

MINUTES, BREWSTER PONDS COALITION, APRIL 6, 2017

Board members present: Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Judy Pirani, Gwen Pelletier, Sue Searles, Dawn Walnut. By Skype telephone--John Keith, Konrad Schultz.

Guest: Chris Miller, Director Natural Resources and Shellfish Department

Due to absence of Board President Tom Vautin because of a family emergency, Gwen Pelletier presided over the meeting.

UPDATE WITH BREWSTER DNR

Chris Miller had been invited by Tom to update the Board relative to the Mill Pond remediation projects, especially relative to the proposal for macrophyte harvesting at Walker's Pond and there being an article on the Warrant for the May 1, Annual Town Meeting. During the discussion with the Board members, and in answer to questions, Chris shared the following information:

- DNR requesting \$80,000 for purchase of a weed harvester
- Request will be in Article 10, Capital and Special Project Expenditures, Natural Resources, Aquatic Weed Harvester
- Harvester will cut weeds, leaving roots
- Cuttings (biomass) will be drained/dewatered at the site, either on a barge in the water or at the landing.
- Biomass will then be transferred to recycle center for inclusion in composting
- Area of pond to be covered is approximately 15 acres
- Target date for harvesting is August
- Goal is to be able to use harvester in other shallow ponds
- Machines being considered are not complex.
- Plan is for DNR staff to operate the first year, to learn the process and then determine if future use should be done by Town staff (DNR and/or DPW) or by contractors.
- Horsley Witten consultants will assist with monitoring for removal of nitrogen and phosphorus. Biomass will be weighed at/by DPW and the calculation will be based on volume by weight.
- Concern re invasive pond weeds being disturbed and regenerating is a concern. Chris will double check with Horsley Witten consultants re this issue.
- Concern re effect on fish habitat has been considered; the activity of the harvesting should frighten fish away so should not be a major impact

- Responding to concerns re disturbing the ecosystem, draining/dewatering of the biomass harvested on a barge or at the water's edge will allow some of the pond life to return to the pond.
- Impact of macrophyte removal on plankton was discussed. The project includes monitoring. Chris would check with Horsley Witten re specifics for monitoring plankton. During the discussion of this issue, we recognized the need for sampling before, during, and after plant removal. Chris welcomed support for designing a protocol for monitoring.
- As the project begins, staff or consultants will monitor the effect of the dewatering
- The work will not be along the shoreline. Nor will floating plants be harvested.
- Chris will mark off the area to be harvested with buoys and blocks in advance of work beginning.

The discussion included how the Ponds Coalition could support and assist in the project, with the following ideas:

- Support the article for purchase of the weed harvester at Town Meeting
- Include information about the Town Meeting article on the website, FB, and by email
- Assist with information about the project itself prior to work beginning
- Inform neighbors/abutters to Walkers Pond
- Document the process before, during, and after
- Take pictures
- Locate someone with a drone who could do aerial photos

Moving beyond the Walkers pond weed harvesting, the conversation with Chris also included the following:

- Considering the next step in the Mill Ponds, Horsley Witten consultants are still researching the impact of alum on Herring.
- Karen reminded us of the EPA Cynobacteria Monitoring project, BLOOM WATCH. This program will be an important beginning for BPC plans for citizen scientist monitoring ponds. EPA has a workshop on Cape next week. Chris noted that there had been cynobacteria blooms in Upper Mill Pond so this project could be helpful to the Town.
- Chris announced that annual spring pond testing is this month and the training for PALS volunteers is scheduled for next week. The program has new meters for measuring "Dissolved Oxygen".

Minutes for March 2, 2017, were approved unanimously.

Minutes for March 6 & 7, "Debrief meetings of March 4 Membership Meeting were approved unanimously.

Confirmed email vote by Board to reschedule workshop with George Heufelder re alternative septic systems for May 9 at Brewster Ladies Library. Snow on March 14 caused previously scheduled event to be canceled.

Treasurer's Report: Gwen pointed out that report included an attachment detailing income and expenses for January through March, indicating that future reports will include details for the previous month. Report was accepted as presented. Copies available upon request.

Sue informed the Board that the Pond Education Committee is exploring options on line for printing expenses for materials for the POND EDUCATION KITS. The one printing job they had done at Staples proved more expensive than they had anticipated. Judy Pirani offered to research some options for them.

CURRENT PRIORITIES

- MARCH 4 MEMBERS MEETING:

- ❖ Judy reported good results from people who volunteered to be PHOTOGRAPHERS. Sue asked about the possibility of some of them accompanying the POND EDUCATION project field trips. Judy will make the request when Sue gives her dates.
- ❖ Sue reported good response to request for help with POND EDUCATION kits. There has already been one meeting with assistance for assembling the kits and members have also volunteered to assist with field trips to the pond. Karen reported that the field trips are being scheduled for Long Pond and Small's Pond.
- ❖ Dawn reported that she plans to call upon volunteers for MEMBERSHIP on an "as needed/task driven" basis. She has contacted each of them.
- ❖ Karen reported that she is in touch with CITIZEN SCIENTIST volunteers and encouraging them to attend the EPA BLOOM WATCH, Cynobacteria workshop being presented by EPA and coordinated by APCC on April 12 at the Barnstable County Complex Harborside Room.
- ❖ John had submitted TASKS AND OBJECTIVES for the STORM DRAIN and DATA TEAMS. Copy available upon request. In late April or early May he will convene a meeting of the STORM DRAIN volunteers. Prior to meeting with the volunteers, John will coordinate with Town staff to review which storm drains are most appropriate for monitoring. He and the volunteers will then visit the designated storm drains for assignments. Relative to the DATA TEAM, John pointed out that he and Tom will be working together with volunteers on this project, that they will discuss with the Town, coordinate with Orleans Pond Coalition, and use PALS data. This is a long-term project that will move forward slowly as current data is considered as well as how to improve data collected.

John pointed out that, for example, the map showing “impaired” ponds is too simplistic, not showing a difference between impairment levels.

- ❖ Sue shared that, as she prepares for BEAUTIFY BREWSTER DAY, she plans to put together a package so that next year a member of BPC instead of a Board member might be able to be the leader for this event. Gwen reported that she will be in Town for the event after all and will work with Sue in preparation and on the day of the event. Judy said she is ready to post “invitation” for member participation on the web site and will coordinate that with Sue.

- **BREWSTER CONSERVATION DAY, July 8.**

During a wide ranging discussion of BPC’s past participation, the Board decided to follow Karen’s recommendation and use the POND EDUCATION KIT as the basis for BPC’s display this year. It will include

- ❖ A display of the POND EDUCATION KIT
- ❖ The “fishing game” for kids to play and catch pond life
- ❖ Copies of the booklet created by Corey about public access ponds in Brewster
- ❖ A “take away” Brewster Ponds Coalition bag, one per family, with information about protecting our ponds.

The question was raised about selling BPC hats. No decision was made.

Dawn indicated that at next month’s meeting she would like to talk about creation of a task force for the event in conjunction with the Education Committee.

- **ANNUAL MEETING**

Discussion led to the following decisions.

- ❖ Saturday, August 12, 9:30 AM
- ❖ Invite Rich Delaney, Center for Coastal Studies, to be keynote speaker. Gwen to contact him. Suggest focus of presentation should be re effect of Climate Change/Temperature rise on fresh water ponds
- ❖ At Captain’s Golf Course, Ardeo’s. Gwen to get name of contact for Dawn
- ❖ Not to charge for attendance, but yes to have donation basket/jar available
- ❖ Consider a volunteer award. Discuss at next meeting

- **MASTER CALENDAR**

We considered events for the next few months.

Already on the calendar

- ❖ APRIL--Beautify Brewster Day, April 29
Also workshops by others: BLOOM WATCH; APCC Pond Series in Orleans
- ❖ MAY--George Heufelder, May 9, re alternative septic systems
- ❖ JUNE--possible walk or kayak trip.

- ❖ JULY---Brewster Conservation Day, July 8
- ❖ AUGUST---Annual Meeting, August 12

During the discussion, we considered a paddle event, possibly on Walker's Pond to tie in with the BPC support for the macrophyte harvesting. We also discussed the number of organizations that are now providing and promoting walks in the area. As we discussed the idea of a kayak trip on Walker's Pond, we recognized that the pond is subject to cyanobacteria blooms and it might not be such a good idea to subject people to that possibility. John suggested that he could lead a walk from Black Duck Cartway to a trail which overlooks Walkers Pond and that would provide an opportunity for a walk and an explanation of the project.

- ❖ He will be here in June and will lead the walk on June 10.

Board agreed to consider possible kayak trip for summer and walks in the fall.

- ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Gwen reminded Board members of Annual Town Meeting, May 1. She or Tom will be prepared to speak in support of the item requesting the funds for the weed harvester if there is discussion of the article and there appears to be a need for support. Judy will post reminder on website and send email.

- BREWSTER LONG RANGE VISION PLAN

Sue introduced a flyer being posted and handed out around Town advising of the development of a Long Range Plan for Brewster. She asked that BPC support the effort and urge participation from our members by handing out the notices personally and also posting at our website and sending an email.

We noted that the first line of the flyer asks "What is special about Brewster to you? What is important to protect or improve in Brewster?" We agreed that we should support the effort. Judy offered to develop a posting for an email blast and for the website using that introduction. The first workshop is not until late June so the posting will be done at an appropriate time.

- OTHER BUSINESS

Karen shared that she had noted that other organizations offer small scholarships relevant to their mission and suggested that BPC consider doing so. We agreed that it is something to consider.

REPORTS AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES

A written “Team Report” and “Communication Duties” provided by the Communications Team is available upon request.

WRAP-UP AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

- Gwen to make contacts for Annual Meeting
 - ❖ Rich Delaney, CCS, re speaking
 - ❖ Provide Dawn contact name for Captain’s Course, Ardeo’s
- Dawn, Karen, and Sue to meet re plans for Conservation Day and Annual Meeting
- Karen to work on protocol for Citizen Scientist for monitoring plankton
- John to plan for June 10 walk for Walker’s Pond project introduction/explanation
- John to schedule committee meetings for STORM DRAINS and DATA teams
- Gwen and Tom to plan for speaking support at Annual Town Meeting for Weed Harvester
- Judy will post reminder of Town meeting and support for Weed Harvester.

Next Board Meeting: May 4, 2017

Submitted by,

Gwen Pelletier, Secretary