

Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 6, 2013
Held at Community Bible Church, Ossining, NY

Present (in bold): Robert McCrillis, presiding, William Kellner, Richard Saravay, Brian Kluepfel, secretary, Tom McEnerney, Joan Coffey, Sally Dow, Christopher Drury, Nick Fischer, Phillip Heidelberger, Shirl Kaplan, Rik Kaufman, Donna Lassiter, Michael Loyola, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Christine McCluskey, Ken Novenstern, Joan Wyly, Nina Romanoff, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was present as Executive Director.

A quorum was present and the meeting began. 7:32 pm.

Minutes from the March Board Meeting and April Annual Meeting were approved.

President's Report/Mail and Correspondence (Robert McCrillis)

Joan Wyly was welcomed to her first board meeting. Chris Drury has resigned from the board because he is moving to Massachusetts. Chris thanked the board for the opportunity to work with Saw Mill River Audubon.

Robert asked the board to review committee assignments.

The Raptors Uncorked volunteer signup sheet was circulated and Robert noted that this is new event with logistical challenges, including a new venue for SMRA, so help is needed. Anne Swaim said 37 people have signed up for Raptors Uncorked so far. Our target is 50-60 with max of 100. Bob is dealing with wine merchant. Joan Kellner is coordinating the hors d'oeuvres. The Summer Executive Committee to stand in for regular board during summer break was appointed with a board vote.

The invitation list for the June picnic meeting was circulated with request for any additions. The current roster of board members was circulated for any corrections/updates.

Community Relations and Development:

Membership is up according to our report. Report circulated.

Finance Committee (Phil Heidelberger)

For our official quarterly report, as of April 1, 2013 the portfolio balance was \$914,790 a year-to-date increase of 5% from the January 1, 2013 balance of \$870,932. The year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were 6.1%, 9.3% and 8.7% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 4.3%, 6.1% and 6.8% for the same periods.

The balance as of May 1, 2013 was \$926,194 an increase of 6.3% year-to-date.

As of April 1, 2013, there have been \$8,000 in withdrawals from the endowment during 2013.

Ken Novenstern thanked Phil and the Finance Committee for their diligence noting that the fund balance was in a much lower position in past years.

Treasurer's Report (Tom McEnerney) Copies of the report were distributed. Donations are doing well and may be scheduled to go over budget. Seed sale income is on target; membership income is a little under target. Revenue is \$1400 over expectations for first 4 months. Expenses are about \$1800 over expectations primarily due to office operations and Pruyn House expenses including new stationery, extra snowplowing, and winter heating.

Tom reviewed the NY statute regarding how not-for-profits manage donor-restricted funds. We are required to notify the donors of our restricted endowments to ask whether the provisions of the new law or the old law should apply to their endowment. The new law contains more liberal provisions regarding spending the original principal amount. The Lights opted to be covered by the old statute continuing our existing policy of only spending the income from the Larry Light Fund. We will also send a letter to Turner Construction to ask what they want to do as far as the garden endowment. Tom noted that financial diligence like this is important to protect the Board of Directors.

Executive Director's Report (Anne Swaim):

Anne mentioned Brian Kluepfel's recent article on bluebirds. She reviewed several upcoming environmental meetings and also summarized the ongoing discussions about habitat management at Croton Point, where is there an existing agreement not to mow at the landfill at all this year. Impacts are still present from workers driving across the grasses. There are concerns with the mowing and turf management at the model airplane field as well but that is another issue that may or may not be covered by an agreement between the model aircraft club and county parks.

There is some clarification needed on office coverage for Mon May 13 through Wed May 22. Rik Kaufman and Jean Sparacin both volunteered to assist with this and Anne will follow up with them.

Spring Council Meeting (Richard Saravay)

Christine McCluskey offered her observations as a first-time attendee of the state council meeting. She found the workshops and discussions very helpful. Richard notes that Audubon NY has a new Executive Director, Erin Crotty. The fall meeting will be in Woodcliff Lake, northern New Jersey, on the second weekend in October and will be a combined meeting with Audubon New York and New Jersey Audubon.

Ponie Sheehan reviewed her experience participating in the Earth Day Lobby Day in Albany during which she was able to speak with elected representatives about several pieces of environmental legislation that were then passed by the Assembly.

Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias):

Anne and Michael completed the boundary walks for Brinton Brook and Pruyn. There are some new Pruyn boundary issues with the Birchwood Swim & Tennis Club that are being communicated to the club. At Choate Sanctuary there was an issue with an untended neighboring house in foreclosure that was used as a party spot with a bonfire and beer can pile on Audubon land. Anne contacted both the realtor and the youth officer for New Castle Police. The next sanctuary committee meeting will be in late June. Michael picked up a couple of hundred tree and shrub seedlings from Ted Kozlowksi, the county forester, and these will be used in various sanctuaries.

Program and Field Trips (Christine McCluskey):

Christine said that John Grant's tree walk in April was his "best one yet." People were very engaged and John's teaching was hands-on, showing field examples on good and bad tree planting. Larry collected \$70 in donations from this walk. At the Earth Day in Croton, Donna Lee and Chris had positive and valuable interactions with families and other visitors. Ponie and Sally also made good contacts. There was a suggestion of beginning a Young Birders programs this summer.

This coming Wednesday, May 8 is our next public program entitled, "Go Native—Westchester Native Plant Center" to be held at the Croton Unitarian Church. This Friday, is our annual Central Park birding trip with Charlie Roberto meeting 7 a.m. at Central Park West & 77th Street. Christine also noted the Bronx River/Sound Shore Adirondacks trip on June 7-9 still has spaces and one of the field trip leaders will be Joan Collins, who showed us redpolls in January. Our Doodletown trip has a 6 a.m. start on May 18. May 21 Mianus River Gorge birding will be led by Christine with Gorge staff and begins 8 a.m. On Monday May 27th Memorial Day we will have a 7 a.m. birding walk at Croton Point Park. Christine also noted the New York Birders conference to be held on Long Island in November, with registration forms passed around. Anne is planning to attend and will coordinate a group going from our area.

Newsletter (Bill Kellner): The June/July issue will be mailed a bit later because of the Yellowstone trip. Deadline is later---by May 27. Redesign with Donna Lee and Ponie currently in progress; may roll it out in next newsletter. It will be translated into Spanish with new layout.

Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenster):

Ken noted that Donna Lassiter put on a Cornell program as a Master Gardener that was well-received. We would have done a sale this month but will not because of Yellowstone trip. The 2013 Seed Sale weekend was set for October 12 and 13. We will try to entice additional summer sales with a June 1 price reduction of existing seed of 25% off.

Hospitality: Thanks to all who brought refreshments tonight. Jean will be contact for annual picnic.

New Business: Richard Saravay said the most valuable thing we have in the community is our open land and expressed concerned with State Senate Bill #2565: Vested Rights which would appear to short-circuit local land planning review. Anne asked if Richard could see if the Audubon New York office has reviewed this bill or is tracking it.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Minutes taken by Brian Kluepfel, Secretary