

**Saw Mill River Audubon Board Minutes**  
**Monday, December 7, 2009**  
**Held at the Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester**

**Meeting called to order** at 7:34 p.m. with a quorum present.

**Board members present:** Robert McCrillis, presiding; Cori Cumming, Sally Dow, Trish Foy, Nick Fischer, Arthur Green, Phil Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Bill Kellner, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Joanne McAuley, Tom McEnerney, Nina Romanoff, Richard Saravay, George Shakespear, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin and Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim, Executive Director.

**Absent:** Joan Coffey, Michael Madias Jr., Ken Novenster, Leen Provost, and Jeanne Romeu.

**Minutes of the October 5, 2009** meeting were accepted as presented.

### **President's Report - Robert McCrillis**

**Pruyn Garden Work Day** – November 7 (originally scheduled for October 17) was a success. Thanks to everyone who helped. Tom, Anne and Robert closed the Garden this year

The garden is 10 years old. We plan to renovate the garden in sections. We will do another section in the Fall of 2010. There is a need for a Garden Chairperson to coordinate the volunteers. Busy time for the Butterfly Garden is April/May. If interested, please let Robert know.

### **Mail/Correspondence**

Brochure on winterizing your home from **Ask PSC** was passed around table. For more info go to [www.askpsc.com](http://www.askpsc.com) or call 1-888-ask-psc1.

Announcement of new exhibit opening in January 2010 at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, NY.

### **Community Relations and Development – presented by Robert McCrillis**

Copy of Membership and Fund Drive Report dated December 7, 2009 was handed out. The large donor letters were signed and “PS-ed” earlier this evening for the follow-up fund drive. We have the chance to match last year’s totals of \$20,500. Membership is up and chapter membership is up.

### **Treasurer's Report – Tom McEnerney**

Copies of the SMRA 2010 proposed Budget were handed out and reviewed line by line. A lively discussion followed for approximately 1 hour.

Concerning **revenues** Tom stated that the charge of \$5.00 for programs helped us during this year. It was agreed to continue this practice. The seed sale in November had only three customers. A sale this month may be too close to the main October weekend sale. Our revenues from school programs were down. We need to expand our promotion of school and community group programs.

**Expenses** – Tom raised the question if we should contribute to NYS Audubon. We give a “voluntary” donation of \$500. Last year we voted to give NYS \$250 which has not been sent yet. We did not give them anything in 2008. A question was raised if we give to any other organizations. Yes: Cornell Labs; NYS Ornithological Association; American Bird Conservancy; Audubon NY. A discussion followed and the board voted to send the \$250 check to Audubon NY for 2009 as previously approved and to keep \$250 in the budget to send to Audubon NY in 2010.

Other budget issues raised included questions about reducing printing costs for the newsletter or raising membership dues to \$30. We may revisit the question of printing a paper newsletter next year or following but, in the meantime, will continue encouraging members to receive it digitally. It was also decided to wait another year and/or until current membership brochures need reprinting until raising the chapter membership dues again.

A motion was offered and seconded to accept the budget. Discussion followed addressing concerns: we should revisit the Budget if economy gets worst or income falls below expectations; more emphasis should be placed on soliciting contributions including those from corporations. President McCrillis reminded us that we are also considering a \$4 million goal for our Pruyn House Vision. The Pruyn House Committee is currently exploring the possibility of a capital campaign feasibility study for this project which may also reveal new donors for SMRA.

The 2010 Budget was approved with the understanding that it would be reviewed.

### **Finance Committee - Phil Heidelberger**

For our official quarterly report, as of October 1, 2009 the portfolio balance was \$740,689, an increase of \$109,030 (17.3%) for the year, including \$20,000 in withdrawals. The investment rate of return was 20.8% year-to-date and 13.8% for one year, compared to the Morningstar Allocation averages of 17.2% and 10.9% for the comparable periods.

As of December 1, 2009, the portfolio balance was \$724,166 and is now up 14.6% for the year, including \$49,000 (7.8%) in withdrawals. Between October 1 and December 1, the portfolio lost \$16,523, but this includes \$29,000 in withdrawals during that period.

A motion was presented by the Finance Committee asking that the Board release the Finance Committee from the requirement to invest part of its Endowment in "Socially Responsible" Funds.

Background: prior to 2003, the Board directed the Finance Committee to invest some portion of the Endowment in "Socially Responsible" Mutual Funds. The Finance Committee passed a resolution at its October 27, 2009 meeting authorizing that this requirement be dropped. (see e-mail to all board members of 12/04/09)

Motion made, seconded and passed by show of hands.

### **Executive Director's Report - Anne Swaim**

We are hoping to move ahead on deer exclosure projects in two different areas within Pruyn. We would like to enclose an area of 50x100 within the next few weeks or at least by early spring. We applied for a \$1,000 grant from National Audubon to start this project. Barbara will be working on an additional grant application in early 2010

### **Sanctuaries Committee – presented by Anne Swaim**

The town of New Castle has committed to work with us on the Haas parking lot. Choate Work Day – Saturday December 12 at 10am unless it snows. Arthur stated that a group of Cub Scouts and a group from Temple Israel are planning to help with the workday.

The fall "Trees for Tribs" work day at Brinton resulted in the planting of 50 replacement trees. Donna has extra trees wintering-over in her yard for planting next spring.

**Newsletter – Bill Kellner**

Deadline for next newsletter is January 1, 2010. Bill thanked everyone who had contributed to the winter 2009 newsletter which was sent out last week. Copies need to be taken to the area's libraries. See Bill after the meeting.

**Bird Seed Sale – presented by Anne Swain**

Seed sales are the third Saturday of the month. Sign-up sheet for volunteers was passed around for December 19. Very few people came last month to buy seed. Hoping December sales will be better.

**Programs and Field Trips – presented by Anne Swain**

We hope to have one weekend trip each season. With the assistance of Christine Smith we have planned for a winter birding trip to the Adirondacks. Nine (9) people have already signed up this trip to be held January 15 – 18. We are hoping to get 10 – 14 people in total. Deadline to sign-up is December 15.

Saturday, December 12 is a 9am walk at **Angle Fly Preserve** in Somers, NY on Route 139 off Route 100. This is a new preserve of 606 acres.

The **Peekskill Christmas Bird Count** will be held on Saturday, December 19. Anne, Larry, Rik and Ponie all plan to participate. Anyone can join for all or part of the day.

March 2010 – a program is planned for the Ossining Public Library featuring author and local wildlife rehabilitator Suzie Gilbert.

**Publicity - George Shakespear**

Prepared and sent out press releases on SMRA scholarships and on our field trips.

**Hospitality – Sally Dow /Cori Cumming/Jean Sparacin**

Thank you to everyone who brought refreshments tonight.

**New Business**

Two issues slated for discussion: Deer management and Audubon Fall Council Report - were tabled until the January 4, 2010 meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Minutes were recorded by Joanne McAuley, Secretary.