

MINUTES, BREWSTER PONDS COALITION, DECEMBER 1, 2016

Board Members Present: Tom Vautin, Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Dawn Walnut, John Keith, Gwen Pelletier. Konrad Schultz, by Skype. Also present Judy Valverde, Accountant/Bookkeeper.

Minutes for November 3, 2016 were approved unanimously.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Tom Vautin welcomed and introduced Judy Valverde, bookkeeper/accountant who has volunteered to fulfill those responsibilities, coordinating with Treasurer, Gwen Pelletier. Judy had prepared a financial report, following the pattern that had been used by former Treasurer, Patricia Monahan. The report was accepted unanimously as presented. Gwen noted that the report for December would follow the same format. Beginning in January, Judy will submit in a different format, using Quicken and a chart of accounts similar to the sample version provided by John Keith. Tom thanked Judy for agreeing to work with BPC.

Tom noted that Gwen had provided a memo, Financial Management Update, on the steps/progress for implementing the change since the November Board meeting. There were no questions. Copy of memo available upon request.

Tom noted that the PayPal account was originally set up by Konrad at the time we were creating a web site and wanted to be able to accept donations on line. As treasurer, Gwen now has full access to the account and the following have user access: Judy Valverde for bookkeeping records, Dawn Walnut for membership, Konrad Schultz as original account manager. Tom pointed out that he had noticed that BPC appears not to be “certified as a non-profit” by PayPal, which would reduce the fee per item processed. Konrad said he would check into that because he believed that such certification was determined when he set up the account.

Karen pointed out that BPC has been listed as an “Amazon-Smile” non profit, making us eligible for contributions from Amazon when purchasers use the BPC Amazon-smile link.. She asked if we are receiving funds. Gwen and Judy indicated that we have. Board members determined that we should do a better job of publicizing the program. Konrad indicated that he and Judy would do so.

As we moved on to other agenda items, Judy Valverde departed the meeting.

CURRENT PRIORITIES:

Open Board Position:

Tom shared that he had followed up with John O'Reilly re his becoming a Board member. John has declined the invitation with regrets and explaining that commitments to the School Committee, on which he serves, are demanding and he does not have time to serve both. However, he is quite interested in our efforts and offers his technical assistance when appropriate. Tom asked us all to consider possibilities for someone to fill the vacant position. The ensuing discussion included the following points for consideration:

- Tom had asked John O'Reilly if he had suggestions
- Skills we would like to bring to the board membership
- Whether any current members have those skills or interests
- Someone with pond frontage and member of an association
- That we review the list of donors who have participated in activities
- That the nominating committee, Dawn, Konrad, and Fred Budreski convene
- Names of two new residents known to members of the Board were mentioned for the Nominating Committee to consider; however, there seemed to be consensus that the Board would be better served by recruiting from current member/donors.

In a broader discussion stemming from this topic, we also talked about how to reach out to new property owners in town and folks who may have already been property owners but have become year round residents. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, BPC can provide material to be added to the mailing that the Chamber sends to new property and business owners. Tom said he would follow-up with the Chamber of Commerce re possible inclusion of the BPC Annual Report and/or a Brochure. It was noted that we apparently do not have a current brochure but there are other materials that could be used in mailings.

Annual Appeal 2017:

Konrad provided **2nd Annual Appeal Update** and a “guidelines for follow-up telephone calls” for us to call members who have not yet responded with a donation. Copies of both are available upon request. Konrad noted that donations appear to be at about the same level as last year without BPC Board members having made follow-up telephone calls yet this year. He emphasized the importance of personal telephone calls and urged Board members to review the membership list to indicate folks each of us would call personally. He also noted that a major difference this year is that telephone calls will be made to folks who are already on our mailing list and have a relationship with BPC. He also noted that there will be follow-up by Facebook, Twitter, and Email blast reminders. During a discussion of follow-up calls, there was clearly a difference of opinion among Board members, with the following points being made:

- Preference to refer to calls as “check in” rather than “reminder”

- We are all being “bombed” with calls from so many agencies
- Some of us have a high level of discomfort making calls
- We are getting contributions on a daily basis
- Some donors wait until closer to end of year to send donations
- Perhaps wait to begin making calls to give more time for receipt
- Many folks now do not answer telephone calls from numbers they do not recognize
- People who know us, friends or neighbors, will tend to answer our calls.
- Wait until after first of year to make calls
- This is time of year when donors are making tax deductible contributions and expect to hear from non profits
- Reminders get higher results this time of year
- BPC sending email blast, FB posts, and twitter notices could be overload
- Waiting to call after first of year could mean that folks are making contributions the next tax year, which could also be to our advantage

Tom summarized the discussion with the following points:

- Each of us should review the database and indicate in the special column provided by Dawn who we will call.
- After we have done that, Konrad will randomly assign each of us additional names to call.
- We will call people we know and our neighbors, folks with whom we feel comfortable.
- Dawn has created two columns indicating folks who have already donated. Grey means they have donated and do not need to be called. Every donor will get a letter.
- Time constraints this time of year for all of us make it difficult to make the calls. We will do the best we can.
- We will continue to make calls into the New Year.
- Communications team will send email, FB, twitter reminders

Financial Plan for Calendar Year 2017

Tom had provided a revised copy of a proposed budget for next year, based on a proposed Chart of Accounts that John had shared with the Board. Gwen had written a memo proposing consideration of a staff position to be included in the 2017 budget. Copies are available upon request.

The resulting discussion was wide ranging and included the following points:

- The proposed budget is a “work in progress”, looking at previous expenses and where we see ourselves growing.
- The need to include expenses for maintaining the website, which Konrad had set up and paid for. Konrad will get that info to Tom
- Information that the Town has provided funds to purchase PALS testing equipment. There may be other equipment with which BPC can assist so keep in a general category

- Postage costs appear to be included with printing and copying and should be separated
- Copying and Printing can be allocated to Fundraising and/or Education and Outreach depending on how the information is used/distributed
- Everything we print could/should have an education component making that allocation possible
- Our Annual Appeal/Fundraising/Admin expenses are high.
- It is normal for those expenses to be high in the initial years of a non profit establishing itself

As the discussion broadened to workload and Gwen's proposal for a staff position, the discussion included the following points:

- As we grow, we recognize that we will need staff to support our efforts
- Because of the amount of work each of us is doing as Board members, we are at risk of burning ourselves out
- BPC is already recognized by members and Town leaders as a viable organization
- We cannot afford to lose that momentum or we will fail as an organization
- Consideration of a staff person requires consideration of how BPC would support a salary for staff/consultant
- Grants are available from Foundations, State, Federal sources
- Consider breaking down the work to be performed in distinct tasks
- Attempt to recruit volunteers for some of tasks; take better advantage of our volunteer base.
- Look at resolving issue of getting work done by recruiting volunteers at same time as defining tasks for possible staff person.
- Define tasks then research grants for particular tasks to be performed by consultants.
- Tasks listed in Gwen's memo are a beginning.
- Each of us needs to consider all that we are doing and break down into "bite size tasks"
- There are folks within our community, both our membership and in general, who are retired and have skills they want to use as volunteers. We need to find a way to tap into those skills.
- There are also folks who are interested in part time work who may have skills we want.
- There are ways to share positions with other agencies.

Tom summarized the discussion:

- We will continue to fine tune the budget for 2017
- Relative to workload, recruiting volunteers, or creating staff/consultant positions, we should begin by defining tasks that we each perform and tasks that we wish we could perform but do not have the capacity/time.
- Prior to next Board meeting, each of us should create tasks lists that cover the following:
 - ❖ What tasks we have done or are doing
 - ❖ What we would like to do, but are not doing
 - ❖ What tasks we think need to be done but are
 - Beyond our expertise
 - Require more time than we can give
- The tasks lists can be refined to recruit volunteers for specific tasks or develop position descriptions for consultant positions for grant applications.
- We should invite Lynn Gorey to the Board meeting for discussion re grant opportunities
- Konrad offered to have a conversation with Hal Minis about how BCT obtains funds to support its efforts beyond individual donors

Recognizing that the three previous discussions had been most productive and time consuming, Tom noted the time and moved on with the agenda

Winter Events:

A brief discussion included:

- Possible winter membership meeting and/or workshops February 18 and March 18
- Possible topics: George Huefelder re alternative septic treatment systems; Cranberry bogs
- Possible pot luck membership meeting with facilitated discussion

Other Business:

- Town Proposed Septic Regs
 - ❖ Tom shared that the BoH continues to discuss the proposed septic regs and that the next BoH meeting is December 7.
 - ❖ Relative to the proposed grant application that was circulated for BPC review prior to Thanksgiving, Tom has learned nothing more than that there was supposed to be a meeting this past Monday morning for Town staff and consultant to consider whether to proceed.
- Tom shared that the Town has filed a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission for proposed Macrophyte removal at Walkers Pond. Date of hearing 12/6/2016

- John shared a conversation he had with Peter Johnson about how best to get support from the Town for proposed actions that BPC supports. Advice is to advocate with members of the Board of Selectmen individually.
- Gwen shared that AmeriCorps Cape Cod has announced required meetings on January 31 or February 2 for any organization interested in applying for a position for the next AmeriCorps year, Oct 2017-July 2018. Noting that we do not know yet if we do want to apply, we should have attendance just in case.

REPORTS & WORKING GROUP UPDATES:

Tom noted that each of the following had submitted written reports, which are available on request:

Communications, Education, Membership.

Next Board Meeting: January 5, 2017.

Submitted by,

Gwen Pelletier, Secretary