

Minutes, Brewster Ponds Coalition, April 7, 2016

Board Members Present: Tom Vautin, Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Rick Kuzman, Patricia Monahan, Gwen Pelletier, Dawn Walnut, John Keith. Konrad Schultz (by Skype). Judy Pirani, Communications Committee.
Guest: Charles Sumner, Executive Director, Pleasant Bay Community Boating

GUEST: Charles Sumner introduced the Board to Pleasant Bay Community Boating, a non profit whose primary focus is Sailing, along with Education and Environmental Stewardship. Programs are affordable and include programs for people with disabilities and scholarships. It is located on a parcel of property on Pleasant Bay at the intersection of Chatham, Harwich, and Brewster and at the edge of Muddy Creek. Founded in 2003, PBCB had the opportunity to purchase this property in 2014 and is now in the process of expanding its programs. PBCB is asking for community support through aligning with Associate Organizations whose goals overlap. He is seeking BPC as an Associate Organization because our goals of environmental stewardship are similar. Being an Associate Member means that we support the mission, goals, and objectives of PBCB and would allow BPC to be included on a list of Associate Organizations in PBCB materials.
On a motion by John Keith, seconded by Dawn Walnut, the Board voted unanimously to be identified as an Associate Organization of PBCB.

Minutes for the March 10, 2016, meeting were approved unanimously. Gwen also reported that she had submitted change of address for physical location to both State and Feds from Tony's address to Tom Vautins.

Confirmation of email votes: The board voted unanimously to confirm the email vote to support the proposed Stormwater management by-law at Town Meeting in May. It was noted that, subsequent to that email vote, the proposed article was withdrawn from the Warrant for May 2 Town Meeting because the Planning Board determined that there were issues still to be resolved; the recent resignation of Town Planner Sue Leven left the board with inadequate technical support in resolving those issues. It is anticipated that the by-law will be presented at the fall 2016 Town Meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Patricia Monahan submitted a comprehensive report which included the following through March 31, 2016: Balance Sheet, Income Statement, 2016 Revenues, 2016 Expenses, Bank Position, CC5 Operating Account, Checking Account Report, Paypal Transactions. Copy available upon request.
The discussion relative to the reports and activities on the part of the Treasurer, included the following:

- Patricia has submitted the 990N to the Federal IRS.
- She is still working on the MA FORM PC, with the form 990 EZ, which is due by May 15.
- She has obtained QUICKEN and is setting up our accounts in that system.
- She has reviewed last year's expenses and is setting up a "Chart of Accounts" for categorizing expenses moving forward.
- Now that we have received funds from "Save Blueberry and Sol's Pond", we have restricted funds. Patricia would like to set up a separate bank account for "Temporary Restricted funds" in order to make it clear and simpler to identify use of those funds for specific projects. On a motion by Rick, seconded by Karen, the Board unanimously approved establishing a second bank account with CC Five for Temporary Restricted Funds, to be used for deposit of funds from any pond or neighborhood establishing a fund in compliance with BPC's "Policy on Receiving Funds for Other Organizations".

- In the review of the reports, Dawn pointed out a peculiarity with the list of expenses on the 2016 report with amount of payments in sequence from 2/18 through 3/24. Patricia noted the error, pointed out that the correct amounts do show up on the check entries on the “Bank Position” report on the following page of the report. She will correct that page.
- Approval of expenses. Tom clarified that reimbursement or payment of expenses should be approved by the board, a step we had lost sight of in the transition of the Treasurer’s position from Tony to Patricia. On a motion by Tom Vautin, seconded by John Keith, the following expenses, paid in March, were approved by the Board: Rick Kuzman \$49.00; Gwen Pelletier, \$113.34; Tom Vautin \$80.00. Additional expenses to be reimbursed were approved: Judy Pirani, \$9.00 for Facebook upgrade; \$8.82 Rick Kuzman for postage.
- On a motion by John Keith, seconded by Rick Kuzman, the Financial Report was unanimously approved as corrected.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES: Copies of reports referenced are available on request.

- a. **Communications:** Written report submitted. Konrad Schultz.
 Judy has sent email blast for BPC participation in Beautify Brewster Day and will assist with others.
 Konrad noted that the “Open Rate” for the April Newsletter was 54%.
 During the discussion of plans and activities, Board agreed to rely on recommendations from Communications Committee for further discussion re
 - i. setting up a calendar of events for all of us to use
 - ii. considerations for formatting annual report
 - iii. fundraising strategy with annual report and annual meeting. John commented that a letter similar to last years can be successful with a compelling story
 - iv. website update and/or redesign. Karen suggested that we should add scientific data to articles/items/postings on the web site whenever possible. Dawn suggested that when people correctly identify “What Pond is this?” from the newsletter that we should post it on FB.
- b. **Membership:** Written report submitted by Rick Kuzman.
 In addition to the written report, discussion included the following:
 - i. Rick needs help with identifying new members joining through Paypal. The reports do not always include an address. He will send names of folks to rest of us to see if we can help.
 - ii. Konrad offered to work with Rick to involve members who have volunteered to work with Membership committee.
 - iii. Patricia noted that we should add a statement to the “thank you letter” to indicate that donations are tax deductible and that we need to note if there is a value attached to goods received as a result of the donation, i.e. the hats.
 - iv. Relative to the account set up for “SAVE BLUEBERRY AND SOLS PONDS”, Patricia noted that we received one total amount and no names. Konrad will work with Patricia to clarify if individual letters need to be sent to these donors.

- c. **Education:** Verbal report
Dawn and Karen reported that the “Healthy Ponds Art Fest” at Cape Cod Museum of Natural History had good turn-out and we considered it a success. The next workshop will be the “Weed Watchers Workshop”, confirmed for June 4 at 10 AM. Location is still to be confirmed. John asked about other summer activities. We noted June-Weed Watchers, July-Brewster Conservation Day, August-Annual Meeting. We also considered the possibility of a biking tour of ponds or a kayaking event and will discuss those possibilities further at the next meeting; such activities will help us to engage with summer residents. It was noted that we definitely need to consider liability insurance if we are going to engage in those kinds of activities. By consensus, we requested that Tom inquire about Directors and Officers and General Liability insurance.
- d. **Current Projects:** Written reports submitted by Gwen re “Generic RDA and proposal for AmeriCorps member for 2016/2017.
- i. AmeriCorps member Ben Howard is working on development of a generic application for shore front pond work to include a rain garden. Jan McGann and Gwen are working with him. He anticipates having a sample RDA/NOI and an outline of steps to be completed before the end of July, the end of his service period. He has begun work on a scale drawing of a rain garden, based on the criteria for the rain garden for the proposed Elbow Pond project; his first submission was a basic outline with the dimensions of all the major components and will now begin working on details.
 - ii. As follow-up to our decision in March, Gwen developed the BPC portion of a joint proposal, working with Ryan Burch, Brewster DNR, and Hal Minis, Brewster Conservation Trust for one AmeriCorps member to serve 3 days in Brewster, one for each organization. BPC position will focus on development of a “pond education kit” for teachers. The joint proposal was submitted to AmeriCorps Cape Cod. Decision will be made by July 1 for the year of service October 2016 to July 2017.
 - iii. John Keith reported that he continues to work with the Elbow Pond neighborhood relative to support for the proposed work at the landing off Slough Road. Because of the lack of clarity relative ownership of the property at the landing, John is working with neighbors to resolve that to allow the proposed work to proceed. He anticipates being able to use the “generic RDA application” in preparing the submission to the Conservation Commission. Most neighbors have already agreed to support the project. At this point there have not been discussions about the funds to be contributed by Elbow Pond Association. John estimates the cost of the project to be approximately \$5,000. He hopes that the proposed work might be in progress by the time of our annual meeting in August. He will be meeting with neighbors in April and will have an update on neighborhood support and involvement at the May Board meeting.
 - iv. Beautify Brewster Day: Gwen has volunteered to be the co-ordinator for BPC’s involvement this year. Tom will provide her with information from last year. An article was included in the April 1 newsletter. She will work with Konrad and Judy to develop email blasts to recruit participants. Karen, Patricia, and Rick said that they would be available to participate.
- e. **Advocacy and Outreach:** Tom submitted a written report.

- i. In addition to Tom's quick summary of items in the report, we discussed involvement in Brewster Conservation Day on July 9. We concluded that it would be good not to be repetitive, therefore, not to use the FLUSH YOUR KID septic demonstration; Karen offered to prepare the CYNOBACTERIA presentation with activities for the children. As we approach the date, Board members will plan to assist her as needed.
- ii. During a discussion about the seminar in May being hosted by the New England Chapter of the American Lake Management Society, we discussed the possible value of becoming a member. We concluded that our interests and efforts would be better served by aligning with other pond associations on the Cape. Such an opportunity may become a possibility in the fall of this year when the Association to Protect Cape Cod has proposed hosting a meeting of all pond associations on the Cape and assisting in alignment of our activities.
- f. **BPC Organization:** Tom reminded us that we still have a vacant Board position that we need to fill and asked that we continue to give that serious thought.
- g. **Annual Meeting:** Karen reported that she needs to confirm time with Laurel Schraider, Silent Spring Institute, for August 13. Gwen reported that her research for a location had bumped into a few dead ends because places were already committed for August 13. However, ARDEO's at Captain's Course Golf Course is available and she had made a tentative reservation for August 13. The use of the space is no charge; meal costs would range from \$6.00 to \$22.00 based on our menu choice. We decided to confirm for the space from 9:30 AM to 12:00 Noon, with set-up time for 9:30. A breakfast buffet, with decisions of what to be made at our next meeting. Program to be from 10:00 to 12:00. Gwen was authorized to confirm and proceed with agreement with Ardeo's

NEW TOPICS:

- a. Project proposals for donor consideration. Tom shared that a donor who wants to help protect ponds is interested in making a contribution of a significant amount and is interested in donating for a specific project. Tom had sent an email last week asking us to give some thought to possibilities. During a wide ranging discussion, the following were listed for consideration, in no particular order
 - i. A "how to video" based on the development of the RDA/NOI and creation of a rain garden for storm water run-off at ponds
 - ii. Development of a "Pond study template" for the NOI to the Conservation Commission, providing information that applies to all ponds.
 - iii. Development of a program and training for citizen scientists interested in collecting data for pond management to include the following:
 - a) Sponsoring a "Pond Observation Day"
 - b) Training by scientist for citizen scientist
 - c) Funds to hire a consultant to manage data collected by citizen scientist.
 - iv. Weed harvesting equipment
 - v. Financial support for the POND KITS to be developed for use by elementary school teachers.
 - vi. PALS testing equipment

b. Board planning session in June

As we concluded our discussion of possible projects for a donor, we realized that we were wrestling with, even in the discussion for the list above,

What are our goals for our ponds?

What do we want from them—swimming, kayaking, fishing?

What should we be doing?

What is the heart of our strategy?

Do we want testing for all negative impacts, i.e. Mercury levels, too?

We concluded that it is imperative we have a special meeting where we can focus on these questions and begin to develop a strategic plan, especially now that we are established and are beginning to obtain financial support.

To that end we all checked calendars and agreed that we could participate in a Board retreat on June 5, tentatively scheduled for the morning from 9 am to 1 pm.

WRAP UP/FOLLOW UP Agreed on the Following:

- ❖ Agreed to be identified as Associate Organization with Pleasant Bay Community Boating.
- ❖ Patricia to submit MA Form PC by May 15 due date, open separate bank account for “Temporary Restricted Funds” being held for pond associations who have requested such
- ❖ Rick to revise thank you letter to indicate contributions are tax deductible to extent allowed by law and noting value of gifts received, ie. hat.
- ❖ Konrad to provide Patricia and Rick with names of donors to “Save Blueberry and Sol’s Ponds” account
- ❖ Tom to inquire about General Liability Insurance and D & O Liability Insurance
- ❖ John to provide update in May re Elbow Pond project: resolving land ownership issue re who submits RDA/NOI to Con Com; neighborhood participation in work and contributions to cost of project
- ❖ Gwen to coordinate BPC participation in Beautify Brewster Day
- ❖ Gwen to make reservations for Annual Meeting on August 13 with Ardeo’s at Captain’s Golf Course.
- ❖ All to plan to be available for Board Retreat on June 5, 9 am to 1 pm

NEXT MEETING: May 5, 2016 6 PM, Library

5 Minutes BPC, April 7, 2016

Submitted by,

Gwen Pelletier, Clerk