

Minutes, Brewster Ponds Coalition, October 4, 2014. _
Organizational Meeting

70 people present

Dawn Walnut called the meeting to order then welcomed and thanked those attending for being here for the organizational meeting of the Brewster Ponds Coalition.

She explained that the process of getting to this point started in January with public meetings by the Town of Brewster about the need to protect our ponds from further impairment. Those meetings led to the creation of a steering committee hosted by the Planning Department to consider whether citizens were most interested in a Town Committee or creation of a non-profit organization to advocate and work for the health of ponds. Through a series of meetings, the Steering Committee decided a non-profit would be the best option. A "sub-steering committee" was spun off from the original steering committee with the charge of pursuing the steps to create a non-profit organization. Today is the end result of the efforts of both groups.

Dawn introduced members of the "sub-steering committee" presenting the proposed creation of a Brewster Ponds Coalition, today. John Keith to present what BPC would do, Tony Ortiz re organizational structure and funding, Gwen Pelletier re creating a non-profit 501 c 3 organization, and Konrad Schultz re nomination of members for a Board of Directors.

Prior to moving to the agenda, Dawn thanked the CoA Director, Denise Rego and Lauren Zeller for their support in our using this building today; the larger steering committee for their support and guidance; Paula Miller from the Comprehensive Water Planning Committee; Hal Minis from the Brewster Conservation Trust; Jim Holland for the creation of the BPC logo; Chris Miller and Ryan Burch from the Natural Resources Department; the Orleans Pond Coalition and Brewster Conservation Trust for sharing copies of documents; the Board of Selectmen for their interest and waiving room fees for meetings; Mark Nelson from Horsley Witten; and most especially, to Sue Leven, Town Planner, for her guidance and support.

John Keith presented a power point, a copy of which is attached to these minutes, outlining the major activities proposed for the Brewster Ponds Coalition: Education and information sharing; Advocacy for pond protection and restoration; Common methods and economies of scale for pond studies and work; Funding for pond studies and work. Subtopics of each of these are covered in the attached power point.

Tony Ortiz spoke briefly about the organizational structure with committees doing much of the work and co-ordinating with each other and other organizations. He explained that the budget will follow the organizational structure and activities, also pointing out that funds will be raised through donations and grant applications. Included in the power point was also a draft organization structure.

Gwen Pelletier outlined the process for becoming a non-profit 501 c 3 organization. Two key components are having an organizational meeting and electing a Board of Directors, both of which are happening today. She noted that copies of the proposed by-laws are available on the table along with the brochure and other information about pond protection. Next steps will include the Board of Directors adopting by-laws and incorporating in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by submitting Articles of Organization to the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Once the MA incorporation has been approved, then we file for Federal 501 c 3 status. Once we have been approved as a 501 c 3, we will be a tax deductible non-profit. She pointed out that current donations are being received on behalf of the BPC under the auspices of the Brewster Conservation Trust so that donations are currently considered tax deductible. She also explained that you are considered a voting member of BPC today if you have completed an application form in the past or are completing one today. She further added that donations are definitely appreciated and that if you didn't come with a check book today, the address for mailing them is on the brochure!

Gwen then opened the floor for questions. Questions and comments included the following: an organization web site, which should include a copy of the power point presented today; frequent membership meetings; coordinating with existing organizations and avoiding duplication of efforts; board meetings open to membership; BPC working as an advocate---in support of Town activities, or to get the Town to initiate action on an issue, and/ or in opposition if there is not agreement; being action oriented; financially supporting projects that the Town may not be able to do.

Konrad Schultz presented a summary of how the "sub-steering committee" proceeded as it worked on by-laws and moving forward to create a 501 c 3 non-profit. Members believed it important to continue to reach out to community members who had already expressed an interest in pond protection. To do so we connected with Town Planner Sue Leven; Hal Minis from the Brewster Conservation Trust; Orleans Pond Coalition; Brewster Chamber of Commerce; Association to Preserve Cape Cod; Ocean Edge; the Museum of Natural History; Nickerson State Park; members of existing pond groups, including Elbow, Blueberry, Sheep, Canoe, Sol's, Canoe, Owl, Upper Mill, and Long Pond.

Through this process the committee developed guidelines and a process for recruiting Board members. Konrad then introduced the slate of nominees for seven of the nine proposed board member positions. Konrad nominated the following persons: John S. Keith 3 year term, Tony B. Ortiz 1 year term, Karen Malkus-Benjamin 2 year term, Gwen Pelletier 1 year term, Konrad Schultz 2 year term, Tom Vautin 3 year term, Dawn Walnut 2 year term.

A second to the slate of nominees came from the audience. Gwen Pelletier then asked if there were nominations from the floor. There being none, Gwen closed the nominations and asked for a vote of the slate presented. A voice vote elected the slate as presented by unanimous vote.

Konrad thanked the meeting for the vote and announced that the first meeting of the Board of Directors would be on October 7 at 6 PM at the Brewster Ladies Library.

Dawn Walnut thanked the members for joining, asked that they be sure to sign up for committee participation, encourage other folks to join, and to become an active member of BPC.

Peter Trull pointed out that the cover picture on the brochure showed swans, an invasive species, and strongly recommended that it should be changed. The elected Board members agreed to do so!

Dawn asked for adjournment. A motion and second came from the audience. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Submitted by

Gwen Pelletier