

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board – Corrected Board Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2003 – Chappaqua Library**

Present: Lurline Arco, Joan Coffey, Rita Wecker, Stan Wecker, Jim Anderson, Jeff Pinerio, Richard Saravay, Robert McCrillis, Tom McEnerney, Jo Lunetta, Henry Seduski, Jeanne Romeu. Anne Swaim was also present. Karen Wells and Ken Novenster were in attendance after 8:30 p.m.

President's Report: Richard noted that Bedford Audubon is celebrating their 90th Anniversary this coming Wednesday at St Matthews Episcopal Church on Route 22 in Bedford.

Minutes of Nov. 2003 Meeting: Under Finance Committee, the third line, the date Nov 1, 2003 should read September 30, 2003. Minutes accepted as amended.

Mail: Audubon in New York Strategic Plan for 2003 was briefly presented by Richard. This covers legislative proposals. He said this is a good document of activity of the state office and programs, including centers. Also received was the annual report for the New York state office and an environmental issues update from NY Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.

Westchester Chapters Meeting: Stan Wecker, Bob McCrillis and Anne Swaim attended the Westchester Audubon chapters meeting on Wednesday, November 18. Various communication issues were discussed between the five Westchester chapters and David Miller of the NY State office. Saturday, March 13 was confirmed as the date of the Lower Hudson Audubon Chapter Roundtable.

Follow-up to Board Retreat: Copies of the 2004 Objectives from the retreat were distributed to the board.. This was a record of the objectives prepared by Donna Nye. The planning committee needs to meet in the near future to review these objectives.

Holiday Tea: Set up needs to be completed by 1pm. Jeanne Romeu, Joan Coffey, Lurline Arco, and Judy Epstein all agreed to help with set up. The question was asked whether we want punch? This was not resolved. Names and addresses and email addresses will be requested for a free raffle for Jean George's drawings. Jo Lunetta will prepare the raffle materials.

Nominating Committee: New board members need to be sought. We are below our by-laws range of 18 to 24 people. Robert McCrillis will be willing to accept the 2004 nomination for President.

Audit Committee: Robert McCrillis reported that the committee intends to meet quarterly to go over the financial records. Tom McEnerney will begin serving as treasurer in January, 2004. The audit for 2002 has been completed with a "clean opinion" and the tax return was completed at the same time.

Finance Committee: We are between quarters so Rita offered only a brief report as of November 30. The closing balance was \$799,964 on November 30. We started the year at \$710,000 and including withdrawals, the endowment fund has still grown. Janus Worldwide Fund has been sold. A CD is expected to be rolled over tomorrow in the approximate amount of \$62,000. An investigation has begun on the question of bonding. We are now bonded for \$25,000 with a \$1,000 deductible. The recommendation is to up this to \$100,000 per occurrence. The cost is \$250 increase on current premium. This is within the 2004 budget. Is a motion needed? No, this is assumed to be part of budget approval.

Sanctuaries Committee: Ilse looked at the overall sanctuary budget figure for the 2004 budget and thinks this will cover additional work needed at Brinton Brook. Ilse also suggested that Brinton Brook be added to the agenda on a regular basis. Richard agreed.

Brinton Brook: Jeanne asked whether the title search was approved and Richard said it was. We will wait to hear from Ken Novenster to see if this has been initiated. She said the Nida Associates garage is back on the Town of Cortlandt planning board agenda for tomorrow night. Jeanne will call the town hall on December 1, 2003 to see if the matter will be discussed or not.

(When Ken Novenster arrived at 8:30, he was also asked about the title search for the Nida Associates easement at Brinton Brook. Ken Novenster will follow through on the idea of a title search and also call the Town of Cortlandt to see if this matter is truly on the agenda tomorrow. Karen also agreed to attend this meeting if necessary.)

Pruyn Sanctuary: Westchester Tree Life will trim the road trees along the stone wall as a donation if we provide two traffic control people. This will be included in the cost of the arboretum maintenance in the 2004 budget. Ilse inquired why we don't have a sign on Route 133. Jeffrey Pinerio agreed it would be great to have a sign on Route 133. Richard noted the eventual need for additional parking. Jeff added that this is a larger topic that we need to consider not only for Pruyn but for other sanctuaries. Stan asked whether the Selz family is still interested in funding a rest room facility. No additional response has been seen to date.

Pruyn House: The oil tank has been discussed for many years. Robert does have an application for inspection for \$275 from Burke Oil. It would then cost us \$180/year for leak insurance. Lurline said that her husband may be able to investigate a lower cost on these two items. It will cost \$800 for a new dishwasher and dryer, \$500 to clean out attic, garage and shed, \$500 to install a closet over the bath tub in the office bathroom, \$275 for septic tank pump out, and \$80 to clean fireplace. One idea is to convert the garage into a classroom and conference area – this is a possibility for a grant application. Another idea is to pursue a grant to convert the Pruyn House to alternative energy as a demonstration project.

Community Relations and Development: Stan reported a loss of at least 90 members from our membership rolls according to the latest report from National Audubon but there may be some problems with the reporting from them. Donations are expected to be a little over \$14,000 for the year.

Bird Seed Sale: Ken Novenster reported that the committee met two weeks ago. It was decided to have one weekend sale a month in January, February and March. The first one will be Saturday, January 10, from 9am to 3pm. Only four customers remain for pickup. Judy mentioned that someone approached her about doing a plant sale in the spring. We might coordinate this with a sale of the remaining seed.

Milne Bequest: Richard Saravay reiterated that Wolfsie will not contest his removal as executor from the Milne estate. Our lawyer has suggested that this may mean distribution in the next couple of months. We are expecting something in the range of \$100,000.

Goldsby Request: Richard noted that we have not yet given a direct answer about whether we will accept this property. Ken Novenster said that Paul Gallay of the Westchester Land Trust would certainly be interested in pursuing a conversation with the landowner. Features of this property were reviewed. Richard moved, seconded by Ken, to accept the property. There was extensive discussion about the purpose of our holding this land. There was an amended motion by Ken to schedule a meeting with the landowner's attorney and representatives of Westchester Land Trust and SMRA to facilitate protection of the property by the Westchester Land Trust. Seconded by Ilse and further amended by Stan to set a deadline for the meeting at the end of January. Amended motion accepted by Ken and approved unanimously.

Budget Committee: The Budget Committee met Tuesday, November 25 to prepare the draft 2004 budget. Richard, Bob, Henry, Stan and Rita made up the committee according to the by-laws. Incoming Treasurer Tom McEnerney was also appointed to the Budget Committee at the last Board meeting. Input was received from various committees. Henry also reviewed the income calculation from the endowment. Richard reviewed the possibility that we are looking at a rising endowment in the coming year but were looking at an austerity budget in the past year. The budget shows a deficit of \$26,000 which is almost entirely due to the proposal to hire an executive director late in 2004. Stan noted that this person would focus especially on fundraising with the idea of fully funding his or her own position in the second year. Jim registered his strong opposition to this large a deficit budget. He also strongly questioned the validity of seed sale income figures. Richard noted that the endowment contribution calculation is quite low. The budget assumes the executive director would start in September 2004, with a maximum salary of \$50,000.

There was extensive discussion on the question of hiring an executive director in the coming year. As chair of the Personnel Committee, Jo reviewed the general job description of this person who would be hired under a two year contract. The search would not be initiated until April 2004. We could hold off if the economic conditions do not warrant this. Karen Wells offered a motion to approve the budget without the executive director position, resulting in a reduction of \$18,400, and also to lower the seed sale income by \$2000 for 2004. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Stan Wecker noted that the past fundraising position did not raise money to support salary. The emphasis for the new position is that there would be a timeline for fundraising. Jim said that accepting a lower budget does not preclude increasing our budget in June if our economic position is better. Jo suggested that this reconsideration might work but should happen in April rather than June to allow for enough time for a job search. Jeff felt this should happen after a full presentation of the proposed position to the board. Stan suggested that the Personnel Committee report at the January Board meeting with specifics on the position.

It was clarified that Karen's motion would still result in a \$10,500 excess of expenses over income. The motion, including the Board approval of the 2004 budget with changes as noted, passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10 p.m.