

**Saw Mill River Audubon
January 4, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes
Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

Present: Robert McCrillis, Jan Bass, Valerie Heemstra, Philip Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Bill Kellner, Karalyn Lamb, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Christine McCluskey, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenstern, John Phillips, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg, and Anne Swaim.

Meeting started at 7:30pm. Minutes of December 7, 2015 Board Meeting were approved.

President's Report – Robert McCrillis

Robert wished everyone a Happy New Year!

He asked for an affirmation vote from the board for the 2016 SMRA Nominating Committee: Jean Sparacin and Non-Board Members: Patricia Loquet and David Watson which was submitted to the board by email earlier. The proposed slate for the April 2016 Annual Meeting election is:

Officers for 2016-2017

President: Valerie Lyle
Vice President: Tom Ruth
Treasurer: Tom McEnerney
Recording Secretary: Valerie Heemstra
Chairman of the Board: Robert McCrillis

Class of 2019 Board Members

Valerie Heemstra
Rik Kaufman
Brian Kluepfel
Karalyn Lamb
Valerie Lyle
Thomas McEnerney
Christine McCluskey
Jean Sparacin

The proxy ballot must go to the printer by mid-January. It will be included in the Feb-Mar 2016 newsletter. The election (via proxy ballot) will take place at the Sunday, April 3, 2016 Annual Meeting.

There are two slots open on the Board (Class of 2017 and Class of 2018). Our By-laws indicate 18-24 Board members. We currently have 22. We could fill these positions. If you know anyone who may be interested please contact Robert.

Annual dinner committee will meet on Monday, January 11th at 2 pm in Pruyn Office. Our Welcome to Spring Annual Dinner will be held at Table 9 Restaurant. Our scheduled speaker for that evening is Hudson River Estuary Naturalist Tom Lake. He will be updating us on the status of Hudson River Bald eagles.

Community Relations and Development – Robert McCrillis

Please look at report submitted by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger. Noted of interest is that our December follow-up campaign raised \$5,165.

There will be a **Development Committee** Meeting on Thursday, January 21st at 7pm at Robert's house to review: new sources of revenue, income from special events, grant projects and Pruyn House renovations Capital Campaign. Robert asked for a show of hands of those willing to serve on this committee. Volunteers were: Tom McEnerney, Tom Ruth, Valerie Lyle, Ken Novenstern, Richard Saravay and Robert McCrillis. Barbara Campbell and Anne Swaim will also attend.

It was moved and seconded that **Chapter Membership dues** be increased to \$35 a year. Vote was unanimous in favor of increase.

Finance Committee – Philip Heidelberger

The portfolio balance on January 1, 2016 was \$909,158, a decrease of 4.2% below the January 1, 2015 balance of \$949,940. The \$40,332 decline in balance for the year included \$31,984 in withdrawals from and \$600 in additions to the portfolio during 2015. The investment rate of return was -0.94% for 2016.

Treasurer's Report – Tom McEnerney

Tom distributed his financial report showing revenues and expenses in 2015 and the 2016 Budget. Revenues for 2015 were \$29,000 in excess of budget, primarily due to substantially higher donations. Expenses for the year were slightly under budget resulting in much lower than normal withdrawals from the endowment.

Executive Director's Report – Anne Swaim

EagleFest is being held February 6th. We have three different locations where volunteers are needed: the boat ramp by Croton-Harmon train station, the tent in Croton Point Park and George's Island. A signup sheet is being passed around.

Anne reported on the **Brinton Brook Deer Management Program**. Our bow hunters have taken out a total of 6 deer. Season ended December 31.

Year-Round RVs in Croton Point Park. There have been no repercussions from the Westchester Parks Department about Anne's comments in the December 3rd article. We received approval for our second interpretive sign for Croton Point and it will now go into production. Installation may need to wait for spring.

A meeting will be arranged for later this month with key Westchester County Parks people to discuss various issues at Croton Point including:

- review of the designated Biodiversity Reserve Area at Croton Point to ensure that this is recognized by the current Park Superintendent and staff;
- habitat management of sensitive park area including the wet field between the landfill and parking;
- issue of lack of enforcement and policy at Croton Point including dogs off leash and campground security;
- exploring a drone use policy for Croton Point Park (and all parks). John Philips noted that there is, apparently, an existing (but unenforced) policy prohibiting the flying of kites.

New per diem Educator has been hired – **Peter Salmansohn**. He will be starting in January.

Salary will be \$40 per hour. SMRA rates for classroom and field trips have been raised to be applied to any new booking for this school year. Mr. Salmansohn's resume was passed around and some Board Members already know him from Audubon's Hog Island programs – especially his love/knowledge of puffins. He is known fondly as "Puffin Pete."

Also good news – **Westchester Land Trust** has completed the easement for the Weinstein property. Our next conversation(s) with the Weinstains will be regarding plans for their intention to donate the property to SMRA including planning for a life estate.

Advocacy

Tom Ruth gave an update on the **Hudson to Housatonic Conservation Initiative**. We have scheduled:

- January 14 public program at The Black Cow to see the film "The Marion Lake Story."
- February 14 program titled: "Show Some Love to Birds." This is a nest box building program during which we hope to build 50 boxes for Croton Point Park.

This Spring Tom hopes to put together a Habitat Improvement Team offering property walks to about 4 – 5 homeowners to get them interested in land stewardship.

Richard Saravay gave us an update on **Audubon New York Council** activities including the Spring Council Meeting on March 18-20 in Saratoga Springs, NY. He also passed around a copy of a letter sent to Governor Cuomo on December 10, 2015 concerning NY Audubon's legislative goals for 2016.

Richard noted that the National Audubon Convention will be held in Park City, Utah in July 2016.

Sanctuaries Committee – Michael Madias, Jr.

Michael indicated that there will be a boundary survey walk on Sunday, January 17th at Haas and all are invited, meeting 9:00am at Pruyn Sanctuary. Michael and Anne plan to walk the boundaries at Chernick and Cameron - Murfeldt sanctuaries in March.

Programs and Field Trips – Christine McCluskey

Christine noted upcoming SMRA events, including:

January 9 - Croton Point Eagles walk with Charlie Roberto and 4th Annual Soup Social at CP Nature Center. A sign-up sheet was passed around for soup-making volunteers.

January 14 - Film night at The Black Cow, Croton - "Marion Lake Story - Defeating the Mighty Phragmites." We will include discussion and resources on local invasive species control.

Newsletter

In Brian's absence, Anne noted that February-March newsletter articles are due this week.

Bird Seed Sale - Ken Novenstern

Saturday January 16th - third Saturday bird seed sale at Pruyn. Sheet sent around for volunteers to work that Saturday. We have plenty of seed and are hoping for colder weather to increase sales.

Hospitality

Robert McCrillis thanked Jean Sparacin for coordinating the refreshments and Jean thanked those who brought refreshments this month: Karalyn Lamb and Joanne McAuley

New Business: None.

Meeting ended at: 8:28 pm **Next meeting:** February 1, 2016

Minutes taken by Joanne McAuley