

Saw Mill River Audubon Draft Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 5, 2009
Held at the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester

Board Members Present: Robert McCrillis, presiding; Michael Madias, Jr., Cori Cumming, Trish Foy, Rik Kaufman, Tom McEnerney, Jeanne Romeu, Joan Coffey, Leen Provost, Phil Heidelberger, Larry Trachtenberg, Ponie Sheehan, Bill Kellner. Anne Swaim, Executive Director, was also present.

Minutes of December 1, 2008 Meeting: Minutes were accepted as presented.

President's Report - Robert McCrillis

Correspondence A letter was circulated from Sandra Nuffer thanking SMRA for the Adult Scholarship we awarded her for the Hog Island Audubon Environmental Camp.

Nominating Committee Trish Foy, Sophie Keyes and Anne Swaim were elected as the nominating committee.

Annual Dinner: Joan Coffey, Leen Provost, Cori Cumming will join Anne Swaim and Robert McCrillis on a committee to plan for the Sunday, April 5 Annual Dinner.

Finance Committee: Phil Heidelberger reported that as of January 1, 2009 the portfolio balance was \$631,659, a 1.4% increase for the month of December but a 38.7% decline for the year. This includes \$107,000 in withdrawals (10.4%) so our investment rate of return for 2008 was approximately -28%. The S&P 500 index was down 38.5% in 2008, the index's worst performance since 1937.

Treasurer's Report: Tom McEnerney reviewed the 2008 revenue and expense figures (see attached reports) noting that the amount by which expenses exceeded revenue was slightly better than budget. Nevertheless, SMRA significantly exceeded its guidelines for percentage withdrawal from the endowment fund. Given the current endowment fund balance, the proposed 2009 budget will also significantly exceed those guidelines without additional revenue.

Executive Director's Report: Anne Swaim reviewed events scheduled for the Saturday, February 7 Eagle Fest. Saw Mill River Audubon will once again be sponsoring the warming tent at the Croton River boat ramp and, like last year, will also have an information table in the main tent inside Croton Point Park. We will also display information at the George's Island warming tent where Larry and Ponie expect to work most if not all of the day. A sign up sheet for additional volunteers was circulated to staff the boat ramp area and the info table in the park. We also have additional volunteer offers from among our membership.

Sanctuary Committee: Michael Madias reported that work days will be scheduled at Chernick, Cameron Murtfeldt, and Haas Sanctuaries and will be advertised to our broader membership. There was a brief discussion about the Haas parking area project. By our February meeting, we hope to know whether we can move forward with permission for this project or whether we will need to move through a public hearing process with the Town of New Castle. If this part of our grant project is not possible, there may be a possibility to apply that portion of funds to a kiosk at Haas that is part of a parallel Eagle Scout project.

Community Relations & Development: The report prepared by Barbara and Ellen was circulated. There was the discussion about the decline in membership revenue compared to rising membership figures. A brainstorming development meeting will be held Monday, January 12, 2008, 7pm, at the home of Robert McCrillis to consider additional sources of revenue. All board members are invited.

Newsletter: The deadline is this week to gather materials for the Feb/Mar newsletter. The next newsletter will include the 2009 proxy ballot and some additional information on the April 2009 Annual Meeting and Dinner. Anne and Bill will meet later this week to review the newsletter content.

Bird Seed Sale: A volunteer sign up for the Saturday, January 17, seed sale was circulated. There was income of \$1330 for the third Saturday in December.

Programs and Field Trips: The New Years Day walk drew 16 participants and received positive reviews despite the bitter temperatures. The next field trip is the Croton Point walk on Saturday, January 10 led by Charlie Roberto. Cori noted that there are various unsolved logistical questions about the Saturday, February 28 public program at the Ossining Library. This public program will include a bluebird box building workshop and a Powerpoint presentation about bluebird boxes.

Publicity: Anne noted that George Shakespear has prepared a release on January events that Ellen will be distributing this week.

Hospitality: Larry and others were thanked for providing refreshments for the meeting.

Pruyn House Vision: Bill Kellner reported that we are anticipating the final presentation products from Steven Winter Associations by the end of January. The next step will be to consider how we distribute these materials further.

The next board meeting will be Monday, February 2, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes recorded by Anne Swaim, Executive Director, in the absence of Sally Dow.