

MINUTES, BREWSTER PONDS COALITION, JANUARY 5, 2017

Board Members Present: Tom Vautin, Dawn Walnut, Sue Searles, John Keith. By Skype Konrad Schultz. By Face Time Judy Pirani. By Telephone Gwen Pelletier. Also present Corey Bray, AmeriCorps member and Lynn Gorey, grant writer volunteer.

Minutes for December 1, 2016 were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report. The report for December 31, 2016, prepared by Judy Valverde and presented by Treasurer Gwen Pelletier and President Tom Vautin was approved as submitted. Additional discussion included:

- While Gwen is traveling, Tom is checking mail and making deposits of donations, providing that information to both Dawn Walnut for membership recording and to Judy Valverde for financial records.
- During a discussion of cut off date for year end donations and cut off for 2016 donations and beginning 2017. Board left decision for Gwen and Judy Valverde to make and to inform Dawn for tax benefit purposes to donors.
- There will be an amended year end report based on final donations for 2016.
- The report submitted for year end 2016 will be the final one in the format using spreadsheets.
- Financial records moving forward will be based on Quicken, the approved Chart of Accounts, and the budget approved for 2017.
- A request for reimbursement by Judy Pirani for \$30.00 for a FB Boost for the annual appeal was approved unanimously.

CURRENT PRIORITIES

AmeriCorps Pond Education Project Update

Written Education Committee report submitted by Karen Malkus-Benjamin and Sue Searles submitted and available upon request. In addition, AmeriCorps member Corey Bray and Board Member Sue Searles reported the following:

- Corey is compiling and/or writing two booklets for inclusion in the Pond Kits.
 - A pond booklet to include information about all ponds with public Town of Brewster access. Information to be included is available in many different documents, but not in one single location. It will include size, depth, etc., historical information, uses (current and historical), fishing, recreational, and photographs. This list of potential information about individual ponds is not all inclusive. The booklet will also include a list of all ponds in Brewster, even those with no public access. Corey expects to have a draft of this booklet available by the coming weekend for his “supervisory staff” of Karen, Sue, and Gwen to

review and his AmeriCorps supervisors. He and Sue noted that the development of this booklet will be useful to BPC in many other ways, through the website and workshops/information meetings.

- A storybook about ponds, focusing on pond “creatures”, geared to young children. Other AmeriCorps members in the “AmeriCorps house” he shares with other members of the Barnstable County Program in Wellfleet, are interested in his project and have offered to help with illustrations. Corey anticipates having a draft of the storybook available by the middle of January. During the discussion Board members suggested that he might want to share this with Jim Holland, graphic design artist, who serves on the BPC Communication team and who designed our logo. Sue Searles will facilitate that connection.
- Corey also shared with the Board that, through his joint AmeriCorps assignment with DNR, he has been using maps that Chris Miller and Ryan Burch have suggested would be of interest to BPC and have offered them to us. Corey is not using them and has turned them over to us for safekeeping.

Annual Appeal 2017 Progress and Plans for January

Written report submitted by Konrad Schultz. Copy available on request.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- Each Board member plays an important role as an “influencer.” Personal contact makes a difference. Reminder emails have already been sent so, Board members should now begin making personal phone calls to: folks who have not yet contributed.
- Calls should be to people whom we know that are around ponds: 1. our friends and neighbors and... 2. to those members on Dawn’s Master List in our Google Drive.
- Spreadsheet of membership posted by Dawn has place where each of us can make notes based on calls
- 50% of existing members have not replied to date. Though we have no history to compare, we want to determine why they have not renewed.
- Need email addresses. Challenge to get them. Many donors send contributions with only mailing address and sometimes telephone
- Good response from “gatefold”, all new donor/members
- Consider an additional mailing if no email address

Grant opportunities

Lynn Gorey has volunteered to research grant opportunities and help submit proposals for BPC activities. To that end she shared one specific grant opportunity for the Education Pond Kits project and information about research for possible others. The education committee report (copy available on request) included information from a committee meeting about that proposal. Board discussion of the proposal and other opportunities included the following:

- ❖ Captain Planet Foundation has grant opportunity of \$2400 that aligns with Pond Education Kits and field trips.
 - Requested funds would be to provide transportation to ponds for school groups
 - Grant requires matching funds, which BPC has budgeted already.
 - Reports required as follow-up, if awarded, are simple
 - Lynn will prepare proposal and letters required from Board and participating schools.
 - Tom Vautin signed a letter of support
 - Sue will meet with school principals to secure signed letters of support
 - Deadline January 31, 2017.
 - Board approved submission of grant request.
- ❖ Other grant opportunities.
 - Lynn continues to research grant opportunities and notes that there appear to be increasing opportunities in environmental areas for which BPC would qualify.
 - From attendance at 2015 Cape Cod Philanthropy Day , Board members noted that there are a number of local funding sources as well, such as CC FIVE Charitable Foundation, National Grid, through the Cape Cod Foundation.
 - As we continue identifying directions for BPC, we can develop specific projects that would be fundable.
 - Lynn will work with BPC to identify funding sources and submit proposals when we determine specific projects for moving forward.
 - Thoughts at this point included:
 - Implementation of Stormwater runoff projects
 - Pond studies
 - Organizing communities around ponds
 - Recognition that Board members can only do so much; that BPC needs to focus on specific projects.
- ❖ The Board thanked Lynn for her efforts and willingness to work with us in this much needed area.

Budget Plan

The Board briefly reviewed again the draft budget proposal for 2017 that Tom had presented in December. On a motion by Tom Vautin, seconded by Dawn Walnut, the Board voted unanimously to approve the budget, copy available upon request, with the condition that the Board review the budget on a quarterly basis.

Winter Events

Discussion included the following:

- ❖ An informational meeting re alternative septic systems with George Heufelder, County Health Department, as speaker. Being arranged by Karen Malkus-Benjamin. Tom will follow-up with Karen
 - Timing for February if possible
- ❖ Membership Breakfast to include a social event and an educational component
 - To also include “volunteer fair”
 - Identify in advance specific tasks or projects for which people could volunteer
 - Ask each person to agree to one thing
 - Dawn will post to our site a “template” to be used for volunteer descriptions.
 - We are each asked to review and begin to complete volunteer descriptions for a single opportunity or an on-going task/project
 - Dawn signed up for location, Library on Saturday, March 4. 9:30 am to 12:30 PM
 - Dawn volunteered to coordinate. Sue offered to work with her.

Volunteer Opportunities and Needs

Konrad Schultz and Gwen Pelletier had submitted lists related to this topic. Copies available upon request.

Tom noted that the two lists complemented each other, with Konrad’s focusing on an overview and Gwen’s with more specifics. The discussion revolved around how we use these two as a beginning to develop specific tasks and projects for volunteers, consultants, or possible staff.

Discussion that ensued included the following:

- Need for more active volunteers
- Need for activities events to be run by members, not Board members
- Moving in direction of above two is a big step in our development
- Need to identify volunteer leaders
- Volunteers sometimes need training
- There are many talented/skilled retired people looking for volunteer opportunities
- Retirees often want to change focus in retirement from what they did as careers and challenge is how to capture their skills and offer them different opportunities
- Dawn, as membership chair, will begin responding to folks who indicated they wanted to volunteer, beginning to learn what their skills and interests are and understand how they might fit within the tasks/projects/opportunities available with BPC

- Website redesign should include “Volunteer Opportunities”, using the lists created by Konrad and Gwen as beginning points for developing those opportunities with specifics, not just broad topics

REPORTS AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Written reports from Communications Team and Education Committee available on request.

Communications

In addition to the written report, Judy Pirani. noted that the winter e-newsletter was sent several different times because of new members who responded to the “gatefold” mailing, making it easier to identify them. Also the open rate for the new members was really high; over 90%. Tom noted that use of “MailChimp” has made it easier to identify different groups of our membership, and he suggested that we have another newsletter emailing to new members who joined after our newsletter publication. Sending the newsletter is a good way to build upon new members’ enthusiasm for the BPC--introduce them to our organization.

Membership

Dawn pointed out that the membership database has an additional column to include “pond front”. In the future, we should always be sure to ask for that information.

Education

Sue added that as part of the Pond Education Kit project and the grant application, she will be visiting each of the partner schools to talk about plans for transportation to ponds for students and to obtain letters of support from each of the schools.

Outreach and Advocacy

- Board of Health. Tom reported that there have been no further conversations with anyone from the Board of Health re the proposed changes in septic regs and the possible grant application from the Board of Health. He will follow-up with Carmen and Town Planner Ryan Bennett.
- Town Pond Improvement projects. Tom inquired with Chris Miller if there were actions that BPC could take at this time relative to the proposed “weed harvesting” for Walker’s Pond. The next major step will be the request for funds for the equipment for harvesting. Board members agreed we should play an advocacy role, with the Finance Committee, public hearings, and at Town Meeting. In a wider ranging discussion of the entire “Mill Ponds” project, Board members agreed that this would be a good time to ask for a meeting with Ryan Bennett, Town Planner; Chris Miller, Conservation/Natural Resources Director, and Horsley Witten Consultants re the overall project.

- Specific Outreach Project. Tom reminded us that BPC had played a supportive role with an issue re run-off into Myrick's Pond. At the time of the visit with Town Officials in September the determination had been by all present that the runoff issue was not a result of Town owned property, drainage, or streets. However, now that leaves have made site lines more clear, it appears that it is a Town related issue. Our role as an advocate is trying to help solve problems. We had been involved in the initial review. This is one that still needs to be resolved. Tom will meet with Scott Kern to begin discussions again with Noel Bramer, Conservation Agent, and Patrick Ellis, DPW Director to look again at the issue.
- General Outreach. Tom will continue discussions with Kyle Hinkle, Chamber of Commerce, re inclusion of BPC information in mailings to new property owners. In addition, Kyle is enthusiastic about BPC providing an article about Brewster Ponds for the spring publication of BEST OF BREWSTER. Board members agreed on pursuing this opportunity and placement of an ad for BPC in the publication.

RECAP/FOLLOW-UP

- ❖ Tom will follow-up with Karen and George Heufelder re January/February program re alternative septic systems
- ❖ Dawn and Sue will develop plans for winter membership meeting
- ❖ Dawn will post "template" for volunteer position descriptions
- ❖ ALL will review tasks lists and further develop
- ❖ Lynn and Sue will complete application to Captain Planet Foundation for funding of Pond Education Project
- ❖ Konrad will complete items for follow-up reminders to members
- ❖ Tom will review the membership database re follow-up notes and add to as appropriate
- ❖ Judy Pirani. will work on the article for the Brewster Chamber of Commerce's BEST OF BREWSTER publication..
 - To have an education component about ponds in Brewster
 - To include a list of ponds in Brewster with Town Landings.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 2, 2017

Submitted by,

Gwen Pelletier, Secretary
 With assistance from Judy Pirani,
 Konrad Schultz, Sue Searles