have an additional conversation with speaker, Andrew Gottlieb, APCC Executive Director. He asked Board members to share with him thoughts they have for suggesting theme/topic to him.
  - ❖ As previously discussed, we will not provide a printed Annual Report, saving that document for inclusion with the end of year fundraising mailing.
  - ❖ Judy Pirani will prepare, instead, a handout highlighting our Activities for the last year and goals for the coming year.
  - ❖ Judy will send out a “Save the Date” email to members.
  - ❖ Gwen will prepare and submit to Tom a financial report, similar to the “snapshot” provided in last year’s Annual Report. However, we decided that beginning this year we will report based on the calendar year, in keeping with our Financial Calendar Year.
  - ❖ Dawn will follow-up with ARDEO’S at Captain’s Course for the buffet breakfast. Gwen will turn over to Dawn the contract and notes to date of conversations with ARDEO’S
  - ❖ Tom will prepare slides for Business section of meeting, review of year, etc.
  - ❖ We agreed to have a “Volunteer of the Year” award at annual meeting. Dawn will manage the selection. She asks that each of us send her nominees, with reason for nomination. She will compile lists of nominees, send info to us prior to August Board meeting. We will vote on person to be honored at the Board meeting.

- Possible staff position

- ❖ The discussion around Board recruiting opened a conversation around the recognition that we may be at a point that we need to consider at least a part time staff position.

- Karen pointed out how time consuming the Pond Education Kit project with the three schools was and that it cannot be sustained or enlarged with purely volunteer Board effort and member volunteers. She and Sue spent, along with the help of AmeriCorps member Corey Bray, extraordinary amounts of time creating the kits and working with the schools. If we are to continue this project:

- Contacts need to be made with the two elementary schools in Brewster.
- Kits will need to be created for new schools.
- For the 3 schools which participated this year, field trips supplies will need to be planned if we continue the project with them
- Field trip supplies will need to be replenished
- Someone to coordinate and manage field trips

- Gwen pointed out that as we continue to grow, financial management requires more than should be expected of a Board Member/Treasurer. She agreed to assume the responsibilities with the resignation of Treasurer Patricia Monahan in October/November of last year. She was able to do so with the support of Judy Valverde who is providing technical support as a volunteer. Gwen indicated that this is not a long term solution and that perhaps we should consider hiring someone as bookkeeper/treasurer with oversight from Board member..

- ❖ As the discussion continued the following points were made

- Karen has met a person who has relevant experience and has indicated a genuine interest in Brewster Ponds Coalition and

our efforts. Although she lives in Sandwich, she would very much like to become involved. Karen summarized her background: has managed a business; has an environmental focus; experience in the health industry; is looking for a position; works part time for Barnstable County in the health department at the moment; might be interested in a part time position.

➤ Gwen suggested that it might be possible, depending on her background to combine the work required for program issues with financial management.

❖ Towards moving forward on this issue:

➤ Tom stated that this is a critical discussion at this time and suggested that such a position could be “part time/administrative” to meet our current needs.

➤ We all recognized that we might be approaching “burn out” if we cannot get adequate support from volunteers and do not do something to create long term sustainability for BPC.

➤ We decided to ask Karen to send us the resume of Alex Fitch

➤ John volunteered to forward a position description for another non profit with which he is involved that is a bit similar to what we are discussing

➤ John suggested we think about a “consultant” position rather than a paid staff position.

➤ John suggested considering 15 hours per month.

➤ We recognized that with our current financial position we could support a part time position initially and that part of the position responsibility would involve helping research grants from environmental organizations that would help support the position.

➤ Tom suggested that the nominating committee and/or others plan to meet with Alex Fitch to discuss her interests and experience. It was suggested that both Karen and Gwen might participate in such a meeting.

➤ Tom indicated that we have previous lists provided by both Konrad and Gwen when this issue was discussed earlier in the year. With the job description from John, and with comments at this meeting from Karen and Gwen. With this discussion, we need to figure out what a role for BPC would look like at this time. With this information, he offered to “fine tune” a position description for further discussion.

- Citizen Science Monitoring Project Update

In the Education Committee Report, Karen included information about training for use of the Cyanobacteria Kit that we recently purchased. Copy of report available upon request. In addition, the following points were made and/or information shared about the project.

- ❖ Nancy Leland has provided one training session. Karen is providing additional training to BPC volunteers.
- ❖ Sampling at 6 Brewster ponds is being done in coordination with APCC. Four BPC teams are participating.
- ❖ APCC is also monitoring ponds in other locations, including Eastham and Barnstable.
- ❖ Nancy Leland will process samples provided by our sampling teams and we will get the benefit of her research
- ❖ This is a great example of volunteer involvement.

- Walkers Pond Project Update and BPC Management Plan

Tom presented a “Draft Framework for BPC support of the Walkers Pond Weed Harvesting Project”.

This is the project for which the Town has recently purchased equipment for

Harvesting weeds. BPC has participated in meetings with the Town and consultant Horsley Witten. The topic elicited a significant discussion of what are BPC goals and that as individual Board members, we sometimes have differing points of view. Significant points in the discussion were

- ❖ BPC wants to be seen as independent and an advocate for the ponds
  - ❖ BPC will not always agree with Town proposals
  - ❖ Harvesting weeds at Walker’s Pond is a test project. If it is successful it could be replicated at other ponds in Brewster with significant weed problems.
  - ❖ BPC can help document the project as it is implemented. Tom is working with a group of BPC members who are interested in participating in that documentation.
  - ❖ Karen expressed concern that use of alum in Upper Mill Pond is a foregone conclusion, despite the indication from the Town that there will be a delay on that possible project for two years to see the effect of the Walkers Pond project on the total environment. Since the permitting process for Upper Mill is just beginning, the BPC will have the opportunity to comment and offer alternatives, as appropriate.
  - ❖ BPC does not want to be seen as a “rubber stamp” for everything the Town proposes.
  - ❖ Tom will update the draft outline for BPC involvement in the weed harvesting on Walkers Pond and continue discussions with Chris Miller about the project to keep the Board informed.
  - ❖ There is no date scheduled at this point for work/activity to begin.
- Ecotour Pond Paddle Event  
Konrad reported that the committee had one initial meeting, with other meetings scheduled to begin the planning process and develop the event with the folks who have indicated an interest in volunteering to help with it.

## **Reports and Working Group Updates**

Written reports were submitted by the Communications Action Team and the Education Committee. Copies available upon request.

**Wrap-up Recap: Follow-up**

- Karen to send Alix Fitch resume to all Board
- Everyone to share thoughts re position description
- Everyone to be at Drummer Boy Park for Conservation Day Saturday 7/8
- Karen, Sue, Gwen plan to attend “AmeriCorps graduation” on 7/27
- Judy Pirani to send “Save the Date” for Annual Meeting and to develop program for Annual Meeting
- Tom to contact Andrew Gottlieb and to develop slides for Annual Meeting
- Dawn to solicit nominations from Board for Volunteer award and to manage that selection process
- Gwen to provide Tom with End of year financial information
- Nominating Committee to continue interviews for 9th Board position and Nominating Committee for next year.

Next Board Meeting: August 3, 2017

Submitted by,

Gwen Pelletier, Secretary