

Minutes, Brewster Ponds Coalition, July 1, 2021

Virtual meeting by Google Meet: Board members present: Susan Bridges, Mary Mauterstock, Konrad Schultz, Cameron Ferguson, Nancy Ortiz, Gwen Pelletier, Marty Burke, Rob Condon, Bruce Swiren, Marcia Kielb, Wayne Jenkins

Meeting started: 6 PM

Standing Topics

1. **Minutes of the June 3rd Board Meeting approved - Nancy**
2. **Confirm and document email votes between Board meetings - Nancy**
 - a. Annual meeting decision to be live - location at Cape Cod Alliance church on August 14th. (7 yes, 2 no, 1 neutral)
 - b. BPC added our signature to the Protection of Open Spaces letter to the Cape Cod Commission requesting the Commission review open space policies for existing open spaces under threat of development should the properties be sold. (7 yes, 3 no response)
3. **Incoming mail - Rob**
 - a. Thank you note from Bennett Hartley for the BPC scholarship.
 - b. Invoice from Chubb insurance (general liability)
 - c. Konrad mentioned the positive response from Peter Lombardi (Town Manager), Noel Aguiar (Conservation), and the Brewster Education Department on the successful launching of the Pond Education virtual program. Susan mentioned congratulations received from John O'Reilly, business partner and sponsor of the Pond Ed Program.
4. **Treasurer's report - Rob**
 - a. Financial statements - see Board folder for details
Current balance is \$108,925. June expenses were \$1,130 and donations were \$2,330. BPC is over budget for donations and under budget for expenses.
 - b. Approval of expenses and reimbursements - none
5. **Misc. administrative matters -**

Rob has received a debit card. Susan can either go to the bank and get her own card or use Rob's. Rob and Susan to discuss investing surplus funds.

New Business:

- a. Town of Brewster sewer plans - Konrad

Brewster, due to the "rural" character of the town, has no sewer plan at this time, unlike Orleans, Chatham, and Harwich which are in the process of constructing sewer systems. According to the US Census Bureau, some parts of Brewster are, in fact, considered

“urban”. Brewster is considering opting out of the Cape and Islands Water Protection Fund which subsidizes “innovative strategies and alternative septic systems to improve water quality in freshwater ponds and marine resources, the completion and update of water quality and wastewater management plans, the construction of sewer collection systems, etc.” The Board believes it is beneficial for Brewster to remain in the Water Protection Fund as septic issues become more critical in the future. Susan and Konrad will draft a letter from BPC to the town supporting remaining in the Water Protection Fund. This fund could eventually help finance alternative septic systems around ponds among other projects. Brewster’s 2.75% tax on short term rentals, hotels and inns is earmarked for improving water quality.

- b. Tour MASSTC on July 12th at 10:00.

Four board members are interested in this tour of the Mass Alternative Septic System Test Center in Sandwich. Floating wetlands will also be discussed.

- c. Fundraising dinner

The board discussed having a fundraising dinner at Spinnaker Restaurant. Susan noted that we would need to identify a project that the fundraiser would support, for example the Bioremediation Project that Tom Vautin is leading. A speaker on a pond related topic will be needed. One member suggested having the dinner in September as there is a lot going on this summer. A member (Marty) thinks a fundraising dinner is a good idea if a worthy reason and goal is established. Marty suggested that purchasing a microscope or two for use by BPC volunteers in the analysis stage of the citizen science program should be considered as a worthy fundraising reason. Our ability to take on the analysis of water samples is a next step in the growth of our program.

- d. Trail Monitoring Program

To be discussed at a later date. Marty suggested getting the program started now since there are lots of volunteer interest. Many of the late spring and early summer questions from subscribers is about the trail monitoring program which doesn’t exist at this point other than on our website. Gwen mentioned that the BPC would only monitor the trails that go by ponds.

Current Priorities

1. Events

- a. Annual Meeting - August 14th

The annual meeting will be held at the Alliance Bible Church in Brewster at the low rental cost of \$100. Some board members were concerned about having the annual meeting in person. The facility, however, is very large and comfortable. There is plenty of room for social distancing. A light breakfast will be served. Susan has recruited Brian Baumgaertel, director of MASSTC, as a speaker on alternative septic systems. Discussion ensued about the Splash Award candidates. Nominations will follow via Emails. The board decided to award the \$150 Spinnaker gift certificate to Tom and Shirley Vautin to be presented at the annual meeting.

- b. Hydrangea Festival 7/13 & 7/14

A handful of additional volunteers are needed. Mary has ordered a banner at Staples. Nancy will volunteer, however, suggested getting volunteers from outside the board to include more BPC members.

c. Brewster Conservation Day/Week - July 10 - 17

The Brewster Conservation Day will take place over one week both in person and virtual. The Pond Education group will be part of the virtual event and host 2 in person educational programs for children at Seymour Pond. The BCT is planning 2 story walks based on books by authors Heidi Clemmer and Susan Baur. The kick off will take place on 7/10 at Drummer Boy Park from 10:00-12:00. Susan and Konrad, along with Shelly, the turtle mascot of the Pond Ed program, will participate. More volunteers were requested.

2. Outreach, Pond Projects & Partnerships

- a. Canoe Pond - Board unanimously approved grant for replacement of aeration system pumps. Approximate cost to BPC is \$800. The PALS report showed water quality improvement from the aeration system. There was some discussion of a future stormwater runoff project on Canoe Pond Drive.
- b. Seymour Pond - Konrad, Wayne and Marcia visited the Beechwood Drive stormwater runoff location off Surrey Lane and determined the catch basin in the center of the parking should suffice to control runoff. Marty was asked to reach out to the Highlands Association leaders to ascertain interest. The project idea was not one that the group had considered and they were unsure of need and value. The idea of having a member take a phone video was run by them and they are open to it. Wayne and Marty both expressed the project as a "low" priority, particularly given the fact that the town has put in a berm that deflects rain water to a drain that has been installed.
- c. Slough Pond - Wayne and Konrad visited the private road and public road juncture causing runoff. The stormwater flows into a low point on a neighbor's property culminating in Slough Pond. Neighbors have talked to the town about adding a catch basin across the road and cleaning out the current catch basin. These are low cost solutions. The cost of a standard storm drain is \$5K. There is no neighborhood HOA, however, there are interested neighbors who may contribute. Two homeowners agreed to pay for the annual cleaning of the existing drain. Gwen suggested including the new DPW director in this project. Wayne has agreed to follow up with Slough Pond. Marty has relationships with some of the neighbors who are on the CS Team and can assist in speaking with them if needed.
- d. Leland Rd (Upper Mill Pond). - Konrad and Marty met with Andy Barto, Don Mattson, and Dan Stevens of Leland Rd (aka: Indian Waters Association) regarding the two runoff sites into Upper Mill Pond from their two association beaches. Konrad and Marty will attend the association annual meeting on July 17th in an attempt to generate interest among neighbors to participate in stormwater remediation on their two beaches. Discussion ensued regarding the expensive alum treatment of Upper Mill. Lower cost solutions should be pursued.

The harvester at Walker's Pond did not result in water improvement. In fact, Walker's Pond water quality has declined since the harvester project took place. One possible solution that needs much further study is a chemical membrane that blocks cyanobacteria from entering Upper Mill from Walkers. One caveat is the inability of fish to pass through to Walkers.

- e. Elbow Pond - Mary will meet with Conservation on 7/13. Another harvesting project needs to take place at a cost of \$4,800.(\$1,500 for the damselfly study, \$2,500 for harvesting, and \$800 for water testing.) There is currently \$2,422 in the Elbow Pond account. The board has agreed to support this project via the grant program and Mary will follow up with a written proposal.

3. Committee Reports - Written/verbal reports as needed. **See shared drive.**

- a. Communications - Konrad
- b. Pond Education - Marcia
- c. Citizen Science - Marty

Marty suggested purchasing one or two additional microscopes for the citizen science program use going forward. This will enable our program to expand and not totally rely on outside sources for all of our analysis. (There was a lab set up at the DNR in Brewster and perhaps space there could be utilized again.) Currently samples are being driven to APCC. Gwen prefers to help the already established APCC grow by working with our volunteers.

Executive Session - Marty may have two possible candidates for board members. More information may be available at the next board meeting.

Wrap-up

- **Recap decisions, action items, and follow-up assignments**

Rob and Susan to discuss investments of surplus funds.

Susan and Konrad to draft letter re: Brewster remaining in the Water Protection Fund.

Splash Award nominations will follow via Email.

Mary to write an Elbow Pond grant proposal.

Next Board Meetings:

August 5, 2021 - Google Meet

September 2, 2021

October 7, 2021

November 4, 2021

December 2, 2021

Meeting adjourned 8:08 PM

Submitted by Nancy W. Ortiz, Clerk