

Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2007
Held at the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester

Members present: Robert McCrillis, presiding; George Shakespear, Tom McEnerney, Trish Foy, Joan Coffey, Cori Cumming, Sally Dow, Philip Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Bill Kellner, Michael Madias, Erika Miller, Ken Novenster, Jeanne Romeu, Ponie Sheehan, Meredith Smith, Larry Trachtenberg

Staff: Anne Swaim, Executive Director

Meeting called to order at 7:40 with a quorum present. Minutes of October 1, 2007 meeting were accepted with no corrections.

President's Report: Robert McCrillis reviewed:

Mail/Correspondence—energy flyers and posters were distributed

Nominating Committee Election—to be finalized in January

It is with great sadness that the Board notes the death of Board Member Stanley Rosenthal. The sympathy letter written by Anne Swaim to his family was read.

Treasurer's Report: Tom McEnerney reviewed the 2008 Budget sheet which is attached as part of these minutes. Overall, Total Revenues are projected at \$63,000; Total Expenses are projected at \$138,850 and it is proposed that we transfer \$107,850 from the endowment, including up to \$35,000 for the Pruyn House Feasibility Study. Discussion took place on the Bird seed sale costs. The Budget was approved.

Finance Committee: Phil Heidelberger reported that due to a strong stock market in the third quarter, as of October 1, 2007, the portfolio balance was \$1,062,892, a 9.8% increase for the year. The year-to-date, one, and three year investment rates of return were 10.9%, 18.7%, and 13.8%, respectively. These compare very favorably to our benchmark Morningstar Allocation Fund Index returns of 6.2%, 10.6%, and 8.4% for the same periods. After a choppy November, the portfolio balance was \$1,033,162 on December 1, a 6.8% increase for the year.

Executive Director's Report: Anne Swaim reported:

Arrowcrest Easement Update—We are still pressing the village to do their job. We are still waiting for the Village attorney to move ahead with a letter to the encroachers, after a series of e-mails and phone conversations with the Village Manager. Discussion took place as to next steps that the Board can take to resolve this issue. The Village Manager has indicated that this is not a priority for the Village. The Village is taking no action on other easement violations and seems to be generally acting in an incompetent manner. The Board tentatively decided that, after January 1, 2008, should no action be taken by the Village, we will reach out to our membership, to other land trust groups, and to the news media to put pressure on the Village.

Arizona Trip—There is one slot remaining.

Environmental Action Steps—Anne gave a short visual presentation highlighting web sites that are available for state and national issues. The real quandary is how to filter and provide focus and action steps for more local issues. All suggestions would be welcome. It is part of our mission and we are currently not doing enough in this area. It was suggested that we establish a system to filter issues through the Environmental Action Committee to the Board and our members.

Sanctuaries Committee:

Boundary Walks—Choate walk will be put off due to survey difficulties. Next walk is January 19 at Pinecliff.

Committee meeting was held on Nov. 12.

A letter on hunting policy was sent out to neighbors bordering Brinton, Pruyn and Graff. A new donation is to be made at Haas; there will now be access, parking space, and a garden area. A title search and a lien search have been ordered by the Board; in response to questions, Ken indicated that title insurance is probably not necessary. Different concerns about our sanctuaries borders were also discussed. There is an opportunity to develop high quality display trail maps with Ed Hicks that we hope to investigate in the coming year.

Community Relations and Development:

Donation, Membership, and Grant Report was distributed and is attached. Follow-up fund drive letters were addressed and signed by members.

Pruyn House Vision: Bill Kellner reported that the committee met to evaluate the four proposals; a follow-up meeting will be held in several weeks. A final decision is envisioned to take place after that meeting. Additionally an initial meeting is scheduled with the Town of New Castle.

Audubon Council: Fall Council took place in October; Richard will report on that in January.

Bird Seed Sale: Ken Novenster reported that an additional sale will take place on December 15. Discussion took place as to the length of the monthly sales; 9:30 to 12:30 was agreed to. Volunteers are still needed for December. All varieties of seed will be available. More members are needed for the Seed committee.

Field Trips: Upcoming calendar of trips was published in the Newsletter.

Programs: Cori Cumming reported on the last two programs which had about a dozen participants each. Another successful workshop was held about hawk identification. Linking of workshops, walks and tie-ins to libraries and books was also discussed.

Publicity: George Shakespear reported that a December press release of events was sent out.

Hospitality: Thanks for the refreshments.

New Business: Any contacts with upper Westchester schools would be appreciated by Anne.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM. The next Board meeting will be January 7, 2008. Minutes for December 3, 2007 were recorded by Trish Foy.