

Saw Mill River Audubon Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 10, 2014
Held at Community Bible Church, Ossining, NY

Present (in bold): Robert McCrillis, presiding, William Kellner, Richard Saravay, Brian Kluepfel, secretary, Tom McEnerney, Sally Dow, Nick Fischer, Philip Heidelberger, Shirl Kaplan, Rik Kaufman, Donna Lassiter, 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. 7:30 pm.

Minutes from the January meeting were approved.

President's Report/Mail and Correspondence:

Two guests—Jan Bass, Tom Ruth attended. They have been nominated for open board positions, along with Karalyn Lamb who could not attend tonight's meeting. Volunteers were solicited for a committee for the annual dinner on Sunday, April 6 at Table 9 Restaurant. Jean and Joanne volunteered and Bill suggested that Joan Kellner might be interested as well. The dinner committee will meet on Wed Feb 19, 2pm at the office.

Members were reminded to submit their proxy vote for the next board election, contained in the current edition of the newsletter or online at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/Proxy

Community Relations and Development:

Report circulated. 2013 was the best year in SMRA history for annual fund donations.

Finance Committee (Philip Heidelberger)

For our official quarterly report, as of January 1, 2014 the portfolio balance was \$948,376, a one year increase of 8.9% over the January 1, 2013 balance of \$870,932. The one year and three year investment rates of return were 16.9% and 8.8% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 11.4% and 6.4% for same periods. There were \$66,600 in withdrawals from and \$1,000 in additions to the portfolio during 2013. The Feb. 1st, 2014 portfolio balance was \$930,505, a decrease of 1.9% for the year.

Treasurer's Report (Tom McEnerney): A vote was taken and the board unanimously approved a withdrawal of up to \$1,400 from the butterfly garden endowment for 2014 expenses. Two reports were circulated and discussed regarding seed sale profits and insurance costs.

Executive Director's Report (Anne Swain):

A vote was taken after brief discussion and both Light Scholarship applicants (Alex Chin and Eamon O'Toole) were granted their requests, for a potential total of \$1,495.

The 10th annual Hudson River EagleFest was generally considered a success with SMRA leading bird walks (Anne Swaim, Christine McCluskey, Larry Trachtenberg) and sponsoring various activities. Anne's "Raptors for Rookies" program also drew a large crowd. We garnered around 50 new requests for our email list.

No update on the Birchwood Swim Club issue. The club borders Pruyn Sanctuary and has un-buildable swamp land that could be donated to SMRA.

Discussion of the potential new development adjacent to Brinton Brook property, purchased by Hudson Valley Golf Course, took place. The new buyer may want to develop a driving range but there are zoning and environmental issues of concern. Property close to the Haas Sanctuary (Legionnaires property) is proposed for development as a high-end spa.

The redesigned SMRA website was unveiled.

Advocacy (Richard Saravay):

Discussion of Audubon's position nationally and locally in the reduction of Mute Swan populations. Anne Swaim signed for SMRA in agreement with Audubon statement on this issue as per our ongoing policy to support Audubon NY issues and then report back to the SMRA board. A letter from Erin Crotty, Audubon New York's Executive Director [sic], on the Mute Swan issue, was circulated.

Two articles (one an editorial) circulated about the effect of deer-reduction programs in Westchester County.

Sanctuaries Committee (Michael Madias):

Discussion of what action to take with two grants took place. The plan is for two new benches at Pruyn: one at a trail intersection and the other by the garden.

Programs and Field Trips (Christine McCluskey):

The upcoming DelMarVa trip on May 8-10 was discussed. This trip already has strong interest. The Duluth, MN trip was a great success, with several owls, including snowys, hawk, and great greys sighted. Nice work by Christine organizing despite some complex delays/logistics. A brief discussion of the February 13 photography workshop at the Croton Free Library mentioned that a snow date of February 27 is in place. The subsequent March 1 workshop at Croton Point Nature Center has 15 sign-ups already.

A Monday trip to Kingsland Point (Sleepy Hollow), led by Anne, was discussed. Two red-headed woodpeckers have been seen at the site.

Newsletter (Bill Kellner) - Current issue is out this week. Next deadline is March 1.

Bird Seed Sale (Ken Novenster):

We are hoping the heavy snows increase revenue at this Saturday, February 15 sale.

Hospitality: Thanks to Sally Dow and Jean Sparacin for coordinating.

New Business: SMRA will hold a retreat for its members on September 20, 2014. Site TBD.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Minutes taken by Brian Kluepfel, Secretary