

# Minutes, Brewster Ponds Coalition, November 3, 2016

Board Members Present: Tom Vautin, Dawn Walnut, Karen Malkus-Benjamin, Sue Searles, Gwen Pelletier. Konrad Schultz and John Keith by Skype and telephone.

**Minutes for October 6, 2016** meeting were approved unanimously.

Gwen shared letter from Brewster Conservation Trust thanking BCP for donation of \$100 to BCT. BCP had contributed \$100 as a thank you for use of HAY House for the BCP Board retreat in June.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Patricia Monahan was not present; however, she had prepared and posted Financial Reports for September and October. Copies of those reports are available on request. Board members reviewed the reports and accepted them with the following notes: 6/5/2016 expense of \$100 should be labeled Brewster Conservation Trust, instead of Commission. 10/28/2016 Bank Transfer of \$1,000 from Paypal to Bank Account was to leave only a minimal amount in Paypal account to cover charges for Paypal transactions.

**Approval of Expenses:** The Board unanimously authorized payment of the two following expenses: Kaleidoscope Imprints \$408.00 for purchase of 48 hats; Monthly payment of \$150 to Brewster Conservation Trust for "office and computer" for BCP AmeriCorps member. Karen noted that she now has in her possession a check for \$150 that had been approved at the September meeting as a donation to Silent Spring for speaker Laurel Schaidler at Annual Meeting; she will be sending it with a card prior to our next meeting.

**CURRENT PRIORITIES:** Copies of relevant documents referenced are available upon request.

- ❖ Introduction of AmeriCorps Member Corey Bray. Karen, Sue, and Gwen introduced Corey to the Board and reported that he began his assignment with BCP, BCT, and DNR on October 25, with a joint orientation by the 3. BCP's assigned day for Corey is Tuesday. Karen, Sue, and Gwen met with him on November 1 and began to map out how to proceed with research and development of the "Science Based Education Kits". Corey stayed for the entire Board meeting to get a better sense of the organization, how we work, and our current focus.
- ❖ Proposed Financial Management Plan: Tom began this discussion by reminding Board members that Patricia Monahan had submitted her resignation by email to Tom Vautin on October 28, 2016. He had informed Board members in an email on October 29. Patricia offered to continue to function as Treasurer until the Board could take action to replace her. Tom reported that he and Gwen had been considering options for moving

forward and have a recommendation to the Board. Gwen reached out to Judy Valverde, Fiscal and Operations Director for the Community Development Partnership, located in Eastham. Gwen was the Director of the CDP from 1994 until 2006; she had hired Judy during her tenure and Judy is still there. Judy offered to manage BPC's finances as accountant/bookkeeper. Tom recommended the following steps and the Board took action as indicated below:

- Accept the resignation of Treasurer Patricia Monahan. The Board voted unanimously to accept her resignation effective with this date, November 3, 2016.
- Nominate Gwen Pelletier to serve in the dual role of Secretary/Treasurer. Board voted unanimously to appoint her effective with this Board meeting, November 3, 2016
- Approve a resolution to be submitted to Cape Cod Five to remove Patricia as an authorized signatory on the bank accounts and approve Gwen Pelletier, along with continuing signatory authority for Tom Vautin and Karen Malkus-Benjamin. Board voted unanimously to approve this authorization.
- Begin the transition to this Financial Management Plan with the following steps:
  - Appoint Judy Valverde as the volunteer accountant for Brewster Ponds Coalition
  - Request that Gwen and Judy begin the transition and transfer of records from Patricia Monahan to Judy Valverde as soon as possible.
  - Request that Gwen arrange for a meeting of the previously appointed Finance Committee as soon as possible to review the status of our financial records, chart of accounts, operating procedures, such meeting to include Gwen Pelletier, Judy Valverde, and (if possible) Patricia Monahan. The members of the Finance Committee appointed in September are the BPC Treasurer (now Gwen Pelletier), Board members John Keith and Tom Vautin and BPC member Roger Normand.
  - Request that Judy Valverde attend the Board Meeting on December 1 to meet the full Board and review the status of the financial transition.
  - The Board voted unanimously to approve these steps.

❖ Open Board Position

- Tom explained that with the resignation of Patricia and Gwen's assuming the dual role of Treasurer and Secretary, we now have an open Board position. He further explained that John O'Reilly had been interviewed by the Nominating Committee prior to the August Annual Meeting and election of new Board members. At that time he was not ready to commit but did express support for and an interest in possibly serving on the BPC Board at some future time. Board members who have knowledge of John shared: he is an engineer; served on the Comprehensive

Water Planning Committee; is currently an elected member of the School Committee; has worked on Town projects; was the engineer for Blueberry/Sol's Pond road project that included a bioswale; is engineer with BCT's North Road Blueberry Pond project; potential for conflicts of interest; credentials are perfect for working with BPC.

- After a discussion of the value of having John O'Reilly as a board member, on a motion by Gwen Pelletier, seconded by John Keith, the Board voted unanimously to authorize Tom to approach John about membership on the Board. If John determines that it is not the right time to serve on the Board, the wish is to have him work with BPC as a member, lending his technical expertise to development of projects and analysis of issues about ponds.

❖ Annual Appeal for 2017

- Konrad submitted a written report. Copy available upon request. During a discussion, Konrad emphasized the importance of personal notes and signature on letters going to current donors/members, and asked the board to select which members' letters to sign. Board members agreed to do the best we possibly can to participate in signing letters and writing notes. Judy volunteered to retrieve letters from Curley Direct, the mail house mailing our appeal, and to distribute member letters to designated board members for personal notes; Dawn offered to coordinate a "signing party" for remaining member letters for those of us who could participate. Tentative date is Friday, November 11. Judy will return signed member letters to Curley Direct the following week for mailing before Thanksgiving.
- Konrad indicated equally important are follow-up telephone calls on a personal level after allowing an initial period of time for responses. Calls would be either thank you for the donation or reminder with importance of donation. Konrad will provide "draft script" for those telephone calls and we will review at December 1 Board meeting.

❖ Budget for Calendar Year 2017

- Tom had prepared a draft of a possible budget based on expenses for the past year, anticipated expenses that he could project and submissions by Konrad for Communications and Gwen for the AmeriCorps Science Based Education Kit. During the review and subsequent discussion, the following points were made:
  - Inclusion of speaker fees
  - Consideration of a part time staff person
  - Inclusion of expenses for social events for membership
  - Project related expenses

- Support for Town with hardware such as D.O. meters, other tools, training for use, supporting tools or hardware for major equipment purchases by town
- Consideration whether complete budget will be on website, in detail or in summary, or at all.
- Support for neighborhood associations in their efforts to implement projects such as remediation of stormwater runoff; perhaps pay for filing fees for NOI or Request for Determination
- Creation of subcategories i.e. Membership Breakfast under events; speaker fees under Education or Events
- Submission of applications/proposals for grants will be for specific budget items/categories
- Tom requested that we each give some thought to this discussion and items and send him additional proposals prior to the December meeting
- Karen suggested that we perhaps need a separate meeting to focus on development of a budget.
- ❖ Master Calendar of Events
  - Karen reported that she is working on this item; however, it has become complicated because of links that fill in automatically. Tom indicated he would remove those automatic links to solve the problem.
- ❖ Strategies for Grant Proposals
  - Tom reported that he met this week with Lynn Gorey, who has volunteered to work with BPC for researching funding sources for grant possibilities and to submit proposals for projects/items. Tom reported that Lynn has some great ideas and is enthusiastic about the possibilities.
  - Ideas that surfaced in the Board discussion and from suggestions Lynn had made to Tom included:
    - Sources for the pond science kits contents such as microscopes
    - Funding for the proposed video of the Blueberry Pond, North Road project
    - A project manager to assist Pond and Neighborhood Associations
    - Identification of tools or hardware to be used in remediation efforts
    - Noting that many funding sources are beginning to focus on environmental issues

**REPORTS AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES:** Copies of written reports are available upon request

- ❖ **Communications:** Written report submitted. In addition to the report, Judy Pirani noted
  - That analytics for viewing emails indicates that they are being viewed primarily on mobile devices.

- FB postings of 199 likes creates a challenge of how to convert those people to donor/members.
  
- ❖ **Membership:** Written report submitted.
  - Dawn re-emphasized the explanation in the report about the “Membership year”, explaining that the timing of people’s donations lends itself to allowing for donations during a 15 month period to be accepted as a membership year.
  - She is working on cleaning up the spreadsheet to reflect current status.
  - She is also testing setting up a column that allows each of us to add notes about a specific member when it is relevant.
  - She is in the process of recruiting members for the “Membership Team” to help her with specific tasks.
  
- ❖ **Education:** Written report submitted
  - As a supplement to the written report, Sue indicated that the Committee is considering other events, including an event at a pond, without a walk for folks who may not be interested in or able to walk the trails.
  
- ❖ **Outreach and Advocacy:** Written report submitted
  - In response to the APCC Freshwater Ponds Initiative our Board discussion focused on the following:
    - How to get more data and to keep people engaged
    - Use people for observations; focus on what one can see
    - Karen indicated that Joanne Muramoto, APCC staff scientist, offered to create a protocol for citizen scientists.
    - Karen pointed out that there is a Cape Coastal Conference on December 6 and December 7 at Waquoit Bay with a section on ponds. She will send us the link.
  - Update on Brewster Board of Health proposed septic regulations
    - In response to the request from Mark Nelson of Horsley Witten to meet with BPC, Tom suggested a meeting date when John Keith is on Cape between November 15 and 21. He is waiting for confirmation of a date. Karen and Sue volunteered to attend the meeting.
    - Board agreed that BPC’s position is to listen and clarify points made in BPC submission to BoH at public hearing.
    - Board agreed that BoH needs Town Counsel advice relative to whether to proceed as proposed at this time.

- During this topic, John asked if we know a timeline for proposed macrophyte harvesting at Walker's Pond.
  - Board members were aware that the Town is proceeding with permitting applications.
  - Board members discussed BPC strategy for this issue and how to advocate for it. Conclusions reached included:
    - Developing a strategy for being an influence
    - Advocacy with the Conservation Commission'
    - Advocacy at Town Meeting for funds.

Concluding the meeting, Tom recapped the following decisions/tasks

1. Budget. We will all work on this and be prepared to contribute for December meeting
2. Calendar. Karen will continue to fine tune and enter known items
3. Financial Management Plan: Gwen will proceed with changes
4. Karen to send outstanding check to Silent Spring
5. Annual Appeal: Judy will manage getting letters and coordinating signing of letters
6. Karen will send all Board members the link for the Cape Coastal Conference in December
7. Karen, Sue, and Gwen with Konrad and Judy's assistance for PR will plan the next "Pond Walk" for Bakers Pond on November 19.

Next Meeting: December 1, 2016

Submitted by,

Gwen Pelletier, Secretary