

## MINUTES, BREWSTER PONDS COALITION, SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

Board members present: Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Gwen Pelletier, Sue Searles, Konrad Schultz, Tom Vautin, Dawn Walnut.

Note: Tom shared with Board members that John Keith's work schedule prevents him from attending any Board meetings through December; however, John will continue to be in touch and work with the Elbow Pond neighborhood to move forward with them on solutions for remediation of Elbow Pond impairment issues.

**Minutes for August 3, 2017**, were approved unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

- Financial Statements for August were approved unanimously as presented.
- Approval of Expenses: Unanimous approval of \$25.00 gift card for SPLASH Award presented to outstanding volunteer at annual meeting. To be reimbursed to Karen Malkus-Benjamin.

### **CURRENT PRIORITIES AND ISSUES**

- **Election of Officers**

- ❖ By unanimous vote the following officers were elected for the coming year:
  - Tom Vautin, President
  - Konrad Schultz, Vice President
  - Gwen Pelletier, Secretary & interim Treasurer.

Tom informed the Board that this would be the last term he would agree to serve as President. Gwen informed the Board that she would continue to serve as interim Treasurer with the expectation that the Board will work to resolve the situation within the next few months.

- **Annual Meeting recap**

During review of the meeting, the following points were made:

- ❖ The location and a buffet breakfast appear to be a good choice
- ❖ This year, in contrast with last year, there were problems with the room being set up in advance and with the food service.
- ❖ Gwen will call Joe Jamiel, with whom arrangements were made, and discuss the problem issues with him, letting him know we like the location and would consider having it again.
- ❖ The flow of the meeting was good, in particular the brevity of the business part of the meeting.

- ❖ Having attendees RSVP and having name tags available was good.
- ❖ Having Andrew Gottlieb, the new Executive Director of APCC, was a good choice for making a connection between our two organizations.
- ❖ It would have been helpful if speaker Andrew Gottlieb had also used a powerpoint to keep his address flowing.
- ❖ One strong point of his address was the emphasis on working with local officials and attending Board of Selectmen's meetings to keep environmental issues in front of them. He pointed out that, as a Selectman himself in Mashpee, as many as 10 to 15 people attending a meeting on an issue gets the attention of the BoS.
- ❖ Having a "name" speaker appears to draw attendance to our Annual Meeting.
- ❖ Next year, if possible, we would like to have Rich Delaney, Center for Coastal Studies. Board members asked Gwen to contact him now and see if he is available in August 2018. We could be flexible around date if he is available any Saturday in August 2018.

- **ECO Paddle Event update**

Konrad shared the following information:

- ❖ To date 9 members have registered. 4 additional members have volunteered as guides
- ❖ Ed Woolen has volunteered to host the group for a coffee break at his house on the west side of the pond. At that time, Konrad will have a set up to show the DNR's Weed Harvester, now known as "Big Blue" at work on Walker's Pond.
- ❖ The paddle will begin at 9 am from the Town landing at Upper Mill Pond in the Punkhorn
- ❖ Konrad sees this as an opportunity for building leaders for future events.

- **Citizen Scientist Monitoring update**

Karen shared the following information:

- ❖ The "pilot project" this summer to begin to develop protocols for volunteers participating in monitoring for cyanobacteria is going well.
- ❖ As part of her job, Karen is sampling in Barnstable.
- ❖ For BPC the following ponds and samplers are participating
  - Long Pond, Karen
  - Lower Mill Pond, Nancy Ortiz and Gwen Pelletier
  - Pine Pond, Pat and Bill Wood
  - Greenland Pond, Doug Smith and Gwen Pelletier
  - Sheep Pond, Marty Burke
  - Rafe Pond, Chuck Madansky and Gwen Pelletier

- ❖ BBC equipment is being stored in Gwen's garage where each team can get it on their sampling days and return for other teams.
- ❖ APCC teams are sampling Upper Mill and Walker's Ponds in Brewster and a pond in Dennis.
- ❖ Sampling will end for this season in October.
- ❖ Karen performs the first level of testing on the BPC samples; she then freezes samples for a higher level of sampling by Nancy Leland, of Leland Enterprises and the Boston EPA office.
- ❖ Nancy Leland has made two special trips to the Cape to assist with data processing, working with Karen (on behalf of Barnstable and BPC) and APCC.
- ❖ All Cape participants at this point---Barnstable, APCC, and BPC---need to look for funding opportunities to expand the program.
- ❖ Data from Nancy Leland's testing will be available this fall.
- ❖ The level of sampling that Karen does for BPC takes approximately 2 hours per pond. This is more demanding than can be sustained by Karen alone going forward.
- ❖ Karen plans to have a meeting with all samplers this fall to begin conversations about how to develop the program from this year's "pilot--- to see how it works with volunteers" to a program that provides data for pond analyses for cyanobacteria that can be useful information.

In a board discussion about developing this project, the following points and/or questions were raised:

- ❖ This should be a significant project/program for BPC next season.
- ❖ BPC will be contributing data to the BLOOM project developed by EPA Boston office and Leland Enterprises.
- ❖ The program needs to be coordinated with APCC's efforts.
- ❖ How do we provide information to the public without unduly raising alarms but providing education/information about the issue of cyanobacteria?
- ❖ How do we make this a sustainable project?
- ❖ Need to build a team behind Karen, with team members who can do some of the testing of samples that Karen does.
- ❖ In order to be ready for next season, we need to plan now. Board agreed to make this planning process a monthly agenda topic.

- **Walkers Pond Update**

During our discussion of the current state of the this project by the Town's DNR to harvest macrophytes to help this impaired pond, the following information/ideas were shared:

- ❖ BPC's conversations with DNR had been that we would play a role as observers and provide documentation of the process for information and education purposes.
- ❖ Last week, with only the same day notice to BPC, DNR began harvesting.
- ❖ BPC had no one available on short notice to be present.
- ❖ The location for the designated harvest was in an area of the pond not visible from the public landing.
- ❖ Skip Caplan, who has a drone, was able to get drone pictures of the harvesting, which he has shared with BPC.
- ❖ We already had some "Pre" pictures for this year.
- ❖ The Town's project has generated interest for similar macrophyte harvesting in other ponds that do not have public access
- ❖ Elbow Pond neighbors and their association has indicated an interest.
- ❖ BPC Board member John Keith is working with Steve McKenna of the Elbow Pond neighborhood to see if there is a way to simplify the process with the Conservation Commission to get approval.
- ❖ There will also need to be a process developed for use of the Town owned equipment on ponds with no public access.
- ❖ As the "Voice of the Ponds", BPC needs to provide information/education about the ecology of ponds, in particular that plants are not necessarily bad and, indeed, contribute to the health of a pond and provide food and habitat for pond "critters" and fish. We should plan a program with a focus on the "Ecology of Ponds". A video of the panel could be posted on our website.
- ❖ Often people talking about the need to improve a pond are doing so from a visual perspective--not liking the weeds, and a recreational perspective--weed interference with kayaking or paddleboarding and swimming. They may not even be aware some weeds are good for the ponds.
- ❖ BPC's role going forward should be to help guide the discussions with neighborhood and pond associations about improving the health of ponds, from both a "healthy pond" point of view as well as recreational use.

- **Fall membership and Fundraising Campaign**

Konrad presented the Board with a summary of the plan for the Annual Appeal and a comparison of costs between estimates this year and actual costs last year. His estimate of costs is approximately \$1,000 less than last year

- ❖ Jim Holland has volunteered to design the piece
- ❖ An 8 page full color booklet, with an educational component and bind in “remit/donor envelope”.
- ❖ Mailing to all Brewster property owners.
- ❖ Separate mailing with letter and brochure to prior donors to BPC.

Konrad also presented the Board with an outline of stories for the October/Fall e-newsletter. Board members agreed but suggested not including piece about need for Treasurer since discussion of that issue is part of bigger “organization discussion” we are currently having.

- **Follow-up discussion--BPC organization**

- ❖ Potential grant for Program Coordinator Position
  - Prior to the Board meeting, Tom had sent to Board members a copy of a grant application for funding for a part time coordinator position to the Cape Cod Foundation. (Copy available on request).
  - Tom explained that Lynn Gorey, who has volunteered to do grant research and writing for BPC, saw this opportunity and was aware that we are having discussions about funding a position. The deadline for a preliminary “Letter of Inquiry” was September 10.
  - Lynn wrote a draft of the “letter of Inquiry” and sent it to Tom and Gwen with a suggestion that we apply, for \$10,000 with \$15,000 contribution by BPC for a part time position at \$25,000..
  - Tom, Gwen, and Lynn fine tuned the draft.
  - Board approved unanimously with proceeding with the “Letter of Inquiry”.
  - Applicants will be notified by October 1 if they will be invited to submit a full proposal, which will be due by November 1.
  - Awards of grants will be announced in December.

- **Open discussion re strategic issues for BPC**

In a wide ranging discussion about how we develop BPC for long term stability, the following points thoughts, conclusions, ideas were shared:

- ❖ Plans for a half day retreat in September could not be scheduled because of conflicts with our various personal schedules

- ❖ Suggestion that we consider meeting twice a month with the second meeting to be devoted solely to discussing how we build BPC into a sustainable organization.
- ❖ Focus on designing a process for moving forward.
- ❖ Develop a game plan for the next couple of years.
- ❖ Each year we have had a signature project but have not built the framework for carrying those projects forward
- ❖ At risk of burning out board members with amount of work we each do.
- ❖ Several layers of responsibility to be developed, i.e, how to raise funds; how to develop membership so members, not board members, carry projects.
- ❖ The need to develop funding sponsorship for projects, offering businesses sponsorship opportunities, such as sponsoring buses for field trips for pond education project or particular items in the pond kits
- ❖ Significant projects that need managing:
  - Pond Education Kits for Schools, to be implemented in elementary schools
  - Citizen Scientist project participating in BLOOM Watch with EPA and testing for cyanobacteria
  - Support for neighborhood and pond organizations with an interest in projects on their ponds.
- ❖ The need for staff assistance to manage projects and volunteers involved with projects.

#### REPORTS AND UPDATES;

Written reports submitted:

- ❖ Communications Action Team Report, Judy Pirani
- ❖ Leadership Development Team, Konrad

Next Board Meeting: October 5, 2017

Submitted by,

Gwen Pelletier, Secretary